

It is unfortunate that recent media headlines focused on wiffleball and red rover, and lost sight of the much bigger story: the effort to ensure that children who attend indoor camps are as safe and well cared for as those who attend resident and outdoor day camps.

For decades, the New York State Department of Health has worked closely with camp directors, to achieve an enviable record of safety. Less than two tenths of one percent of the children who attend camp suffer any injury, a remarkable success given the hundreds of thousands of kids who enjoy a summer camp experience that offers everything from swimming and canoeing to rock climbing, high adventure and zip lines.

Given that so many activities can be done indoors as well as out (think swimming, rock climbing walls, basketball, roller hockey, and the like), it is only logical that the same safety rules that governed outdoor camps should also apply to protect kids when they enjoy those same activities indoors.

Basic safety measures - like carefully screening counselors, having proper waterfront safety protocols, ensuring age-appropriate counselors, adequate staffing ratios, and unobstructed fire exits - are vital to ensure that children are safely able to enjoy everything from Marco Polo in the pool to freeze tag and volleyball.

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin and the Health Department should be commended for their efforts in making sure that the safety record of outdoor camps is matched by their indoor counterparts.

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