# Summer Camp and the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comprehensive Report of Multiple Studies

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# Executive Summary

The main purpose of this research was to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted summer camp stakeholders during the summer 2020 operating season. Stakeholders include camp directors and professionals, as well as campers and their families. In order to achieve the aim of understanding different experiences, three separate but interrelated studies were conducted.

This report includes data from the Camps and COVID-19 project, parent panel sample (camp-user and non-camp-user), and the National Youth Impact Study. Information about each study and the associated findings will be presented separately, followed by a conclusion section where the findings and takeaways are integrated.

For the Camps and COVID-19 project, 36 different camp professionals from ACA member camps across the United States each completed three interviews (early summer, mid-summer, and post summer). Camps were organized into three categories: regular or adapted programming, virtual or distance programming, or cancelled programming. Interviewees were prompted to discuss how COVID-19 impacted their programming decisions, how they were navigating the summer, and to critically reflect on their summer 2020 process. Results indicated that COVID-19 was somewhat of a polarizing issue for camps as some were able to adapt and modify in-person programming, while others did not feel this was the appropriate response. Generally, camp professionals were looking for community and opportunities to connect with others who were responding in similar ways. Participants across all three groups commented on the importance of making a programming decision early on and that staying committed to this decision was beneficial for success. A list of COVID-19-related practices was developed from these interviews and used in the two other COVID-19 studies presented in this report.

The Panel Survey study included both camp users (i.e., parents/caregivers whose children had participated in camp summers 2018 and/or 2019) and non-camp users (i.e., those whose children did not participate in summer camp) recruited from across the United States through an online survey company. The aim of this project was to understand children's summertime activity participation specific to summer 2020 and how this changed from expected participation due to COVID-19. Findings indicated that a large proportion of camp users had intended to send their children to day and/or overnight camp but did not during summer 2020 as programs were cancelled and/or parents did not feel comfortable given the pandemic. Generally, camp-user parents reported that not attending camp had a negative impact on their children. Findings indicated that the following practices are important for camp users to feel comfortable sending their children to camp during the pandemic: increased cleaning and sanitizing procedures, implementation of social distancing practices, mandating personal protective equipment (PPE), and COVID-19 testing (especially for overnight camps). Both the camp-user sample and the non-camp-user sample were asked to report on activities their children participated in during summer 2020 and how that compared to their expectations. Overall, these data indicated that youth spent less time than expected on family vacations,

playing sports, hanging out in person, and visiting museums, parks, and zoos, while they spent more time hanging out virtually, watching TV and shows, playing video games, and spending time with their families. A number of parents indicated that their children spent more time than expected attending virtual summer camp and most (70.5 percent) of these parents felt that virtual summer camp had a positive impact on their children.

The National Youth Impact Study is a longitudinal ACA research project. Participants in the study were originally recruited from a stratified sample of ACA-accredited camps across the country representative of different types of camps. These families all had a child who attended camp in summer 2018 and have been participating in surveys and optional interviews twice yearly since the beginning of the project. Data included in this COVID report are from Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 surveys. While additional questions were asked, the data included in this report are specific to activity participation during summer 2020 compared to summer 2019. Findings indicated that there was a decrease in the number of families whose children participated in activities outside the home. Of particular interest was a large decrease in number of families who had a child attend camp in summer 2020 as compared to summer 2019. Children from families with higher incomes spent more weeks in day camps, overnight camps, family vacations, sports, and arts and music than those from lower-income backgrounds. These data indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to widen the opportunity gap for summer activities for youth from lower-income families.

Data and findings from these three projects may be interpreted collectively and provide implications for the summer camp industry. These studies highlight the importance of summer camps making an operating decision early each season, adhering to various COVID-19 safety protocols, communicating COVID-19 procedures to families, and continuing to offer adapted and virtual programming to all families and youth, but specifically to those from lower-income backgrounds.

# Camps and COVID-19 Project

## Purpose

The primary purpose of the Camps and COVID Research Study was to better inform how ACA supports camps as they navigated summer 2020 and prepared for summer 2021. A secondary purpose of the study was to generate evidence that would position camp as a critical dimension of every young person's learning landscape and ACA as the trusted brand in safe and engaging camp experiences. The study was conducted as part of ACA's business research program. For additional information related to this study, see the abstract accepted to ACA's National Research Forum 2021 by Taylor Wycoff and Laurie Browne here (page 8).

## Population

All ACA member camps were invited to participate in this study.

## Methods

This study included two distinct but related phases: first, a preliminary recruitment phase comprised of an online opt-in survey, and second, a longitudinal interview phase consisting of three 30-minute semistructured interviews at three distinct time points over the course of summer 2020.

## Preliminary Online Opt-In Survey

Information about the study and an invitation to participate was sent to all ACA member camps as part of a preliminary opt-in survey via the weekly ACA newsletter on May 26, 2020. As part of the survey, camps were informed of the opportunity to participate in three 30-minute interviews with an ACA research team member at three different time points throughout the summer. If interested, camps were given the option to consent to participation and asked to provide contact information for follow-up.

## Longitudinal Interviews

Of the total 295 survey respondents, 220 expressed interest in participating in the longitudinal interview phase of the study. These camps were organized into three categories according to their programming plans at the time of the survey:

(1) Camps that were offering regular programming or an adapted version of their regular programming for summer 2020
(2) Camps that were shifting to virtual or distance programming, or another new program format for summer 2020
(3) Camps that were cancelling all summer 2020 programming

From these categories, 10 camps were randomly selected and contacted to schedule a first interview. If a camp did not respond after two attempts from an ACA research team member, another camp from that same category was randomly selected. Five additional member camps were added to the sample via partner outreach. Individuals from a total of 36 camps

participated in the second phase of this project, the longitudinal interviews, which are detailed in this report.

