

Field Institute of Taos

Health and Safety Guidelines and COVID Safe Protocols – updated 3/21/21

The health and safety of our participants and their families, staff, and community is our number one priority. We are committed to taking all necessary precautions to limit exposure to and transmission of COVID 19. We continue to monitor the situation with the virus and will continue to follow the advice and guidance of public health experts. **We reserve the right to cancel any/all sessions at any time, should conditions suddenly worsen, or if public health guidelines change. We will also adjust how we are operating, depending on guidelines from the State of New Mexico. All families who wish to send children to our programs in 2021 must agree to fully support following these guidelines. To continue operations, we need 100% compliance with our current guidelines.**

Since the pandemic began in 2020, we have made many adaptations to our programming with the safety of campers, staff, and our community in mind and we will continue to do so. As New Mexico Public Health Orders and Mandates change, we will change our protocols to comply at all times.

The decision by our Board of Directors to comply with the state guidelines has been made because the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of our community's children is our first priority. We look forward to the time when these restrictions are no longer necessary. This pandemic is a challenging time for all of us and we understand that everyone may not agree with our approach. However, we hope that you will respect our decision as one that comes from a desire to do what we feel is best for our community at this time.

We will continue to follow all [New Mexico Health COVID safe practices for youth sports and programs](#) in 2021.

Serving Youth Who Reside Within a 50 Mile Radius

Current NM state guidelines have the requirement that “Youth participants must be limited to those who live in the local geographic area only (within a 50-mile radius).”

What does this mean in the context of our programs?

Full time, year-round residents who live within a 50-mile radius of Taos are welcome in all sessions.

Campers living within a 50-mile radius of Taos for the summer may also attend camp if they have been residing within the 50-mile radius of Taos for at least 10 days prior to the first day of camp and continue to do so throughout the session.

Health Screenings

It is extremely important that all FIT participants, parents, staff, and community members pay close attention to their health and the health of those around them.

YOUR CHILD MAY NOT ATTEND PROGRAMS IF, IN THE PAST 14 DAYS:

- **YOUR CHILD OR ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS EXHIBITED SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS (a negative test result may allow this time frame to be adjusted)**
- **YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH ANYONE WHO EXHIBITED SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS or WHO HAS COVID (a negative test result may allow this time frame to be adjusted)**

Pay close attention to your body. Your ability to identify your **own** symptoms is our first line of defense.

Parents, children, and staff will be asked to perform a self-health checkup prior to attending programs each week. Participants, and those they've been in close contact with, must not exhibit any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days. If any person has/had a documented case of COVID-19, they will need a note from a doctor indicating that they no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Ask yourself (and your child) these questions:

1. Have you had a fever, sore throat, cough, muscle aches, congestion, tiredness, or shortness of breath in the past 14 days?
2. Have you lost or experienced an altered sense of smell or taste?
3. Have you had any other symptoms of illness in the past 14 days?
4. Have you been exposed to anyone else who appeared sick?

If you answer yes, or even potentially yes, to any of these questions, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO FIT PROGRAMS and notify us so we can consult our Medical Advisor on the best course of action.

Group Sizes

At this point in time, all FIT group sizes will be limited to **a total of 10 (including children and staff)**. Multiple groups will not interact or intermingle and will maintain separation.

Drop off and Pick up

EVERYONE (including parents) must wear masks during drop off and pick up and maintain at least 6 feet distancing from others. Each child's temperature will be checked DAILY during drop off.

AT DROP OFF, PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR WITH YOUR CHILD UNTIL THE HEALTH SCREENING HAS BEEN COMPLETED. Your child's temperature will be checked each day before he/she gets out of the vehicle. Avoid the temptation to get out and greet others. Staggered pick-up and drop off times will be used, when necessary, to avoid large gatherings.

Being on time is essential. Time spent waiting presents the highest risk of contact with others.

Lead Instructors of elementary and middle school program participants will dismiss each child to a parent/guardian with a verbal sign-out at the end of each day.

Masks and Distancing

To the maximum extent possible, Lead Instructors, Coaches, and children will maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others. No high fives, fist bumps, hugs, or other physical greetings are allowed. **The current NM Public Health Order recommends that children and adults wear a clean, non-medical face covering at all times WHEN IN PUBLIC with eating, drinking, and swimming being the only exceptions.** It is **required** that all Lead Instructors, Coaches, and participants bring a clean face-covering daily and USE the face-covering. Face-coverings should be cleaned thoroughly with soap and hot water each day.

Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be used frequently to sanitize high-touch zones and clean hands. Lead Instructors and Coaches will avoid activities and games that involve contact, touching, or sharing of equipment. Our activities have been adjusted to accommodate the wearing of masks at all times (decreased physical intensity).

Vans

Masks are required to be worn by staff and all participants in the van at all times. Each child will use the same seat in the van for an entire session. Hand sanitizer will be used prior to loading and upon unloading. Vans will be sanitized daily and high-touch surfaces will be sanitized after each drive. Some sessions will not provide transportation and will meet children at trailheads instead.

First Aid

If needed, for minor cuts and scrapes, if the child is old enough to do so, he or she may be asked to self-administer band-aids or antiseptic under the guidance of a Lead Instructor or Coach.

Trail Etiquette

This is an especially sensitive time for interactions between trail users. It is both a responsibility and an opportunity for youth programs to promote good trail etiquette. Various types of positive behaviors will be taught and practiced, including communication, sharing space, yielding, distancing, use of masks, appropriate rest stop locations, speed control, and other types of etiquette that are unique during the pandemic.

Conservative Decision Making

Lead Instructors and Coaches will prioritize conservative decision making. Lead Instructors and Coaches will work to maximize participant safety to avoid injury. Lead Instructors, Coaches, and participants will NOT take any unnecessary risks and will operate well within their ability level. This includes avoiding situations that push a camper's comfort level, traveling slower and shorter distances, taking more breaks, drinking more water, and eating more snacks! Parents are asked to practice conservative decision making, as well.

Camping and Backpacking

We will have very limited capacity for overnight trips in 2021. This is possible because of the purchase of 10 single-person tents. Any child attending an overnight session must be able to sleep in a single-person tent.

Equipment (bike programs)

Bikes and equipment must be in excellent riding condition. To minimize contact, coaches will be instructed to not work on a bike, unless absolutely necessary.

Self-Sufficiency

Participants must be self-sufficient and bring everything they need for the day. Participants, Coaches, and Lead Instructors are prohibited from sharing any object. This includes water, snacks, clothing, sunscreen, tools, flat repair supplies, spare parts, etc. Siblings may share supplies. If campers do not come prepared with their own food/water and supplies, they are prohibited from borrowing from others and will be sent home. Of course, we will loan items from FIT, when possible, as we all forget something once in awhile. These items must be sanitized before being returned to FIT. **Each participant is required to bring a small hand sanitizer for personal use. We will have plenty of hand sanitizer for group use when needed.**

Minimize Group Overlap

All groups will be stable and consistent and we will minimize inter-mingling between groups. For sessions meeting daily, participants will not switch groups after the start of the session.

Infection Response and Contact Tracking

If any participant, Coach, or Leader tests positive for COVID-19, the program will be immediately canceled until an appropriate response is formulated. The contact information of all coaches and participants in relevant groups will be provided to the Department of Public Health for the purpose of contact tracing.

We are here to help navigate these guidelines so do not hesitate to reach out with any questions. Please contact Susie via email, text, or phone

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