

PARENT PERCEPTION OF CHANGES IN CHILDREN AFTER RETURNING HOME FROM CAMP

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DOES THE CAMP EXPERIENCE MATTER?

- Proponents of summer camp believe camp provides participants with a transformative experience
- The impact of camp beyond the setting in which it takes place remains understudied and unclear
- Collecting empirical evidence of transfer is crucial to positioning camp as a genuine catalyst for positive youth development



PURPOSE

- To examine the extent to which the skills, knowledge, and values that campers develop during their summer camp experiences transfer to their home, community, and school environment based on parental observations



BACKGROUND

- Transfer represents the application of new knowledge, skills or values in a different setting
- Transfer is not guaranteed.
 - » E.g., in formal education settings, students learn information, but often fail to transfer it to real world contexts
- Presumably camp, because of its focus on intrinsic learning, provides a learning environment that encourages campers to retain and use the knowledge they gained from their experiences



BACKGROUND



- Summer camp experiences are short lived, which may affect their transferability
- Understanding what, if anything, transfers from camp to other settings is important to assist camps in better planning and structuring their programming to support optimal youth development



METHOD

- This study reports findings from Phase Three of the Canadian Summer Camp Research Project (see Glover, et al., 2013), a national study aimed at examining the outcomes children experience after participating in a summer camp program
- For Phase Three, a survey instrument was developed to determine changes in attitudes or behaviour that parents noticed since their children returned from camp



Source: Glover, T. D., Graham, T., Mock, S., Mannell, R. C., Carruthers, A., & Chapeskie, A. (2013). *Canadian Summer Camp Research Project, Phase 3: Parent perception of changes in children after returning home from camp.* Canadian Camping Association/Association des camps du Canada.



SAMPLE

- Data were collected from 1,405 parents, predominately from two-parent (80%) households with an average family income of \$110,000 to \$119,000 Cdn.
- The average age group was 7-9 year olds.
- Nearly half (49%) of the campers were girls.
- Over 110 different Canadian summer camps were reported by parents.
- Program types included: residential (49%), day (21%), religiously-affiliated (16%), those designed for children with special needs (3%), and specialty (i.e. science, language, music, sport) (11%)



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OUTCOME AREAS

- Five outcome areas were explored: (1) social integration and citizenship; (2) environmental awareness; (3) attitudes towards physical activity; (4) emotional intelligence; and (5) self-confidence and personal development

Key Outcome Areas

Key findings from Phase 1 CSCRP revealed five areas where camp directors expected campers to experience positive outcomes (Glover et al., 2011):

 <p>Social integration and citizenship Access to a wider social network with closer bonds to more friends and/or staff and with other camp alumni through shared experiences</p>	 <p>Environmental awareness Leads a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle, reduces ecological footprint, and encourages environmental responsibility</p>
 <p>Attitudes towards physical activity Participates in more physical activities within home, school, and community contexts</p>	 <p>Emotional intelligence More balanced and self-aware, thereby capable of empathy and relating to others on an emotional level</p>
 <p>Self-confidence and personal development More flexible, resourceful, and self-aware, thereby better able to deal with life's challenges</p>	



Source: Glover, T. D., Chapeskie, A., Mock, S. E., Mannell, R. C., & Feldberg, H. (2011). *The Canadian Summer Camp Research Project: Examining the outcomes of the Canadian summer camp experience*. Canadian Camping Association/Association des camps du Canada.

OUTCOME AREAS

- Among the five key outcome areas, parents were asked to rate statements based upon changes, if any, noticed in their child since leaving summer camp. Each item was scored so that a higher number indicated a stronger agreement (1= very strongly disagree, 6= very strongly agree)



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SURVEY FINDINGS

- Findings indicated that positive development in all five key outcome areas appeared to transfer from children's camping environment to daily life.
- Detailed analysis further revealed that gender, age, length of stay at summer camp, and returning campers were all positively associated with changes in attitudes and behaviour



