

THE VALUE OF RESEARCH

ACA is committed to research that expands the value and visibility of camp and other out-of-school youth experiences. We do this through rigorous investigations of camper and staff outcomes, industry research, and by supporting camps and other youth development organizations in their evaluation efforts.



Make Evidence-Based Decisions. ACA conducts rigorous research related to the camp industry each year. Findings related to financial management, staff compensation and benefits, facilities, and program design are available for day camps and resident camps, and are broken down by camp size, affiliation, and region.



Measure Camper Outcomes. ACA's Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) provides a compilation of age-appropriate, camp-tested, customizable measurement scales addressing key outcomes of the camp experience, such as friendship skills, independency, teamwork, affinity for nature, and more. Available in paper and electronically, and in versions for staff and parent observations.



Track and Prepare Emerging Issues and Industry Trends. ACA reports on trends and emerging issues facing the camp industry through an annual Emerging Issues Survey and a review of Crisis Hotline calls. These findings are available for free on the ACA website, and in *The CampLine* and *Camping Magazine*.



Continuously Improve Camp Programs. The Camp Program Quality Assessment (CPQA) tool was developed specifically for camp professionals interested in continuous program improvement. Two versions of the tool — a staff checklist and a staff observation tool — provide a great framework for training and for evaluating program practices. Both tools are available for free to ACA members.



Inform Your Planning and Programming. ACA offers many other research resources, including: Camp Emerging Issues Report; Injury and Illness Prevention Research; Mental, Emotional, and Social Health (MESH) Resources; National Benchmark Study of Positive Youth Development in Camp; National Study of Camp Program Improvement; Camp Research Symposium each year at the ACA National Conference; National Research Forum Book of Abstracts (available each year).

Find out more about ACA research efforts
[ACAcamps.org/Research](https://www.acacamps.org/Research)



RESEARCH 360

Complete Research Resources for Camp

The logo graphic for Research 360 consists of a stylized circular emblem. It features a central white circle with a blue vertical line and a green horizontal line intersecting at the center. Surrounding this central circle are several curved, overlapping segments in shades of blue and green, creating a sense of motion or a globe-like structure.

Research 360 is ACA's current strategic direction focused on research and evaluation that aims to improve camp experiences for youth *and* to advocate for the value of camp to our many audiences. The name represents the two dimensions of ACA's research strategic direction that have exciting implications for individual camps and the camp community in general.

ACA's Five-Year Research Project

For Research 360, the first dimension is represented by ACA's five-year research project. This project, which began in 2017, explores the outcomes of the camp experience related to career and college readiness for campers and staff and how camp programs achieve those outcomes. Currently under the direction of an all-volunteer Research Advisory Committee, the project is being conducted by a university research team. This team will collect data from campers and staff over the next five years and will report their findings at ACA conferences and in various publications. A major result of the project will be the translation of the research finding into camp practices that create beneficial camper and staff outcomes.

Local Camp Research and Evaluation Efforts

The second dimension includes the research and evaluation efforts that occur at camps throughout the ACA community. These local efforts, focused on better understanding campers and staff experiences, help each camp offer a quality experience for youth. Building on ACA's existing evaluation tools and training resources, Research 360 will expand and improve ACA evaluation tools and increase our library of quick, easily accessible research and evaluation blogs, infographics, and videos. Through these efforts, Research 360 will remain focused on the individual camp and the campers, parents, staff, and communities they serve.

Want More Research 360?

The best way to participate in Research 360 is to follow our bimonthly blog in *ACA Now* or look for sessions related to Research 360 at ACA's National Conference and regional events over the course of the coming years. For fun, you can also watch (and share!) a short Research 360 cartoon on YouTube.

ACA research is exploring how camp prepares campers and staff
to thrive in college, in their early careers, *and* in their lives.

LEARN MORE

ACACAMPS.ORG