**Reporting**
Example responses relating to themes presented in this report are included wherever applicable.

## Interview Sample
Respondents from a total of 36 camps participated throughout the course of this study. Most participants completed all three interview time points, however one respondent participated in the first interview phase only, another respondent participated in the first and second interviews only, and a third respondent participated in only the second and third interviews. In total, 104 interviews were conducted with 36 different respondents. All respondents were in some form of higher-level leadership role (e.g., executive director, camp director, CEO). All five ACA regions were represented, as well as a diversity of business models and operating budgets. Nearly half the camps participating reported offering a combination of day, overnight, and rental programming in a normal year, followed by camps that typically offered overnight camp only. A detailed breakdown of demographic information for the 36 participating camps is included in Appendix A.

## Analysis
Data for this study was collected via semistructured interviews that were conducted in three rounds. Round one interviews (termed "Early Summer") took place between June 3, 2020, and July 7, 2020; round two interviews (termed "Mid-Summer") took place between July 30, 2020, and August 19, 2020; round three interviews (termed "Post Summer") took place between October 12, 2020, and October 30, 2020. All conversations were audio recorded by an ACA research team member (with participants' permission) and lasted between 20–60 minutes.

Extensive notes were taken throughout the duration of the interviews. Interview notes were reviewed and analyzed inductively to identify common emergent themes.

## Findings
Participants completed three rounds of interviews. The results are presented by interview stage. Interview guides are included in Appendix B at the end of this report.

## Early Summer Interview Themes
These interviews occurred throughout June and early July. They focused primarily on the decisions that camp directors made regarding summer programming and how they came to these decisions. Participants were asked what their plans were for the summer season and factors they took into consideration while making these decisions. Common themes and supporting evidence are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Early Summer Interview Themes and Supporting Participant Quotes

| Theme | Participant Quotes |
|---|---|
| Delayed release of information | "The information was good, but it came too late." |
| Desire for definitive operating guidelines | Prefer a shift from "you should think about this" to "we know this works" or "this is how you put it into practice." |
| Desire for additional ACA support | "They sort of came out with guidelines — they weren't really helpful for us. Can't tell you how many **camps canceled because of that, because they didn't feel supported**."<br><br>"I**t felt like the ACA had created this 'us against them,' you're either open or you're closed and we're fighting against each other.** I don't think the ACA did a good enough job about playing the middle and making everybody feel supported."<br><br>"Determining **how to keep us together as one**, will be an important challenge to face." |
| Value of community, connection, and conversation | "It would be nice to know who else is in this little boat. A lot of people who aren't on this boat aren't very kind. Would be helpful to connect camps that aren't running, so we know we're not the only ones. Have used phrase 'survivor's guilt' occasionally. I'm struggling . . . but can I post anything on social media when I know 400 of them are other camp professionals who aren't running . . . **This year, community is different. Usually, can all come together despite difference, but this year is different. Yes, we're all in camp, but it feels very polarized.**" |
| COVID-19 as a polarizing issue for the industry | " . . . I honestly think that like right now people are frowning upon the camps that are going. **There's been a lot of pressure to cancel** like . . . a lot of pressure. Summer Professionals group on Facebook, there's so much pressure. It's disgusting. On social media, there's a lot of pressure for sure."<br><br>"I understand them wanting to stay neutral for every reason. And I also am feeling like . . . you know, what's going on here when most of us are making these decisions and **the camps that are running are getting really pissed every time another camp cancels**. And I know that everybody has their own feelings, that the camps that are running don't want more camps canceling; the camps that are canceling might feel like the camps that are running aren't taking it seriously."<br><br>**"Any time we mention we're going to open we get ripped apart**. I have kind of stopped saying anything because it's not right for everybody, and we know that." |

## Mid-Summer Interview Themes

During interviews that took place mid-summer (i.e., end of July and August), participants were asked questions about the programs they were offering and how the summer was progressing. There was a clear difference in mood between camps that ran regular or modified programming (be it camp-in-a-box, virtual camp, in-person camp) and camps that were closed for the season. In general, participants from camps that operated had much more energy, and conversations were lively, dynamic, and spirited — and often hopeful. Those that were closed were much quieter in tone and seemed much lower in morale.

During the mid-summer interviews some camps reported experiencing cases of COVID-19 in campers, staff, and camp parents. In total, four participants described COVID-19 cases, their response to this, and direction for the remaining weeks of summer. Two participants reported their camps closed for the season (one camp that served rental groups and a day camp), while two day camps closed temporarily as a result of confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Themes and supporting evidence from mid-summer interviews are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mid-Summer Interview Themes and Supporting Participant Quotes

| Theme | Participant Quotes |
|---|---|
| Importance of committing to an early operating decision | "I think we were one of the first camps to announce we were switching to virtual, but **that early decision made all the difference**." <br><br> "**We stuck to our policy once we were in it.** Absolutely didn't allow any outside influence into this camp." |
| **Regular or Adapted Programming** | |
| Gratitude | "Millions of kids aren't getting to go to camp this summer, so we're all really lucky to be here." <br><br> "Every day that we're able to keep running is a gift." |
| Additional stress on staff | "[COVID-19 protocols] put **a lot of extra pressure on staff**, they felt very alone. What if one kid had to go to the bathroom, and still keep 2 eyes on 10 kids at one time when they're super active. So they have felt very stressed, it's a really big adjustment for them." <br><br> "A different level of stress is the uncertainty of where they're going in the fall. Their schools or their colleges not opening, things like that. I don't think we saw a lot of increased anxiety as it related to working with kids specifically, but more over just **where is their life heading**." |

| | |
|---|---|
| | "In a matter of two weeks, **their entire life changed**. Who knows long-term implications? Out of state four-year school vs. in-state community college. It's completely different. For everything, all of the feelings that go along with that for them, has been tough to walk through those feelings with them. A lot of them didn't have prom, graduation, traditional things. All in the span of five months. It's been tough for them, I feel bad for them. And it just continues. Some are more concerned about family members, grandparents, concerned about working and being able to see grandparents and not wanting to put them at risk, **different stressors that they never had to think about before**." |
| Camper behavior | "Campers were generally more emotional, more rambunctious, but also more respectful of rules (fewer behavior issues overall)." |
| Response when there were COVID-19 cases present | Closing for the season: "A rental group that came in actually didn't follow the protocols that were set out and wound up having 76 students get sick with COVID. So after that happened, we, and the board looked at the risk for the rest of the summer and **decided to close down after that week**."

