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---Courier News---08/12/20

City offers childcare, e-learning assistance

By: Rafael Guerrero

The city of Elgin is offering a daytime childcare and e-learning assistance program to help parents when the school year starts remotely this month.

Kids Club will be run by the city's Parks and Recreation Department and able to accommodate 60 first through sixth grade students every week.

"School will look a little different this year, and we are here to help," Rachel Jachowske, the city's recreation supervisor for youth and teens, said in a news release. "We know a lot of parents still need to get to work when school starts, and this is a great option to ensure children are successful with their e-learning in a safe environment and have time to socialize as well."

The program will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays at the Centre of Elgin. Parents can register their children to participate up to five days a week starting Aug. 24, which is when **U-46** classes resume online, through Oct. 23.

Jachowske, speaking via email, said they may modify or extend the service if U-46 continues remote instruction beyond October. Also, depending on demand, the program could expand to additional parks department facilities so more than 60 students can participate.

Each weekly session will cost \$200 per child. Families who are unable to pay that much can apply for a subsidy from the Recreation Youth Scholarship Fund for up to \$125 per child, Jachowske said in her email.

Children will be placed in groups no larger than 15 to ensure social distancing. Groups will be determined by grade level to help facilitate e-learning, which will be done in the morning.

Students also will participate in small group games, arts and crafts, and outdoor activities, program information said.

Each student will be expected to bring a sack lunch; items needed for school work, like district-issued Chromebooks, notebooks and pencils; two face masks; gym shoes; water bottles; and afternoon snacks, according to the program handbook. Officials are working with the Northern Illinois Food Bank to provide morning snacks.

"Health and safety of staff and participants is the highest priority. We have put together several new policies and procedures, consistent with state guidelines," Jachowske said in her email. "To ensure social distancing, we have modified our rooms, moving

equipment, spacing tables and chairs and adding barriers where appropriate. We will also use outdoor areas surrounding the Centre whenever possible.”

Wearing masks will be required, according to program information, and participants will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after activities and meals, the program handbook said. The Kids Club rooms will be “deep cleaned” at the end of each day.

Registration is mandatory and can be done online at cityofelgin.org/register or over the phone at 847-531-7017.

The city is hiring program leaders to assist with Kids Club. To apply or for more information, go to the city of Elgin’s job board, cityofelgin.org/98/Employment.

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