



Updated 3/4/2021

2020-21 SCHOOL-YEAR YOUTH PROGRAMS

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How are the School-Year Youth Programs structured?

Programs operate Monday - Thursday and are closed Fridays (with the exception of gymnastics). 5-10 week sessions are planned with school breaks and holidays in mind, and families are required to commit to the entire session. Different pods will be spread out amongst City facilities and limited to groups of 14 or less students with dedicated City staff and instructors. Pods will stay outside for most of the time (weather permitting), including for distance learning to the extent possible.

Session 4 Dates: Monday, 2/22/21 - Thursday, 4/1/21 (6 weeks)

Session 5 Dates: Monday, 4/12/21 - Thursday, 6/3/21 (8 weeks)

My child may be returning to in-person school. Are they still eligible for a youth pod?

Effective 4/12/21 for the start of Session 5, students are allowed to attend their in-person school cohort in addition to their Recreation care pod.

Can my child participate in other extracurricular activities while attending their youth pod?

With the exception of in-person school, families are asked to still refrain from participating in other in-person pods, cohorts, or "social bubbles." The only additional activities allowed outside of your pod and in-person schooling are programs that are completely no-touch, outside only, no shared supplies, and no close contact.

What types of programs are offered?

In hopes of meeting the varying needs of our community, we will be offering different care options that vary in time and price.

Learning Labs take place during the school day and provide a supervised environment where students can spend time with peers and focus on their distance learning. While there will be some activity and recess time, most time is designed to allow students the opportunity to complete virtual schoolwork with the support of their own teachers and schools. Staff are trained in safety and supervision but are not trained tutors or educators; they will provide support when possible and help keep students on schedule.

Afternoon Recreation allows students an opportunity for socialization and energy release after a day of at-home learning. Afternoon Recreation staff will lead a variety of mostly outdoor activities including sports, schoolyard games, arts & crafts and more.

All Day Childcare combines our daytime learning labs and afternoon recreation for a full day of care.

Enrichment Classes, such as Gymnastics, are offered as another form of Afternoon Recreation, and focus on a specific subject, allowing students to delve deeper into the subject matter.

Where can I find more detail on the program schedule?

Visit our webpage www.el-cerrito.org/childcare for more information including the schedule which contains program dates, times, fees, descriptions and more.

What grades are these programs designed for?

Schoolyear programs are generally available to elementary age students, grades K-6*. Some pods (Afternoon Recreation and All Day Care) also accept students in TK. We are offering a separate program, Teeter Tots, for those age 2-4.5. More information on this program can be found at www.el-cerrito.org/preschool. **Some enrichment programs may be open to additional grades.*

Who is eligible to register for 2020-21 school aged programs?

Our programs are open to all elementary age students. Currently, the only children NOT eligible to participate are those involved in another in-person group cohort during the session dates, with the exception of in-person school. This means families remain ineligible for a Recreation pod if they are participating other in-person childcare programs, sporting competitions/games with close contact or shared equipment, or any other group activity where participants would be within 6ft of each other for 15 minutes or longer.

How and when do I register for 2020-21 school aged programs?

Registration is only accepted online at www.el-cerrito.org/onlinereg. Registration requires a WebTrac account (for more information on creating an account or accessing an existing one, visit <http://www.el-cerrito.org/onlineinstructions>). All the information on your account, especially contact information, must be kept up to date. Families enrolled in the current session will receive priority registration to re-enroll in their same pod for the following session. After the two-day priority registration period, registration will open for all. Once a session has started, you can inquire about registration by emailing recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us. Late starts are accepted, space permitting. Visit www.el-cerrito.org/childcare for exact registration dates for each session.

How do I pay?

Payment of program fees is due at the time of online registration using a credit card. You will make two partial payments: one at the time of registration, and an automatically charged second payment midway through the session (with the exception of Enrichment programs which are due in full at the time of registration).

-Session 4 Auto-Charge Date: February 25, 2021

-Session 5 Auto-Charge Date: April 25, 2021

Do you accept third-party payments?

Yes, we accept third-party payments from organizations that can subsidize childcare. Examples include CocoKids at www.cocokids.org or BananasBunch at www.bananasbunch.org, and families are encouraged to look into these options. After registering online using a credit card, you can be reimbursed if a third-party payment is received by the Recreation Office at a later date.

Are there scholarships available?

Yes! Scholarships of up to \$300 are available to qualifying families, up to two times per year. For more information on our scholarship program visit www.el-cerrito.org/scholarship.

Awarded scholarships are applied toward your second auto-charge payment for the session.

Program fees seem higher than previous years. Why is that?

We establish fees to ensure that these programs are 100% self-supporting. Lower student to staff ratios, increased custodial and sanitization support, and the need to be able to continually purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are resulting in continually rising costs. Lower ratios allow for high quality care and more individual attention, but at significantly higher costs.

Is Session 5 more expensive than Session 4?

The session fees are based on a weekly rate. While the weekly rate remains the same as Session 4, Session 5 has two additional weeks compared to the previous sessions. For this reason, the session total is higher.