"About three weeks in, a parent came to pick up and let us know they'd had a positive COIVD test. At that point, **we immediately shut down and canceled camp.** Luckily, no one else, staff or children, that we know of has tested positive."

Temporary closures: "We did end up having two cases at two different points in time that we had to shut down for a day. So we experienced all of that and survived it and **opened back up and continued running the rest of the summer**."

"We had a situation a week and a half ago. [. . .] After that happened, we got to see the emotional fallout. [. . .] Having this happen really messed with their heads. **A bunch quit** and didn't show up for a few days . . . from within, **it shook us**." |
| Why there were no COVID-19 cases present | Healthy participants: "Parents sent us healthy kids and that's everything."

Buy-in from all the constituents involved: "I would say at a very bare-bones place, the buy-in from every constituent or person who matters in this scenario, **the buy-in from the parents and the kids,** that this was important to them and therefore they were going to do the two weeks prior to camp and minimize exposure of the children before they came to |

|  | camp. **The buy-in of the staff** who did the same thing two weeks prior to their coming here and then two weeks at camp and then never leaving camp all summer long. Yeah, so **the camp families and the staff really buying-in to what had to happen**." |
|  | Luck: "We have had plenty of scares — half-dozen of staff tested with suspicion from symptoms. Probably about a dozen kids tested. So far, every result has come back as negative. I kinda feel like **we've been extremely lucky**." |
|  | "One hundred percent luck, **I would not believe anyone if they said that their campers and staff stuck to the letter of the law** with the masks and distancing and handwashing, etc. That certainly did not happen here. All of the precautions were here as policies in place, but adherence couldn't possibly be 100 percent all the time." |
|  | Geographic location and experience with COVID restrictions: "What we faced in March and April, the rest of the country is facing now . . ." |
|  | "We're very lucky to be in the state we're in." |
|  | "Part of it, because our state didn't take it seriously, we were given the opportunity to run, which a lot of camps weren't able to do. Just being in [our state] with the relaxed policies made it able for us to run." |
| **Virtual Camp** | |
| Ability to connect | "Didn't think it was going to be possible, but still had campers crying ("good camp crying") on the last day of virtual camp." |
| **Moving Forward What Camps Need** | |
| Need to share information | "Hoping that the camps that did run that were successful, even the ones that had to close because of COVID, or camps where the town is upset because camp brought COVID into the town . . . **we're hoping to learn what are the best practices** that came out of this?" |
| Fundraising | "We've been **financially devastated** . . . so I've been spending a lot of time fundraising, but we don't pull from a very affluent group."

"Fundraising. A big part of what we're trying to do now is trying to **make up lost revenue**." |

| Desire for industry-wide standardized protocols | "**Standards when it comes to COVID-19** in 2021 . . . some of the accreditation standards are really prescriptive on what you can and can't do; I wish rollout for COVID was similar to that."<br><br>"What is everyone's definition of COVID free? **We probably all have different definitions.** And how are they testing for it? Are they using actual tests? Taking temperatures? So when they say it, how are they doing it? And measuring it?" |
|---|---|
| Connection with others | A strong desire from camps of all types to be better connected with "camps like us" (e.g., other camps that do canoeing, other urban camps, etc.) |
| **Summary 2021 Plans** ||
| Varying approaches to summer 2021 | "We're approaching summer 2021 as if it will be a **repeat of this summer.**"<br><br>"We're **confident there will be a vaccine** by next summer, so we're looking at **little changes** we can add to bolster our old model." |

**Post-Summer Interview Themes**

The final round of interviews occurred after the summer season (i.e., October 2020), and participants were asked to retrospectively reflect on their summer and consider their operating strategies more critically. The themes and supporting evidence from the final round of interviews is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Post-Summer Interview Themes and Supporting Participant Quotes

| Theme | Participant Quote |
|---|---|
| **All Types of Camp Programming** ||
| Early decisions | "**We didn't wait to see what would happen**. We started planning immediately. We formed our team and said, 'What if we have to go that way? Who will do this now? What are the plans to have camp?' I think **once we made the decision** that we were going to have camp, for me, **it was a relief**. Now I know where I'm going. I can now plan everything that needs to happen because we're aiming this way. We did have part of our team working if state said we can't open, what will we do. And we told parents we're not totally in control. But **once we had made decisions, it felt like a relief**."<br><br>"You have to create a plan, and **you have to stick to the plan**. It's one thing to develop it and another thing to stick to |

| | |
|---|---|
| | it. Our department of health relaxed guidelines just a week before camp started . . . so we *could* have filled our cabins, but we still chose to stick to the plan, which was 50-percent capacity." |
| Communication | "Having an attitude of collaboration and open communication . . . Being open with families as we are having a concept of what the summer will look like. We already put a part on **our website talking about our COVID response**. It alludes to 'we don't know yet.' But **open communication**, which we've always tried to strive for, is even **more important right now**." "It reinforced the necessity for **strong communication with parents**. Despite everything we did, we could have done more. Parents don't like to read, and it became more apparent as summer wore on . . . coming up with **creative ways to communicate** because they're clearly not reading things." |

