Updated 8/10/20

2020-21 SCHOOL-YEAR YOUTH PROGRAMS
FALL SESSION 1
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How will the new adapted School-Year Youth Programs be structured?
The first Fall Session will run from Monday, 8/24/20 through Thursday, 10/29/20. Programs will operate Monday through Thursday and be closed on Fridays. Families will be required to commit to the entire session. Different pods will be spread out amongst City facilities and limited to groups of 12 or less students with dedicated City staff and instructors. These pods will stay outside for most of the time, including distance learning to the extent possible.

I need care past October. What do I do?
The El Cerrito Recreation Department will offer programs past October but anticipates our model will need to change due to changes in weather, daylight savings, and possible updates to the County and State Health Orders. More information will be released in September. In order to keep pods as stable as possible, we will offer priority registration to those enrolled in the first Fall session to re-enroll into their same pod.

What types of programs are being offered?
In hopes of meeting the varying needs of our community, we will be offering different kinds of care programs that vary in time and price.

- **Learning Labs** will 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, the majority of 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.

- **Afternoon Recreation** will be offered in conjunction with Learning Labs in some cases for a full day of care, or as its own program for those looking for an afternoon-only option. Afternoon Recreation staff will lead a variety of mostly outdoor activities including sports, schoolyard games, arts & crafts and more.

- Similarly, **Enrichment Classes** will be offered in conjunction with Learning Labs in some cases. These classes will focus on a specific subject, allowing students to delve deeper into the subject matter. Some enrichments may meet only 2x per week, creating two days with an end-of-school day pick-up and two days with supervision extended a bit later into the afternoon. Others may meet every day (M-Th).

- **Licensed Childcare** will take place at our licensed facilities: Madera, Harding, and Fairmont Clubhouses. These all-day programs will follow a model similar to the daytime learning lab followed by afternoon recreation. Those in a licensed program need to complete additional paperwork that can be found at [www.el-cerrito.org/childcare](http://www.el-cerrito.org/childcare).
Where can I find more detail on the program schedule?
Visit our webpage [www.el-cerrito.org/childcare](http://www.el-cerrito.org/childcare) for more information including the Fall schedule which contains program dates, times, fees, descriptions and more.

Who is eligible to register for Fall 2020 school aged programs?
El Cerrito Residents receive priority registration on Tuesday, 8/11/20 at 8am. Non-Residents may register beginning Wednesday 8/12/20 at 8am. As of June 3, all children are eligible to attend ONE youth social bubble (childcare unit, household support unit, children’s extracurricular unit, pod, etc.) per the Contra Costa County Health Order. Children are NOT eligible to participate in a pod if they are involved in another in-person activity at any point during the session dates. For example, a child cannot be in a Learning Lab during the day and then participate in private tutoring, sports practice/lessons, band groups, etc. during the evening; nor can they participate in any two programs offered by El Cerrito or any other provider.

What grades are these programs designed for? Are TK students eligible to participate?
Fall programs are available to elementary age students, grades K-6. Based on our community survey results, this is where there is the greatest need. Currently, our programs are not open to TK students.

How do I register for Fall 2020 school aged programs?
Registration will only be accepted online at [http://www.el-cerrito.org/onlinereg](http://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/794/Online-Registration-Instructions](http://www.el-cerrito.org/794/Online-Registration-Instructions)). All the information on your account, especially contact information, must be kept up to date.

How do I pay?
Payment of program fees will be 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 on September 15, 2020 (with the exception of gymnastics programs for which one payment will be made in full at the time of registration).

Do you accept third-party payments?
Yes, we accept third-party payments from organizations that can subsidize the cost for those families that qualify. Examples include CocoKids at [www.cocokids.org](http://www.cocokids.org) or BananasBunch at [www.bananasbunch.org](http://www.bananasbunch.org), and families are encouraged to look into these options. If you register 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 $150 are available to qualifying families regardless of the date of any previous applications or awards. For more information on our scholarship program visit http://www.el-cerrito.org/scholarship. Any scholarships awarded for the first fall session will be applied toward your second payment (which is to be automatically charged on September 15, 2020).

Program fees seem higher than usual. 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.

What is a “Pod”?
All programs will run using a “pod” model. A pod refers to a group of 12 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. For the health and safety of the participants, their families and staff, children may only participate in one pod during the session time frame including non-El Cerrito programs. Families must agree that their student will not participate in organized athletics or other social interactions with groups of children. Your care pod is your only pod. 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 will 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?
At facilities with more than one pod, program times are staggered to allow for different drop-off and pick-up windows to help prevent congregation. Your drop-off time is the first 15 minutes of your camp time, and your pick-up time is the last 15 minutes of your camp 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?
Fall 2020 School-Year Youth Programs will be 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.

What if I register then need to cancel?
Cancellations or transfers will not be permitted during the fall sessions, and no refunds will be provided except for medical reasons supported by a doctor’s note. Cancellation requests due to medical reasons must be made in writing to recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

What does my child need to bring to work on their distance learning?
Student's should bring all supplies needed to complete distance learning including laptop/tablet devices with hotspots, headphones for listening to their instruction, workbooks and worksheets, pens & pencils, etc.

Why do I need to provide a hotspot? Isn't there Wi-Fi at the program facility?
Internet access is not guaranteed. While most facilities are equipped with Wi-Fi, we cannot ensure that the Wi-Fi will be able to support multiple devices at once, especially during video streaming. Additionally, Wi-Fi routers are based inside the facility, and participants will spend most of their time spread out, outdoors. Providing their own hotspots/internet access is the only way to ensure each participant will be able to connect to distance learning, especially when outside away from the building.

My child will be participating in a Learning Lab during the day. Can they then sign up for an afternoon gymnastics session?
No. Per the Contra Costa County Health Order, children may only be part of ONE pod or “social bubble.” This means that outside of your household, your child should only be spending time with ONE group of 12 or less children. They cannot be in one group for one part of the day, and second group during a later part of the day, nor can they spend some days with one group, and other days with another. This is true for non-El Cerrito Recreation programs as well (for example, your child cannot be in a pod during the day then attend an in-person soccer practice in the evening or on the weekend).

What if the guidelines and health orders change over the next couple of months?
Our current program model is based on what is allowed by the state and county as of August 10, 2020. If the guidelines or health orders loosen, we will still run the first fall sessions as planned and described. However, if guidelines or orders become more strict or require us to modify our program in anyway, we will do so as needed. Participants must agree to adhere to any procedural or policy changes that are made even once the program has started.