

The Value of the Camp Experience

Camp matters. It makes a difference. Camp allows children, youth, and adults to form a special community where great things happen. In an environment created just for them, children learn real life skills, develop self-esteem, and build their own sense of independence.

Enriching Lives through the Camp Experience

The organized camp experience is a vital component in the development and education of the whole child. Camp provides children with the opportunity to connect with nature, to participate in human-powered activities, and to benefit from personal and primary relationships. The camp experience produces many positive outcomes for children--- self-identity, self-worth, self-esteem, leadership, along with growth in personal skills and competencies. The camp community allows children to develop positive relationships with peers and adults, and it provides them numerous experiential learning opportunities. Trained, caring adult role models help children feel loved, capable, and included. Camp helps children grow by providing a supervised, positive environment that has safety as its primary commitment. At camp, children make new friends, explore the world around them, and learn that "I can" is much more powerful than "I can't." Whether children are playing, exploring nature, conquering new heights, or becoming part of a camp family, they are creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Camp Gives Kids a World of Good

Research has shown that camp experiences often increase a child's confidence, self-esteem, social skills, independence, leadership qualities, sense of adventure, and positive connection to nature. Combined with the strong supportive relationships between staff and campers, safety, and opportunities for skill-building and involvement, the camp experience offers a learning environment that contributes to the positive development of your child. The American Camp Association (ACA) recently implemented the largest and most comprehensive study of the camp experience ever conducted in the United States. The results of the research confirm that camp builds the kind of skills that help children become successful adults.

Campers Say—

- Camp helped me make new friends (96%)
- Camp helped me to get to know kids who are different from me. (93%)
- The people at camp helped me feel good about myself. (92%)
- At camp, I did things I was afraid to do at first. (74%)

Parents Say—

- My child gained self-confidence at camp. (70%)
- My child continues to participate in some of the new activities he or she learned at camp. (63%)
- My child remains in contact with friends made at camp. (69%)

The Long-Lasting Benefits of Camp

Camp has become a part of the fabric of America. When children go to camp, they'll likely come home gushing about the lifelong friends they've made, and the exciting adventures they had. What they probably won't tell you about are the many life lessons camp has given them. For more than 150 years, camp has been changing lives. Camp is full of fun and excitement, but it is so much more—developing children who are better equipped to lead in the twenty-first century with skills such as independence, empathy, the ability to work as part of a team, and a broader world view. Camp is a natural extension of the classroom. Research indicates that by participating in strategically planned, structured summer experiences, children reduce summer learning loss. Camp challenges children, keeps them engaged, develops creativity and talents, and expands their horizons.

american **CAMP** association®

The American Camp Association® (ACA) is a national organization with more than 10,000 individual members and nearly 3,000 member camps. ACA is committed to collaborating with those who believe in quality camp and outdoor experiences for children, youth, and adults. ACA provides advocacy and evidence-based education and professional development, and is the only national accrediting body for the organized camp experience. ACA-Accredited Camps meet up to 300 health and safety standards. Accreditation provides public evidence of a camp's commitment to the health, safety, and overall well-being of both campers and staff. www.ACACamps.org.