| **Closed Camps** |
|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Looking forward | Ready to begin planning for summer 2021: "That said, the fact that **we get to plan camp** is such a different **feeling of positivity and optimism**. Even though there are more challenges, I'll take that any day over having to send cancelations out." Anxious about summer 2021: "Number one is **trying to get the motivation back,** so do I even want to run camp next year . . . It's a ton of work in a normal situation, and to do all of that with the real possibility that [there will be mandated closures] . . . I've looked at next summer assuming [there's no closures], **I believe we can have camp**." |
| Changes to summer 2020 decision | "We **made the best decision we could** with the information we had." "The decision we made to not have camp was **the right decision at that time**. Knowing what we knew at the time and seeing how things were going, that was the right thing." |
| Reasons not to open | Business models and state restrictions: "I think there's a reality that **we can have camp**, it's just **what is it going to require and cost**, etc.? We're on a hamster wheel of not knowing, and some of it was even out of my hands." |

| **Virtual Camp** |
|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Acknowledgement of success | "I didn't think it was possible, but I had campers crying on the last day of Zoom camp because they didn't want it to end." |
| Possibilities of continuing virtual programming | From a medically-focused camp: "We'll **definitely keep online components throughout**. We serve an 11-state region, and we've found that kids we normally only see once a year, we now see regularly. We have kids who have been too sick to come or have had to stay in hospital. **I think we'll keep some of those elements probably forever.**" |
| Pressure to open | Regardless of offering virtual programming, directors faced "external pressures to reopen and do what we've always done." |
| **Regular/Adapted Camp** | |
| New opportunities | "This is forcing us to **dream up new and different things**, not just doing the same thing over and over." |
| Back to basics programming | "**Kids don't appear to need all the bells and whistles** that we had thought. It would have been great if we had been able to open ropes course and pools, but **they survived without it**." |
| Challenges to adaptation | "I tell people all the time now, it would be way easier to bow out of this thing, say, 'Forget it, **this is way too hard**, I'm going to the beach this summer.' The harder route is let's figure this out, and **how do we make this work**?"<br><br>"It's been fascinating to talk to other camps that opened; none of us looked the same. **We all approached things differently** . . . camps are going to be able to make things work for their unique program. And everybody should be confident in that. Unfortunately, no one can wave the magic wand and hand them the plan. **It does take work, but everyone should be able to achieve it**." |

### Additional Findings — COVID-19 Practices and Protocols

Although not the focus of interviews, camp directors who offered in-person adapted programming discussed different COVID-19 practices and protocols that allowed them to operate safely during summer 2020. This included various nonpharmaceutical interventions, such as social distancing, use of cohorts or small groups, and use of personal protective equipment, such as masks, for example.

Based on information gathered from interviews that took place during the early and mid-summer interviews, as well as in conversation with the Association of Camp Nursing, a list of practices and protocols related to camp operations and management of the COVID-19 pandemic was developed. These practices and protocols were included in questions in the parent panel survey project, which is detailed in the next section of this report.

## Summary

Overall results from the Camps and COVID-19 project indicated that COVID-19 created many challenges for camps during summer 2020. The pandemic and its associated impacts on camp directors' abilities and decisions either to offer camp programming or not led to some dissention and disagreement. Camp directors all sought community among others who were in similar positions with programming decisions. It was clear that directors who made decisions earlier in the season, communicated this to camp families, and stayed committed to their decisions were more successful and reflected on the summer in more positive ways. Findings from this study offer important implications and recommendations for summer 2021. That is, directors should make a programming decision as early as possible, clearly communicate their decision to all staff and camper families, seek support from and engage in conversations with other directors who have made similar programming decisions, and in the face of challenges, stay committed to the decision they have made.

# Parent Panel Survey

## Purpose

The Parent Panel Survey was developed with the intention of gaining parent perspectives about their children's camp attendance and other summertime activities in summer 2020 specifically related to COVID-19. Additional non-COVID-related questions were asked, but the data in this report is specific to COVID-related questions only. This study was funded by the American Camp Association.

## Population

The panel survey was comprised of two different groups, the "camp-user panel" sample and the "non-camp-user panel" sample.

The "user" sample was parents of children ages 7–12 To be included in the study, parents must have had at least one child who attended two or more weeks of day or overnight camp in summer of 2018 and/or 2019. That is, all parents had children who attended camp prior to summer 2020.

The "nonuser" sample was parents of children ages 9–12 who had not attended camp for two or more weeks.

## Methods

### Online Survey

Participants were recruited through a Qualtrics online panel survey. This method allowed for targeted recruitment of parents with children 7–14 years old. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics survey software during November and December 2020.

### Response

Camp-User Sample

A total of 506 individuals responded to the camp-user panel survey, however, not all participants responded to every question. Due to the recruitment method, it is difficult to determine response rate. Responses took, on average, 19.86 minutes and ranged from 4.28 minutes to 1,042 minutes. In the case of longer response times, the window that contained the online survey may have been left open on an internet browser before submitting responses.

Non-Camp-User Sample

A total of 513 individuals responded to the non-camp-user survey. Again, not all participants responded to every question, so response rates may differ in the findings section. Response rate is difficult to determine as participant recruitment was conducted by a thid party, Qualtrics. On average, responses took 19.85 minutes and ranged from 4.58 minutes to 348 minutes. Again, longer response times may indicate an internet browser that was left open for a period of time prior to submitting the response.

Detailed demographic information for both the camp-user and non-camp-user panels is included in Appendix C at the end of this report.

**Reporting**
Responses to relevant COVID-19 questions are presented below.

### Analysis
Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data and techniques were question dependent. Frequencies were used to identify various participant responses and means provided average responses among groups.

### Findings
Findings will be presented by question. As some different questions were asked of the camp-user panel and the non-camp-user panel, the description will indicate whose responses are included.

### Expected Camp Attendance 2020 — Camp-User Panel
Of the camp-user panel sample, a total of 448 parents (88.5 percent) expected to send their children to camp, and 58 parents (11.5 percent) did not expect to send their children to camp prior to COVID-19. Of all parents in the sample, 249 (49.25 percent) expected to send their children to overnight camp, and 339 (67 percent) expected to send their children to day camp. Numbers do not total the sample size, as some parents expected to send their children to both day and overnight camp.

