



An Overview of the American Camp Association's Camp Outcomes Tools

**Measuring Youth Development Outcomes
in Day and Resident Camps**



Overview

- Why measure outcomes?
- What do the outcomes surveys look like?
- How do I know which surveys to use?
- How do I know what they tell me?
- Creating Positive Youth Outcomes Resources



Find the outcome(s)

- Everyone in your beginning swimming class became comfortable with putting their faces in the water.
- 80% of youth participants said that they enjoyed the ropes course.
- 8 out of 10 kids in the after-school soccer program demonstrated the correct way to pass a soccer ball.
- A mom called you to say that her son follows instructions better at home after being involved in your program.



- Everyone in your beginning swimming class became comfortable with putting their faces in the water.
- (Not an outcome!) 80% of youth participants said that they enjoyed the ropes course.
- 8 out of 10 kids in the after-school soccer program demonstrated the correct way to pass a soccer ball.
- A mom called you to say that her son follows instructions better at home after being involved in your program.



Outputs vs. Outcomes

Outputs = tangible results of your program (# of participants; # who were trained; responses to your program (including satisfaction ratings))

Outcomes = impacts (hopefully +) on program participants

Learning (knowledge, understanding, perceptions, attitudes)

Skills (capabilities, specific behaviors that accomplish)

Conditions (increased security, stability, pride, etc.)



Why Measure Outcomes?

- Helps you evaluate your program goals
- Documents changes in your campers that can be shared with key stakeholders (parents, donors, staff, etc.)
- Demonstrates your commitment to quality programs that make a difference in people's lives



- ACA accreditation standards require camps to document outcomes

American Camp Association's

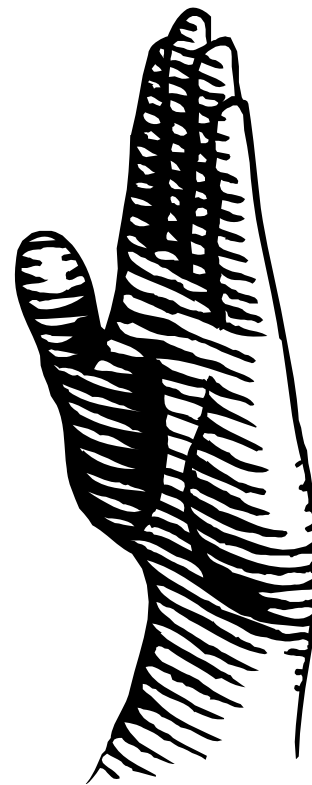
Accreditation Standards for Camp Programs and Services



- PD-6 ("Camp Goals and Outcomes")
 - Goals for participants
 - Specific, observable behavioral outcomes that address camper needs
 - Materials and training strategies for staff around camper outcomes
 - Parents/campers informed of the goals of the camp experience
- PD-7 ("Camp Experience Evaluation")
 - Written evidence of multiple sources of feedback on the accomplishment of established outcomes



How Have You Measured Outcomes in the Past?





Camp Directors Told Us

- We need evaluation tools!

Camp-specific

Easy to administer

Age-appropriate

Reliable and valid (*most important!*)

Customizable



Collaboration with University of Utah

- Development of questionnaires for younger and older campers
- Tested with campers in both day and resident camps
- Demographic range (age, gender, ethnicity)

7 Selected Outcomes

- Friendship Skills
- Responsibility
- Independence
- Family Citizenship
- Teamwork
- Competence
- Exploration



A Closer Look





Young Camper Survey

- Young Camper Outcomes Interview Questions
- Youth ages 7-9 (up to age 11)
- 14 questions, $\alpha = .85$
- Measures broad "Camp Learning"
- Based on 7 domains



Young Camper Survey

- Young Camper Outcomes Interview Questions
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 - Measures broad "Camp Learning"
 - Based on 7 domains
- Reliability-
Did campers
respond
consistently?



Young Camper Survey

- **Sample questions:**

1. At camp, did you learn how to be better at making friends?
2. At camp, did you learn to feel good about things that you do well?
3. At camp, did you learn that you can be good at some things that you didn't know you were good at?

- **4 point scale:**

I didn't learn anything about this

I'm not sure

I learned a little about this

I learned a lot about this



Surveys for Older Campers

- There are basic and detailed versions
- “Basic version” is increase format
- “Detailed version” is the current status + change version.

Helps to determine how much change is associated with camp participation.

This is something new with camp outcomes measurement.



