

August 6, 2020

Dear Parents,

In March, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) issued an immediate temporary suspension of site-based respite services, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included Summit's Adventures (afterschool) and Expeditions (evenings and Saturdays) programs.

As you may know, OPWDD issued guidance on July 10, 2020, indicating that site-based respite services may resume operation during the continued COVID-19 public health emergency. We are reviewing the many restrictions and changes indicated in the guidance to best prepare to resume operations in accordance with the Governor's NY Forward initiative.

Many individuals who attend our respite programs are in a "high-risk" category and require regular close contact with staff members. Therefore, we are planning carefully to provide an environment that meets the requirements that could prevent the spread of COVID-19 among individuals and staff.

*We are working towards being ready to operate with all the required safety precautions in place.* In order to adhere to the guidelines, many changes will be necessary. **The schedule and structure you and your child are accustomed to will be very different; the traditional program days and hours will change.** We will begin serving individuals using a phased approach; everyone will not return simultaneously.

The health and safety of your child and our staff is our highest priority. When in-person services resume, we want you to make an informed decision about sending your child to our respite program.

Information about changes to the program will be included in your parent handbook and have been mailed to you with this letter. Here are some additional important changes:

1. **Things may change quickly with limited notice.** Summit is guided by external groups so our practices may be frequently altered as guidance is received from OPWDD and the New York State Department of Health. We may have to close our program temporarily if our region experiences a spike in COVID-19 cases or if a COVID-19 case is identified at the location where your child is served.
2. **You will be expected to screen your child before sending them to program each day and keep them home if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness.** An additional screening will occur upon arrival. Arrivals and dismissals will be staggered. You will also be expected to immediately pick up your child if they experience COVID-19 symptoms while at program. Summit staff will also be screened at every day and will be sent home as required if they do not pass our wellness screening. Arrivals and dismissals will be staggered.

3. ***If symptoms occur during the day, we will keep your child in a separate area with a staff member until you arrive to pick them up. We expect that you do this as promptly as possible.***
4. ***The program structure and location will change. We will start by offering two hours per day between the hours of 4:30-6:30 p.m. at our 415 N. French Road, Amherst, location.*** Additional staggered two-hour sessions may be offered during Summit Academy break weeks (August 24 – September 4). ***We will contact you to arrange your child's first session and determine your child's schedule going forward.***
5. Staff will be expected to wear face coverings when working with your child, and additional personal protective equipment will be provided as needed. ***Your child will be required to wear a face covering, unless they are medically unable to do so and will be expected to tolerate staff who wear face coverings.***
6. ***Your child will be required to wash their hands multiple times throughout the session, including immediately upon arrival to program, and use hand sanitizer – which will be provided.***
7. ***Your child will spend most of their time inside at our location at 415 N. French Road.*** Additional areas will be designated for outdoor activities.
8. Initially, we will not offer community outings, but we will resume community outings once we are able to do so as safely as possible.
9. Every attempt will be made to keep your child with the same staff and cohort of individuals.
10. ***Program space will look different.*** Markings on the floor will designate individual areas. Individuals will have their own supplies that will not be shared. All unnecessary materials, and any materials that cannot be easily cleaned, will be removed from the program space.
11. ***Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned regularly throughout the day regularly. Program space will be thoroughly cleaned between sessions according to CDC and DOH guidelines.***
12. We will make every effort to help individuals maintain social distance from each other, but this will not always be possible by every participant.
13. We ask that, if you are not doing so already, you work with your child on critical skills including wearing a mask, washing hands, tolerating others' wearing masks, maintaining social distance, etc.
14. If your child has a behavior plan it will be adjusted to reflect a "hands-off" approach, to the extent possible, in order to reduce extended physical contact time between your child and staff members.

15. ***Visitors, including parents, will not be allowed in the building except in extraordinary circumstances.***

**Based on these changes, we ask that you complete and return the enclosed Informed Consent no later than August 12.** Your responses will help us tremendously as we work through critical details.

Thank you for your continued support. We will continue to keep you updated as we receive additional information. If you have any questions, please email Ashlee Bronson, Assistant Director – Community Division, at [abronson@TheSummitCenter.org](mailto:abronson@TheSummitCenter.org).

Sincerely,

*Diana Schmit*

Diana M. Schmit, MS  
Vice President, Community and Adult Services

## Summit Informed Consent for Resumption of Respite Services

I have read the Resumption of Respite Service letter dated August 6, 2020 and understand the information.

After considering the information provided: (please check one)

- I plan to transport my child to respite when in-person services are available. (\*Please note, for those who have participated in our Adventures (afterschool) program, bus transportation will not be available.)
- I *do not* plan to send my child to respite

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_