Figure 1. Parent Expectations of Summer Camp Attendance Summer 2020

**DID YOU EXPECT TO SEND YOUR CHILD TO CAMP SUMMER 2020?**

■ Yes  ■ No

11%

89%
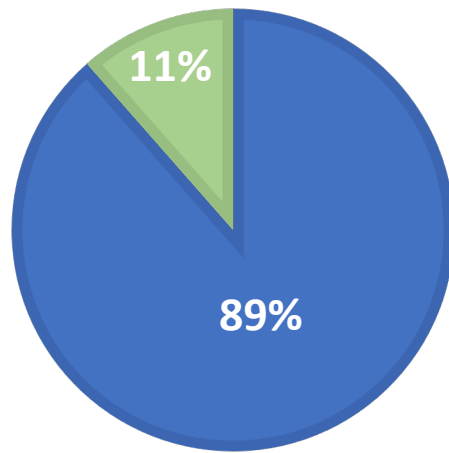
**Actual Camp Attendance 2020 — Camp-User Panel**
Of the camp-user panel sample survey respondents, 197 parents (38.9 percent) had a child who attended camp in summer 2020, and 309 parents (61.1 percent) did not have a child who attended camp in summer 2020.

Figure 2. Actual Camp Attendance Summer 2020

## DID YOUR CHILD ATTEND CAMP SUMMER 2020?

■ Yes ■ No

**39%**

**61%**
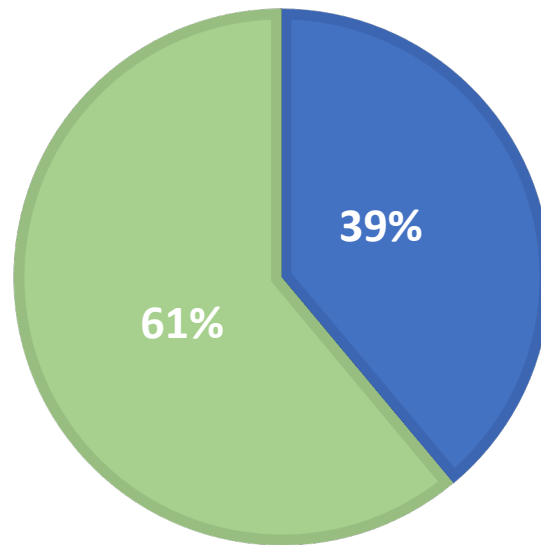
**Impact of Not Attending Camp 2020 — Camp-User Panel**
Parents in the camp-user panel sample were asked what the impact of not attending camp was on their children.

Table 4. Impact of Not Attending Camp Summer 2020

| Expected to attend overnight camp but did not | | |
|---|---|---|
| Negative | 76 responses | 55.1% |
| Neutral | 44 responses | 31.9% |
| Positive | 18 responses | 13.0% |
| Total | 138 | |
| Expected to attended day camp but did not | | |
| Negative | 101 responses | 50.2% |
| Neutral | 73 responses | 36.3% |
| Positive | 27 responses | 13.4% |
| Total | 201 | |

For the most part, parents felt their children were negatively impacted by not attending camp in the summer of 2020.

