

NJ 2-1-1 is an important summer resource

TO THE EDITOR:

For the summer, NJ 2-1-1 is the essential resource for parents and individuals looking for summer safety tips, camp information and food programs.

2-1-1 is the free, user-friendly phone number that serves 90 percent of America's population, and connects some 16 million people a year to critical resources, information and services. In New Jersey, more than 230,000 people turned to NJ 2-1-1 for help last year. To prepare New Jersey families for the summer season, NJ 2-1-1 has launched several pages on its website www.nj211.org devoted to summer safety tips, as well as offering useful summer camp resources, information about food safety, tips on staying cool and energy conservation. These resources are also available by calling 2-1-1.

"The summer season should be a time for enjoyment, and we want to be able to provide parents and individuals with the resources to make their summer experience a memorable and safe one," said Joe Geleta, Executive Director, [NJ 2-1-1 Partnership](#). "While we provide access to safety tips to keep everyone safe and healthy, we also provide resources for those in need to find access to food and shelter during the summer as well."

The start of summer ushers in farmer's markets, fresh fruits and vegetables and local food programs. NJ 2-1-1 provides access to all of these resources across the state. By calling NJ 2-1-1 or visiting the website, parents and individuals can find listings of pick your own farms, farmers markets that accept food stamps, food programs for elderly residents and access to the Family Success Centers located in every county.

Family Success Centers are community-based, family-centered, neighborhood gathering places where any community resident can go for family support, information and services.

The Family Success Center page provides access to information on child, maternal and family health services, including linkage to publicly-funded health insurance programs and referrals to local health care services.

Over the summer a child's need for food does not go away. NJ 2-1-1 provides access to where nutritious free meals are available for children and teens 18 and

younger at many locations throughout the state during the summer while school is out of session.

A summer safety tips page offers health and safety recommendations with an intentional focus on the very young and the very old as these populations are the most vulnerable to the heat. This includes information on sun protection; water safety; recreational water illnesses; leaving children unattended in a car; caution with outdoor grills, play equipment and ensuring children wear safety helmets when participating in biking, roller blading and skateboard activities.

Those still looking for a camp for their child can access a county-by-county listing of camps run by organizations like the YMCA, YWCA and Boy/Girl Scouts on the NJ 2-1-1 summer camp page. The page includes a brief description of the programs offered, a link to the organization's website and essential contact information. Many more camping options can be found by searching the NJ 2-1-1 resource database using the search term "camp."

NJ 2-1-1 is also the place to find low-cost recreational options including resources for children's movies and information about county parks and recreation programs. These can be accessed on the web page and calling NJ 2-1-1.

The NJ 2-1-1 website www.nj211.org provides visitors with full access to the 2-1-1 resource database of over 14,000 programs and services and is organized to allow users to 'self-serve' by providing comprehensive information like application links, application agency locations, eligibility guidelines and critical dates, among others. Special sections of the site are devoted to such topics as Emergency Preparedness, Family Services, Home Energy Assistance, Utility Assistance, and Resources for the Unemployed among others. You can also follow NJ 2-1-1 on Facebook and on Twitter @nj211.