Basic Version Surveys

- Basic “Increase Format” ($\alpha > .90$)
- Available for 7 outcomes
- 6-14 items per outcome
- 5 point scales

How much, if any, has your experience as a camper in this camp changed you in each of the following ways?

	Decreased	Did not increase or decrease	Increased a little bit, maybe	Increased some, I am sure	Increased a lot, I am sure
1. Placing group goals above the things that I want.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Working well with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Most basic version surveys have 6-8 questions
- “Friendship skills” has 14 because it is a more complex concept and requires more questions



- Reason for the # of “increase” options on this scale is to reduce ceiling effects (when the majority of scores are at or near the maximum possible)

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2. Working well with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Detailed Version of Surveys

- “Status + change format” ($\alpha > .84$)
- Available for 7 outcomes
- 6-13 items/outcome (status and change)
- 6 point scales

1. I accept responsibility for my actions	False	Somewhat False	A little False	A little True	Somewhat True	True
Is the above statement more or less true today than before camp?	A lot less	Somewhat less	A little less	A little more	Somewhat more	A lot more
2. I own up to my mistakes	False	Somewhat False	A little False	A little True	Somewhat True	True
Is the above statement more or less true today than before camp?	A lot less	Somewhat less	A little less	A little more	Somewhat more	A lot more



How do I know which one(s) to use?

- **Young Camper Survey**
 - Best for campers 7-9, possibly up to 10 or 11
 - Shortest & fastest
 - One dimensional ("Camp Learning")
- **Basic Version Surveys (measures "Increase")**
 - Campers are 10+
 - Interested in gains through camp
 - Less burdensome than status + change
 - Multi-dimensional (7 outcomes)
- **Detailed Version Surveys (measures "Status+Change)**
 - Campers are 10+
 - Interested in gains through camp
 - Interested in status after camp (correlations with other indices)
 - Most burdensome
 - Multi-dimensional (7 outcomes)



How might I use these?

- Directors do not need to use all of these questionnaires!
- Pick the ones that are most relevant for your program.
- Make sure you are collecting data to answer your questions



How might I use these?

- What do you want to know?
 - Results (scores) for your entire camp?
 - Results (scores) by camper age?
 - Results (scores) by camper gender?

- Explore changes in mean/averages
 - Ex: Campers increased 2.7 to 3.5 on...

- Explore percent changes
 - Ex: 40% of campers said...



- Externally

“90% of our campers reported gains in Independence because of their time at camp”

“80% of our day campers and 90% of our residential campers reported gains in Friendship Skills because of their time at camp”

- Internally

“Campers who participated in program X (e.g., our challenge course) learned more about Teamwork than campers who did not participate.”

“The older campers (> 12 year old) reported learning more about Responsibility at camp than our younger campers”

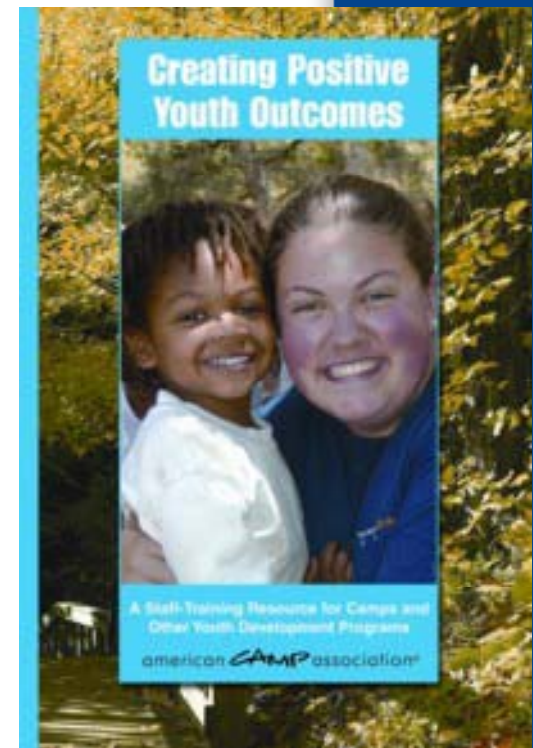


Creating Positive Youth Outcomes Toolkit

- A 7-step process for program evaluation to help you increase positive youth outcomes.

A book and resource CD include:

the evaluation outline,
examples of goals and objectives you might target,
a facilitator's guide for staff training,
copy-ready checklists and worksheets,
forms for refining targeted outcomes, and
youth survey tools designed and used by ACA for
youth outcomes research.



Visit <http://www.acabookstore.org/product.cfm?pid=1537> to order your copy.



Outcomes Surveys

- ACA Research Website

www.acacamps.org/research