Figure 3. Impact of Not Attending Day Camp Summer 2020

**IMPACT OF NO DAY CAMP**

Positive
14%

Negative
50%

Neutral
36%

Figure 4. Impact of Not Attending Overnight Camp Summer 2020

**IMPACT OF NO OVERNIGHT CAMP**

Positive
13%

Negative
55%

Neutral
32%

## Reasons for Not Attending Camp 2020 — Camp-User Panel
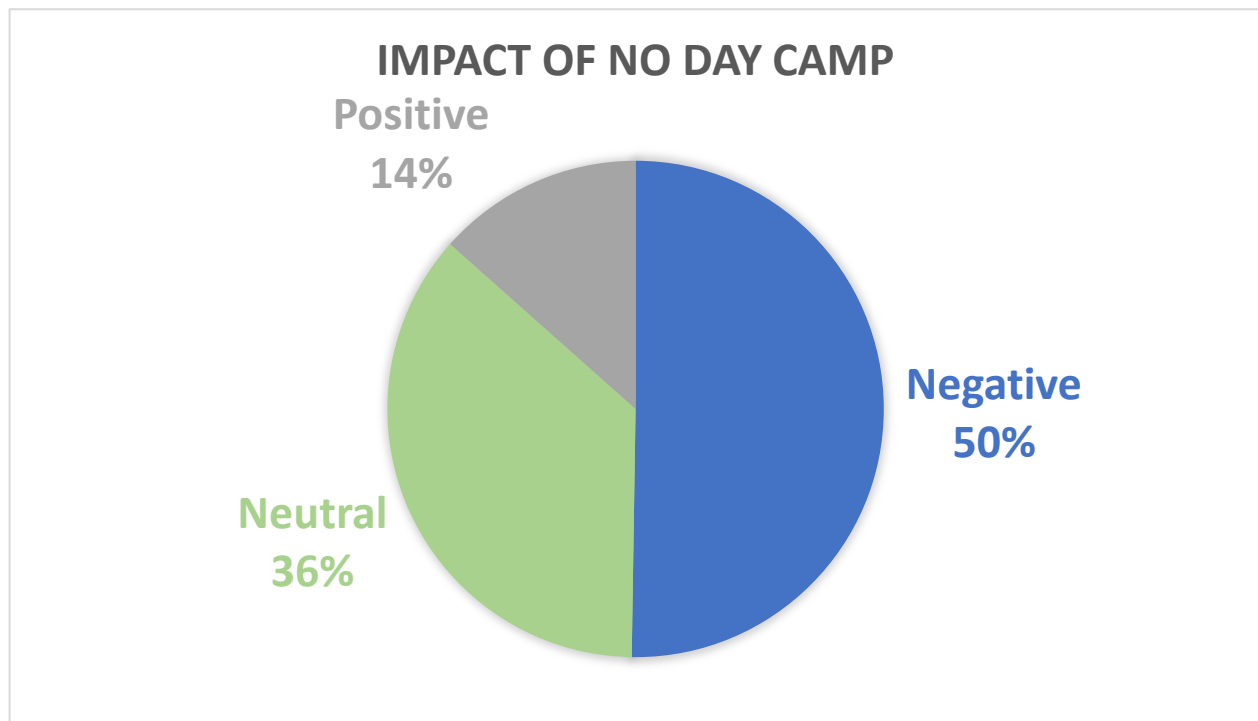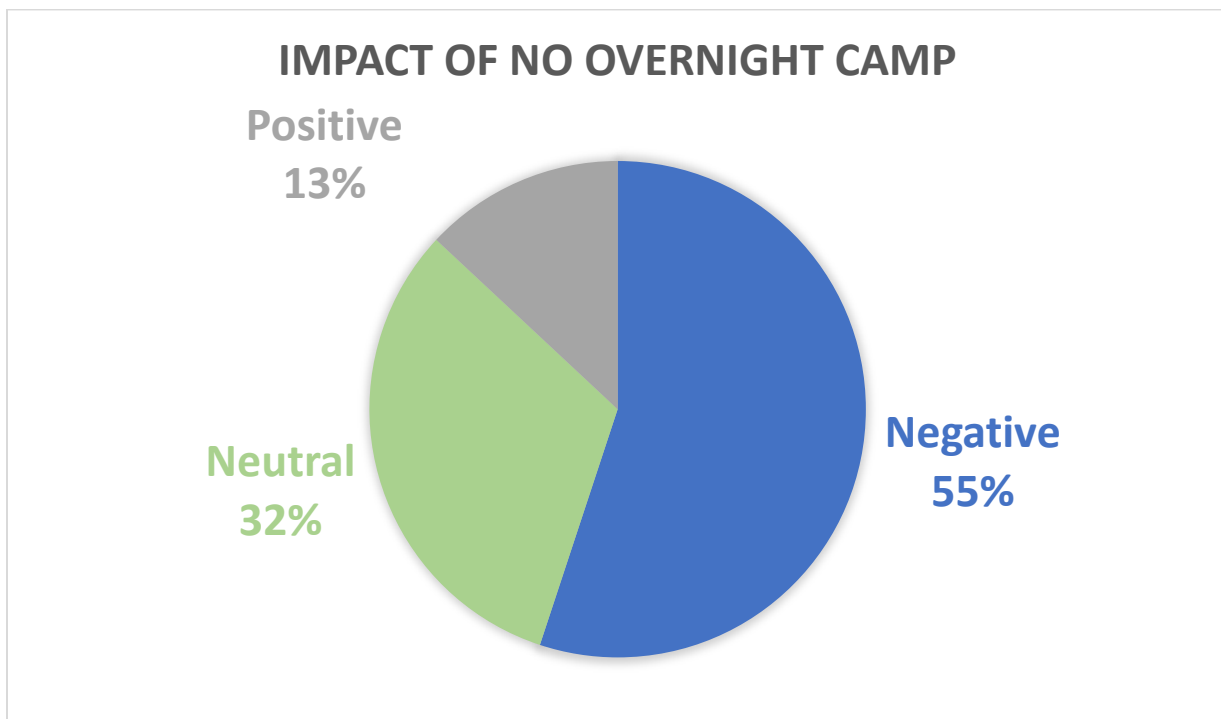
Parents in the camp-user panel sample who were able to send their child to camp but chose not to (i.e., camp programming was offered in some capacity) were asked additional questions. This is a relatively small sample size as many camps were canceled, and parents were not able to choose whether or not to send their children to camp. Parents who had the choice to send their children were asked to select the reasons why their children did not attend camp during summer 2020. Parents were able to select up to three factors. The list of factors was determined based on interviews with camp practitioners during early and mid-summer months (Camps and COVID-19 Project) as well as with guidance from the Association of Camp Nursing. The Camps and COVID-19 project is detailed in the previous section of this report.

The factors were separated by day and overnight camp and camp-based nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) related to COVID-19 and external factors (those occurring outside of camp). NPIs were listed as being insufficient, inadequate, lacking, or poor, indicating that the reasons why parents did not send their children to camp were because they believed these NPIs were not present at camp. The top three factors for both NPIs and external considerations are emphasized in green.

Table 5. Factors Impacting Decision Not to Send Child to Overnight Camp Summer 2020

| Overnight Camp | |
| --- | --- |
| **Nonpharmaceutical Interventions** (Lack of or inadequate) | **Number of responses** |
| Temperature screening | 12 |
| Communications from camp | 7 |
| Quarantine | 13 |
| COVID-19 testing of campers and staff | 19 |
| Small groupings | 12 |
| Sanitization and cleaning | 14 |
| Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) | 16 |
| Social distancing | 21 |
| **External Factors** | **Number of responses** |
| Health concerns | 35 |
| Other opportunities for child | 6 |
| Did not trust camp to manage COVID | 25 |
| Child friends were not attending | 8 |
| Others not sending | 6 |
| Trusted officials said no | 15 |
| No vaccine available | 20 |

Figure 5. Nonpharmaceutical Interventions Impacting Decision Not to Send Child to Overnight Camp Summer 2020