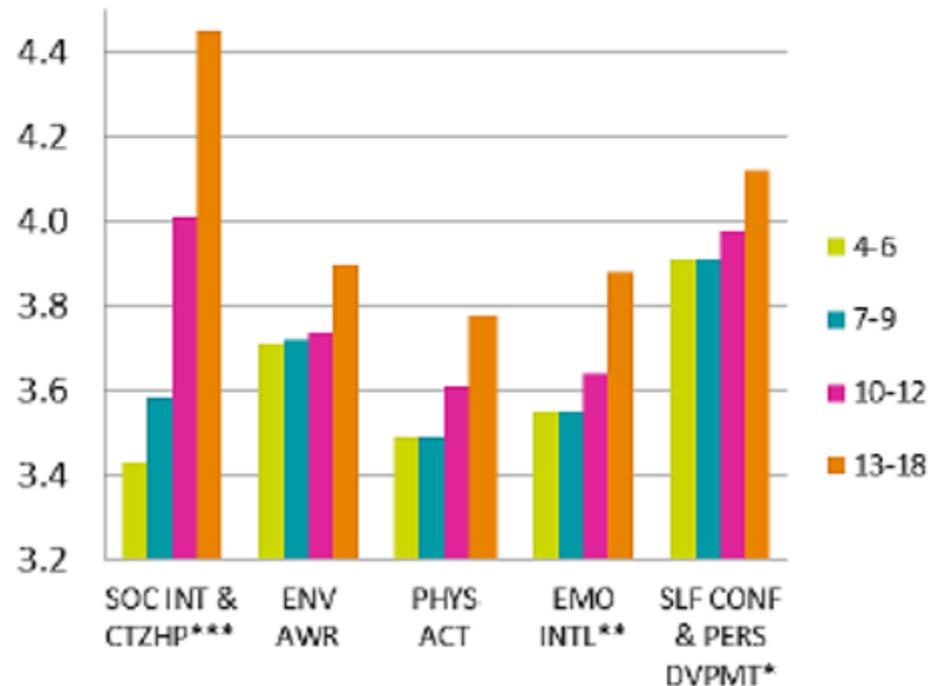
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CHANGES ACCORDING TO AGE:

Age

Older campers seemed to experience significantly greater levels of change in all five key outcome areas with respect to social integration and citizenship.

Changes in Attitude and Behaviour:
Age (years)



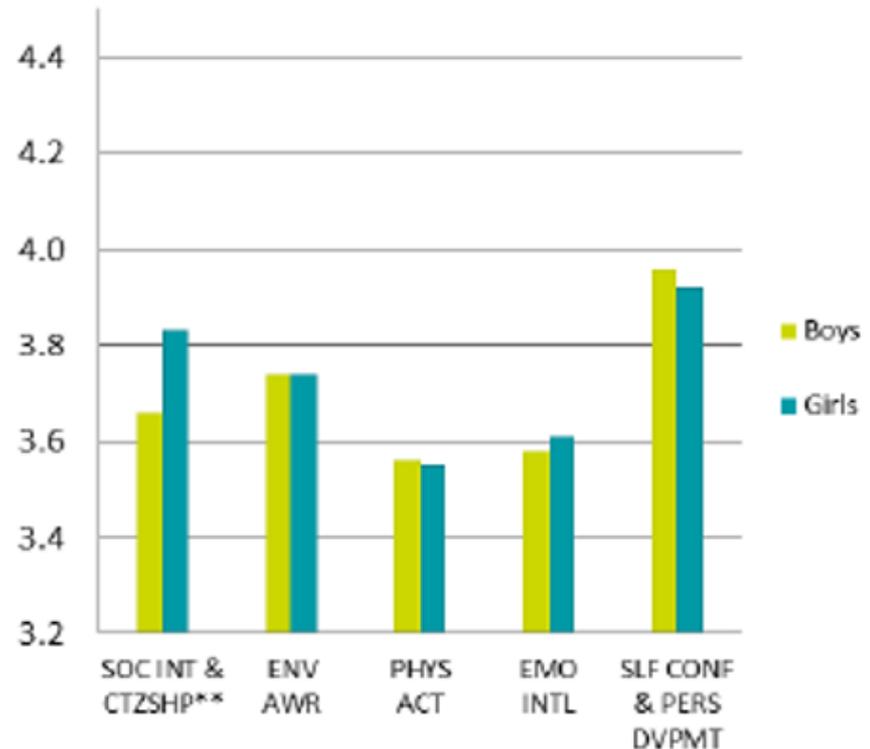
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CHANGES ACCORDING TO GENDER:

Gender

Findings indicate that girl campers tend to experience greater levels of social integration and citizenship than boys.

Changes in Attitude and Behaviour:
Gender



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DISCUSSION

- According to parents, positive changes in attitudes and behaviour continued or maintained after camp
- This positive finding aligns with previous Canadian summer camp research which found that learning transferability to daily life contexts can be traced back to the experiences that took place at camp (Fine, 2005)



DISCUSSION: AGE

- Older campers presumably showed the greatest change in development because, with greater maturity and social experience, they were able to adapt to new situations with greater ease
- Nevertheless, all four age groups examined were found to experience significant positive change, thereby providing good evidence that children continue to develop with subsequent camp experience



Source: Glover, T. D., Graham, T., Mock, S., Mannell, R. C., Carruthers, A., & Chapeskie, A. (2013). *Canadian Summer Camp Research Project, Phase 3: Parent perception of changes in children after returning home from camp.* Canadian Camping Association/Association des camps du Canada.



DISCUSSION: GENDER

- Though societal gender expectations may encourage girls to demonstrate more caring behaviour through greater interpersonal skills, camp directors and programming staff may wish to consider ways to foster greater social integration/citizenship at camp among boys



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ANY QUESTIONS?

