



# MONTANA LEARNING CENTER

*at Canyon Ferry Lake*

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Dear Governor Bullock & Coronavirus Task Force,

We, the undersigned, provide enrichment programs for children outside of the academic setting here in Montana. While each of us is unique, we share some common traits and have some common needs as we envision the reopening of our in-person programs, hopefully at some point this summer.

As parents return to work, the need for our in-person programs will grow, since they effectively function as childcare for at least some period of every workday. Understanding that, we are anxious to resume providing our services to children in person as soon as is reasonably possible, but we do not want to reopen our in-person programs too soon and risk jeopardizing the lives of our staff, the children and parents we serve, our families, our friends, and our neighbors.

We have begun planning the reopening process and contingency plans should the reopening take longer than anticipated. Since we are each unique, our reopening plans vary widely, but all of them envision that over time, we will:

- keep abreast of current developments, including changing guidance from public health agencies and industry associations, such as the American Camp Association, and adjust our approaches and activities accordingly;
- gradually decrease our reliance on virtual activities and increase our in-person programs;
- redesign our offerings to:
  - reduce the number of different programs we offer, instead selecting a few programs to offer that work best in the current environment and potentially repeating them over time;
  - incorporate virtual activities where appropriate and design alternatives for children without internet access;
  - ensure compliance with the current size limit for gatherings, the social distancing guidelines, and other recommendations and requirements from various governmental health agencies and others;
  - adjust our offerings as the gatherings size limit increases, the social distancing guidelines ease, and other guidance and requirements change; and
  - allow time for adequate cleaning of our facilities between uses; and
- determine the best use of our space and arrange for additional space as needed to meet gatherings size limits, social distancing guidelines, and other recommendations and requirements.

In order for us to plan and manage the reopening process, and minimize the risks to our staff, the children and parents we serve, our families, our friends, and our neighbors, we need the following:

- **Clear, yet flexible, science-based guidance from public health professionals on the protocols we should adopt for:**

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- the screening of children and staff as they enter our facilities each day;
- the daily cleaning and periodic deep cleaning of our facilities; and
- the safety and protection of our staff and the children in our programs.
- **Funding and training** to implement the recommended screening, cleaning, and safety protocols, including funding for the needed equipment, supplies, and staff to perform these functions. We feel strongly that each of us will need to hire at least one staff member with sufficient medical training to oversee the execution of these protocols, address any issues that may arise in their implementation, and provide advice to us in the event a child becomes sick while attending one of our programs.
- **A clear, science-backed plan for a staged reopening** that addresses when we can increase our in-person programs beyond the currently permitted limit, when the six feet minimum for social distancing can be relaxed, and when other recommendations and requirements can be phased out.
- **Funding** to allow us to replace certain fixtures, such as toilet flushing mechanisms, faucets, soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, water fountains, and light switches, with touchless versions in order to minimize the possibility of transference of the virus due to the use of these items by an infected person.
- **Funding** for staff hazard pay and for health insurance coverage for staff members not currently provided health insurance coverage through us.
- **Funding** for the rental of other facilities and additional staff in order for us to meet the size limitation for gatherings while still providing robust in-person programming.
- **Funding** for cancellation fees, lost nonrefundable deposits, and similar expenses arising from the need to cancel all planned programming in the short-term.
- **Changes in workers compensation eligibility guidelines** so that staff members who contract the virus at work qualify for workers compensation benefits (both medical care and financial assistance).

We hope this information assists the Task Force in determining how to best use the funds Montana was awarded under the CARES Act to support nonprofit organizations that provide educational enrichment activities for children. Please contact Ryan Hannahoe, Executive Director of Montana Learning Center at Canyon Ferry Lake, at (406) 475-3638 or [MontanaLearningCenter@gmail.com](mailto:MontanaLearningCenter@gmail.com) if you have any questions or would like further information about any of the items above.

Thank you. We appreciate having been given an opportunity to provide input to the Task Force so it can make the right decisions for Montana.

Sincerely,

Butte YMCA  
 Child Care Connections  
 Gallatin Valley YMCA  
 Greater Gallatin United Way  
 Family Connections Inc.  
 Missoula YMCA  
 Montana Child Care Resource &  
 Referral Network  
 Montana Outdoor Science School  
 Southwestern Montana YMCA  
 Wise Wonders Science & Discovery Museum

Carter County Museum  
 Child Care Resources  
 Grandstreet Theatre School  
 ExplorationWorks  
 Helena Family YMCA  
 Montana Natural History Center  
 Montana Learning Center  
 at Canyon Ferry Lake  
 Montana Science Center  
 United Way of the Lewis and Clark Area



MONTANA LEARNING CENTER  
*at Canyon Ferry Lake*



ILLUMINATING  
YOUNG  
MINDS



Greater Gallatin  
United Way

LIVE UNITED



of the Lewis & Clark Area



Montana Natural  
History Center

Connecting People with Nature



ChildCareResources



ExplorationWorks!



CHILD CARE  
CONNECTIONS



Montana Child Care  
Resource and Referral Network