



Summer camps are beginning to open in Washington state

By Hana Kim

Published June 18, 2020

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KIRKLAND, Wash. - It's a rare sight lately to see kids not related to each other in one room playing.

For the group at the Boy & Girls Club in Kirkland, it's out of necessity.

They are kids of essential workers who never stopped working amid the pandemic.

"I wouldn't be able to work," Linda Bunn said.

Bunn is a nurse on the front lines, and every morning she drops off her grandson Joe.

"Joe has been coming here for 4 years and they have been just wonderful. My daughter passed away a year-and-a-half ago, and I've been taking care of Joe," Bunn said.

It has remained an outlet for social interaction, a precious commodity that so many kids are now lacking.

Since the Boys & Girls Club of King County never closed, we can look to them to get a glimpse of what summer camps across Washington state could look like. It starts with health screenings every time a kid is dropped off, including a temperature reading. Families are also asked various questions about COVID-19 before kids can enter the club.

“Our new normal is doing a lot of cleaning, smaller group sizes,” Area Director Jamie Heil said.

During summer camp it will be one staff to nine kids. There will be no field trips, no shared games or toys and no playground equipment.

“Kids are out in the field and learning how to just play in the field,” Heil said.

Heil spends a lot of her time gently reminding kids to fight their natural inclinations. They don’t remember, they want to hug their friend, they want to be go up to their friend,” Heil said.

There will be a lot more reminders to physically distance starting on Monday when the Boys & Girls Club welcomes all kids to summer camp. The organization also says they required all staff to wear face masks starting June 8. Kids will be encouraged to wear face masks but it will not be mandatory.