Figure 6. External Factors Impacting Decision Not to Send Child to Overnight Camp Summer 2020
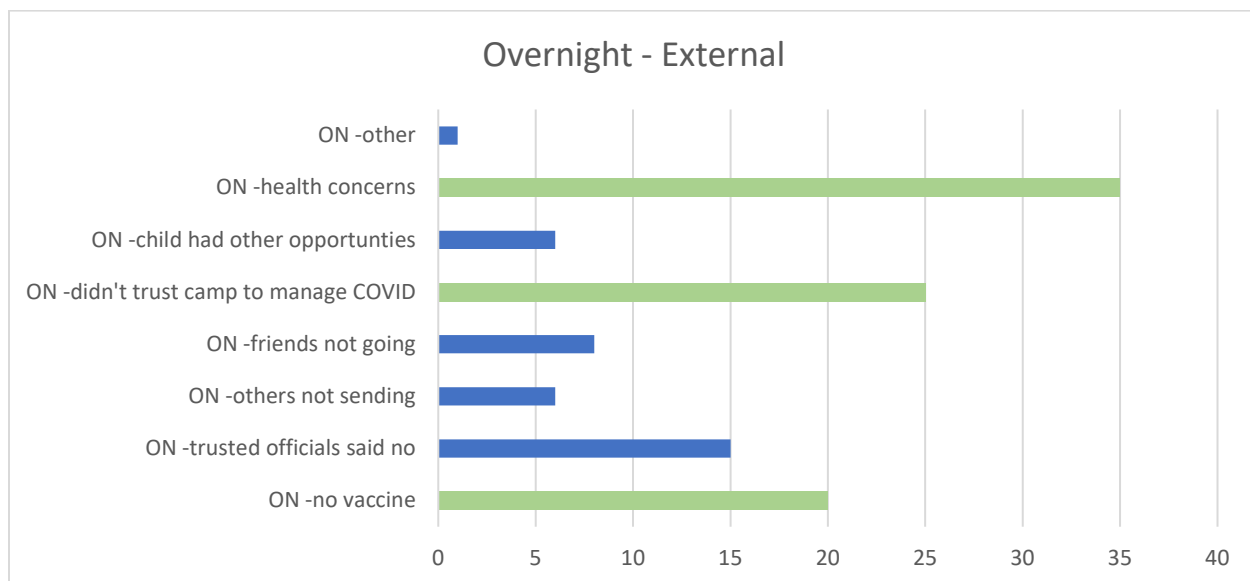


Table 6. Factors Impacting Decision Not to Send Child to Day Camp Summer 2020

| Day Camp | |
|---|---|
| **Nonpharmaceutical Interventions** (Lack of or inadequate) | **Number of responses** |
| Temperature screening | 9 |
| Communications from camp | 5 |
| COVID-19 testing of campers and staff | 16 |
| Small groupings | 19 |
| Sanitization and cleaning | 17 |

| Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) | 14 |
|---|---|
| Social distancing | 32 |
| **External Factors** | **Number of responses** |
| Health concerns | 48 |
| Other opportunities for child | 2 |
| Did not trust camp to manage COVID | 29 |
| Child friends were not attending | 5 |
| Others not sending | 8 |
| Trusted officials said no | 17 |
| No vaccine available | 26 |

Figure 7. Nonpharmaceutical Interventions Impacting Decision Not to Send Child to Day Camp Summer 2020
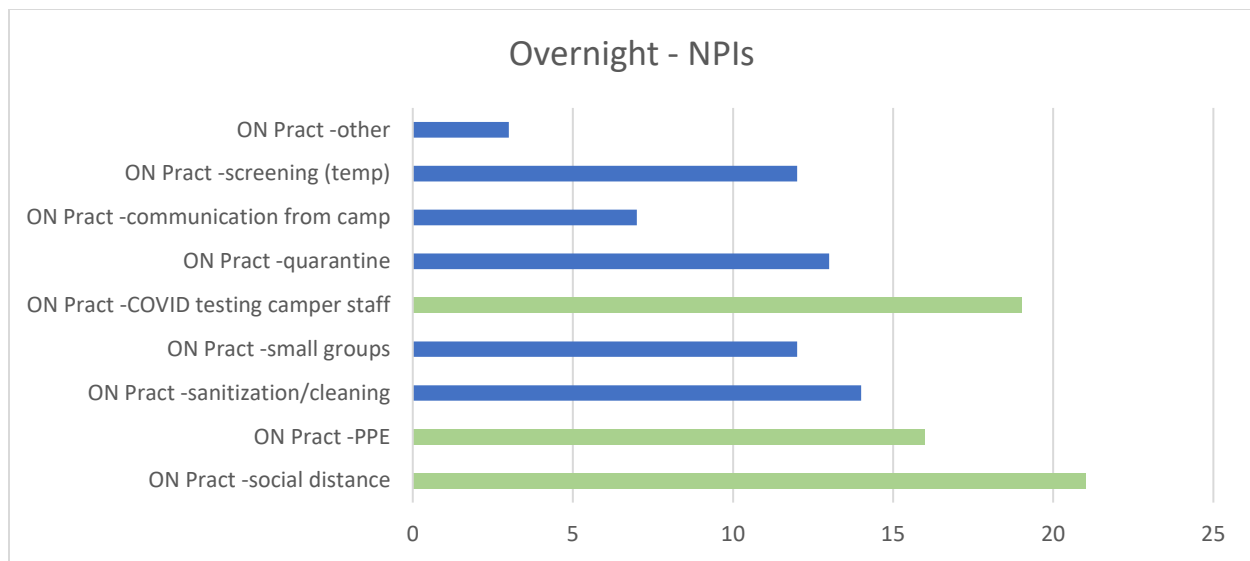


