



# WHY SUMMER CAMP



## CAMP BUILDS BRAINS

Experience changes the brain, yes, the actual activation and wiring of the brain. Particularly when experiences are emotional, new, and challenging, the repeated experiences kids have alter the actual architecture of the brain. It's like a muscle. When it's used, it grows and strengthens. So, when kids have camp experiences that require them to overcome fear, be flexible, handle their emotions (especially away from their parents), be persistent to master something or build relationships, it builds this important part of the brain. This means that camps can play a role in how these kids function in the world, and ultimately who they become as adults, even on a neuronal level. **Dr. Tina Bryson**

### UNPLUG FROM ELECTRONICS

Studies have shown that cutting down screen time can have a positive effect on kids' physical, social, and behavioral well-being, and can even improve their academic performance.

**American Academy for Pediatrics**

### CHANCE FOR RISK TAKING

As kids move toward adolescence, they feel the need to test their limits. At camp, they can take these risks under the watchful eye of adults, proving themselves in positive, nurturing environments. **Dr. Tina Bryson**

### CONNECT WITH NATURE

Today's kids spend less time outdoors, and it's taking a toll on their health and well-being. Children need nature for the healthy development of their senses, and therefore, for learning and creativity. **Richard Louv**

## HELPS KIDS BECOME A MEMBER OF COMMUNITY

At camp, kids stay in cabins with children from different regions & walks of life. They set tables together, perform daily rituals, and build deep friendships with kids they might not otherwise be friends with. Not only are they exposed to different types of people, but they must find ways to get along with them, and to work with them as they develop new relationships. **Dr. Tina Bryson**

## CAMP BUILDS CONFIDENCE AND IDENTITY

Learning to sleep away from home is, of course, a critical step on the way to independence. Part of the challenge is beating homesickness, which may be hard for some children, and which, by definition, your parents cannot help you do. Beyond that, there are things that, as a parent, you cannot do for your children. You cannot make them happy (if you try too hard they become whiners); you cannot give them self-esteem and confidence (those come from their own accomplishments); you cannot pick friends for them and micro-manage their social lives, and finally you cannot give them independence. The only way children can grow into independence is to have their parents open the door and let them walk out. That's what makes camp such a life-changing experience for children. **Dr. Michael Thompson**

## EXPERIENCE CHARACTER GROWTH AND DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS

A profound gap exists between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need for success in their communities and workplaces. Schools aren't teaching kids grit, perseverance, and leadership. Rather, schools are VERY busy teaching the core curriculum and assessing how well our kids know it. No school has time to see how "gritty" a kid is, but at camp, the "grit-meter" is always running, and its personal character—not a report card or an athletic achievement—that rises to the top. Kids also develop other important life skills at camp, including independence, responsibility, and decision-making. Kids grow considerably in an environment away from their parents where they are forced to live on their own and find their own resources.

**Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

## TIME WITHOUT PRESSURE

For many children, school means pressure. Pressure to achieve. Pressure to do things "on time." Pressure to learn at someone else's pace. Some children seem to be wired to meet these challenges, while others are not. Children who absorb knowledge best through words and employ standard logic to solve problems shine in American schools. But, for many others - creative thinkers or those with artistic temperaments the pace and the demands of the school setting are overwhelming and, for some, ultimately defeating. For them, camp is a breathing space in which the pressure is off. At camp, they have a chance to feel good about who they are and what they can do. **Marie Hartwell-Walker, Ed.D.**

## CREATE MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIPS

It takes 200 hours to create meaningful friendships, that's over 2 weeks! To cultivate friendships the environment needs to be social in nature and by choice (not school, sports, etc.) There is no better place than camp for kids to spend time, connecting, being silly, talking, experiencing, and truly making friends. **Jeffery Hall, Journal of Social and Professional Relationships**