The program I want to register for is full. What should I do?

If the program you are interested in is full, please add yourself to the waitlist. Every effort will be made to open additional pods where there is enough interest. If there is a cancellation from a pod due to a medical reason, the Recreation Department will use the waitlist to fill the spot. If you are having trouble adding yourself to a waitlist, please email recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Do I need to submit any additional paperwork after online registration?

Once per school year, students attending a pod at a licensed childcare site (Madera, Fairmont, or Harding) will additionally be required to complete state licensing forms. Forms are available at www.el-cerrito.org/childcare and are due within one business day of online registration. Completed forms can be emailed to recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or dropped in the mail slot at 7007 Moeser Lane (near the Community Center Hall front entrance). If your pod is NOT located at Madera, Fairmont or Harding then you do not need to submit any additional paperwork.

What is a “Pod”?

All programs will run using a “pod” model. A pod refers to a group of 14 or less students who will remain together for the entire program session, and do not intermix with other groups of students. Each pod will be led by staff or instructors dedicated specifically to that group. Pods, sometimes referred to as “cohorts” or “social bubbles,” can be thought of as your program household. To help keep fellow pod mates self and healthy, families are expected to limit travel and social gatherings, as well as follow all active Health Orders and Guidelines as outlined by the Contra Costa County Health Department.

I want my child and their sibling/friend to be in the same pod. How do I do that?

For siblings or friends to be together, they must be enrolled in the same pod, for the same time slot at the same location. Please coordinate directly with family/friends to ensure you are enrolling in the same pod. We will not be able to accommodate transfer or special requests. Mixed age pods that keep siblings together is highly recommended where feasible to keep households contained as much as possible.

How do the pod drop-off and pick-up windows work?

Your drop-off time is the first 15 minutes of your pod time, and your pick-up time is the last 15 minutes of your pod time. For example, if you are registered for an 8:30am-5pm pod, your drop-off window is 8:30am-8:45am and your pick-up window is 4:45-5pm. We strongly recommend that families do not put siblings in different pods at different locations that occur at the same time as this means you would need to be in 2 locations within the same 15-minute time window.

Where will programs be offered?

Programs are offered at different locations throughout the City to maximize physical distancing. Locations include the Community Center, Arlington Park, Harding Park, Castro Park, Fairmont Park, and Casa Cerrito. Most pods will spend the majority of time outdoors. Pod locations are subject to change.

Will my child spend any times indoors?

Best practice during the COVID-19 pandemic is for children to spend as much time outdoors as possible. However, during inclement weather such as rain or unhealthy air quality, or for short breaks or special activities, there may be times when children move indoors. Each pod will have a designated indoor space assigned only to them, equipped with additional sanitizing supplies and 2 HEPA filter air purifiers. On days where children must spend the majority of time indoors due to inclement weather, face shields will be provided to both children and staff to be worn in addition to face coverings if desired.

What if I register then need to cancel?

Cancellations or transfers will not be permitted, and no refunds will be provided except when a student needs to cancel to return to in-person school, and their school schedule conflicts with their pod times. Two weeks' notice is required. Cancellation requests must be made in writing to recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

If program is cancelled for the day due to severe weather, a PSPS, or other unforeseen circumstance, will I still be charged?

If a day of program is cancelled by the Recreation Department for any of the above reasons, families will receive a credit on their account or credit card refund for the missed time. Credits/refunds are issued at the end of each session.

What does my child need to bring to work on their distance learning?

Students in Learning Labs or All Day Care should bring all supplies needed to complete distance learning including laptop/tablet devices with hotspots, headphones for listening to their instruction, device chargers, workbooks and worksheets, pens & pencils, etc. Each Monday, we ask that guardians provide a hard/printed copy of their child's schedule to pod staff. Staff will use this printed document to help keep students on schedule with their distance learning.

Why do I need to provide a hotspot? Isn't there Wi-Fi at the program facility?

Internet access is not guaranteed for Learning Labs or All Day Care. While most facilities are equipped with Wi-Fi, there has been rare instances of the internet going down or students being unable to connect. Providing your own hotspots/internet access is the best way to ensure each participant will be able to connect to distance learning.

My child will be participating in a Learning Lab during the day. Can they then sign up for an afternoon gymnastics session?

No. Per state cohort guidance, children should only be part of ONE pod or “social bubble.” This means that outside of your household and in-person school, your child should only be spending time with ONE group of 14 or less children.

My child may be returning to in-person school soon. Should I still sign-up?

Families who are unsure of their in-person school schedules are still encouraged to register. Students will be allowed to attend in-person school in addition to one care pod. We have updated our cancellation policy to allow for cancellations in situations where a student’s school schedule may conflict with their pod times (please provide two week’s notice).

Are late starts accepted?

Late starts/registrations can be accommodated if space permits. After online registration closes, please inquire about enrolling by emailing recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us as registrations must go through the Recreation Department office once programs have begun.