



National Town Meeting – *AmericaSpeaks: Our Budget, Our Economy* June 26, 2010 Key Messages and Data

Data

According to the study conducted by the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute — *Kid's Share: An Analysis of Federal Expenditures on Children Through 2008*:

- Less than one-tenth of the federal budget was spent on children in 2008.
- Since 1960, the children's share of the total budget has diminished by one-quarter, while spending on the non-child portions of entitlement programs has more than doubled.
- As provisions of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act expire, it is projected that spending on children will shrink from 2.1 percent of GDP in 2008 to 1.9 percent of GDP by 2019, if current policies continue unchanged.

Key Messages

To advance the economic and social health of the country, the federal government should direct resources to children's issues – children are the country's future workers, leaders, parents, tax-payers, and voters.

Camp-Specific:

Research indicates that day and resident camps are an effective site for youth development because of the "supports and opportunities" offered through positive relationships, feeling safe, youth engagement, and skill-building (Bialeschki, Henderson, & James, 2007).

- Resources should be invested to support programs and settings that reduce childhood obesity in the United States.

Camp-Specific:

- Providing youth with high-quality camp experiences that encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices will help address childhood obesity issues.
 - Hickerson & Henderson (2010) found that children in day camps take (on average) about 12,000 steps per day. Furthermore, Hickerson found that children in residential camps take 19,500 steps per day, on average, which is well above the recommended guidelines for daily physical activity outlined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
 - Cleland, et al. (2008) reports that children who spend time outside tend to be more physically active and are less likely to be overweight.
- Resources should be invested to support programs and settings that address summertime learning-loss in children and youth.

Camp-Specific:

- Nature-based experiences have been linked to better performance by children in school (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998).
- Providing youth with high-quality educational experiences at summer camps will expand on school-year strategies and topics. For many educators and parents, the appeal of out-of-school time experiences such as camp lies in the opportunity to expand on school-day content in an environment explicitly designed to look and feel different from the school day.

- Parents, particularly low-income parents, consistently cite summer as the most difficult time to find quality programming and care for their children. Fifty-eight percent of parents say summer is the hardest time to make sure their child has productive things to do (Duffet, et al., 2004).
 - "Play in nature, particularly during the critical period of middle childhood, appears to be an especially important time for developing the capacities for creativity, problem-solving, and emotional and intellectual development" (Kellert, 2005).
 - Although learning can be considered through an "academic" lens, learning also involves acquiring behaviors, skills, values, and understandings that are not always traditionally academic in nature. The American Camp Association's research into the developmental outcomes of camp experiences suggests how the camp experience prepares children and youth for learning (American Camp Association, 2005).
- Resources should be invested in programs and settings that reduce nature deficit disorder in children and youth.
 - Camp-Specific:*
 - Direct experience in nature simultaneously stimulates all of a child's senses, and the use of our senses is essential to learning. By moving childhood indoors, we deprive children of a full connection to the world (Louv, 2005).
 - Inner-city children show increases in self esteem and well-being after spending the summer in rural camps (Readdick & Schaller, 2005).
 - Youth participating in [Camp 2 Grow](#), a camp-based leadership and environmental stewardship program experienced increases in "affinity for nature" and interest in preserving the environment (American Camp Association, 2009).
 - Proximity to, views of, and daily exposure to natural settings has been associated with children's ability to focus and enhances cognitive abilities (Wells, 2000).
 - Contact with nature is associated with increased language development (O'Brien & Murray, 2006).
 - Children will be smarter, better able to get along with others, healthier, and happier when they have regular opportunities for free and unstructured play outdoors (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005).
 - Resources should be invested in programs and settings that teach children and youth twenty-first century competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, adaptability, initiative, and imagination.
 - Camp-Specific:*
 - Learning that occurs through the camp experience supports the development of twenty-first century competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, adaptability, initiative, and imagination.
 - Children who experienced an outdoor education program versus those in a control group who had not had the outdoor learning experience showed a 27 percent increase in measured mastery of science concepts; enhanced cooperation and conflict resolution skills; gains in self esteem; gains in positive environmental behavior; and gains in problem-solving, motivation to learn, and classroom behavior (American Institutes for Research, 2005).

References

All references from above can be found [online](#).

American Camp Association

www.ACAcamps.org

www.CampParents.org

800-428-2267