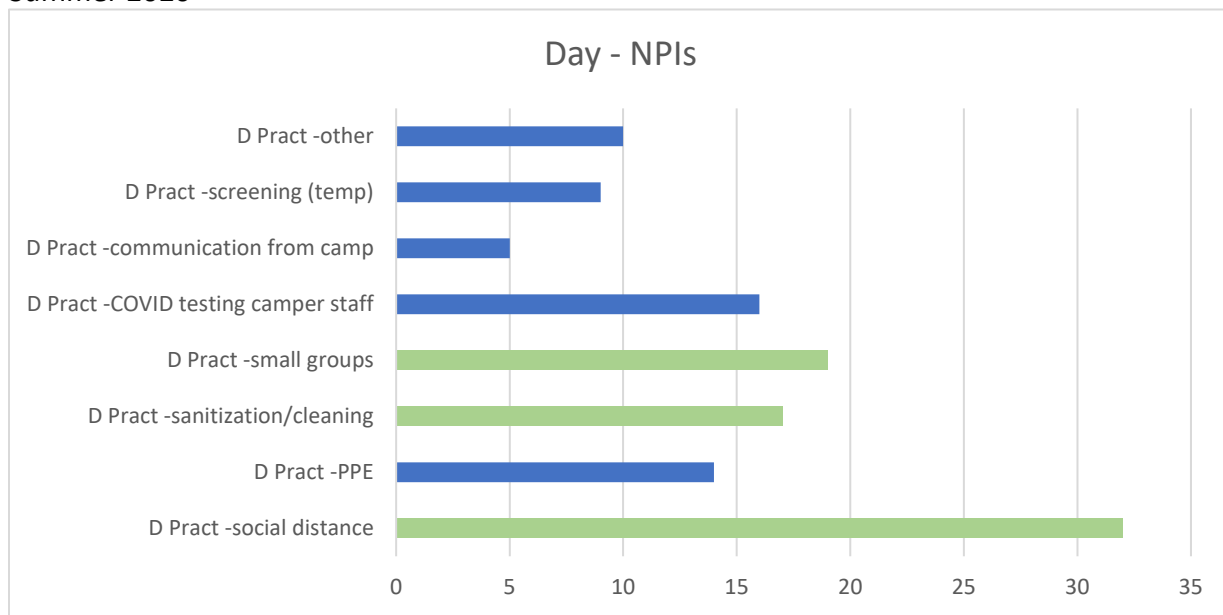Figure 8. External Factors Impacting Decision Not to Send Child to Day Camp Summer 2020
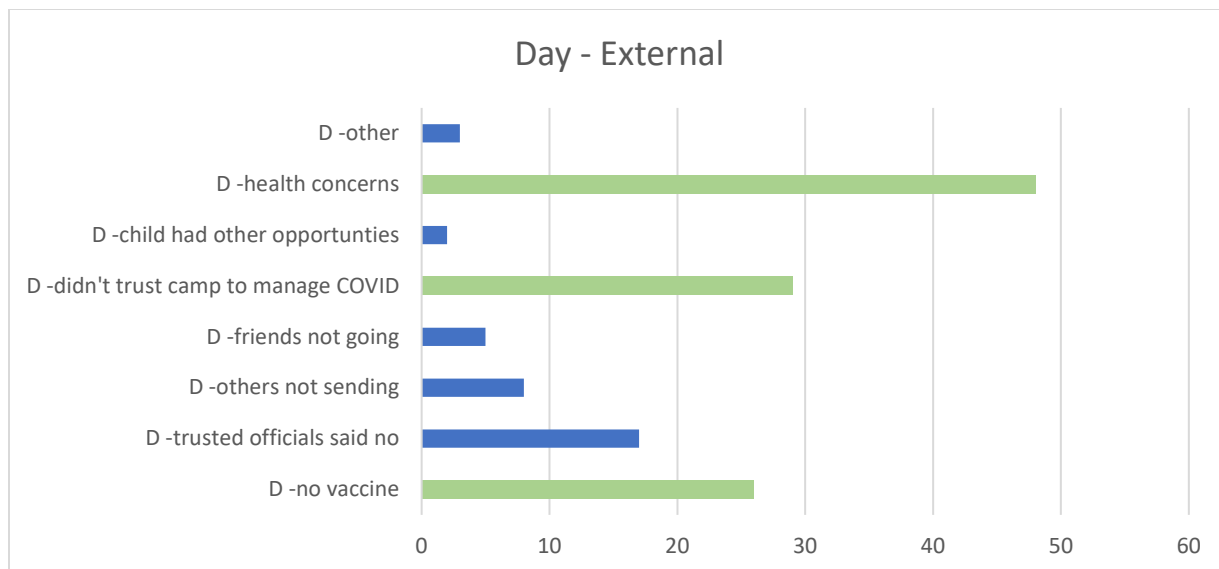
Day - External

In terms of external factors, overall, campers' health concerns were a top priority and reason why parents did not send their children to camp. Parents also were hesitant to send their children because a vaccine was not available, and they did not trust camps to manage COVID-19.

In terms of internal factors, or camp practices, parents of both day and overnight campers prioritized social-distancing protocols, and parents of overnight campers felt testing was a viable option for safe camp practices.

### Importance of Factors for Those Who Did Send a Child to Camp — Camp-User Panel

Parents in the camp-user panel sample who sent their children to camp in summer 2020 were asked about the importance of nonpharmaceutical interventions (i.e., COVID-19-related camp practices). This included 179 respondents. Responses were on a 10-point scale from least important to most important. The average of most responses is above 8 points, indicating that all NPIs are quite important. These factors were also determined from the early and mid-summer interviews during the Camps and COVID-19 study previously detailed, as well as with guidance from the Association of Camp Nursing.

Table 7. Importance of NPIs in Sending a Child to Camp Summer 2020

| Nonpharmaceutical Intervention | Average level of importance (10-point scale) |
|---|---|
| Social distancing | 8.81 |
| Personal protective equipment (masks) for campers and staff | 8.72 |
| Sanitization and cleaning procedures | 8.98 |
| Limited to small groupings (<10 only cabinmates) | 8.59 |
| Negative COVID-19 test before attending | 8.17 |
| Quarantine of 1 week for campers | 7.78 |

| | |
|---|---:|
| Good communication from the camp re: COVID-19 issues | 8.60 |
| Screening procedures for campers (e.g., temperature and symptom checks) | 8.67 |
| Individualized equipment for campers | 8.53 |
| Contactless drop-off/pickup at camp | 8.25 |
| Adapted programming to reduce risk | 8.53 |
| Adapted meals/snacks to reduce risk | 8.33 |
| Limited outside visitation to camp | 8.26 |

Figure 9. Importance of Nonpharmaceutical Interventions in Sending a Child to Camp Summer 2020
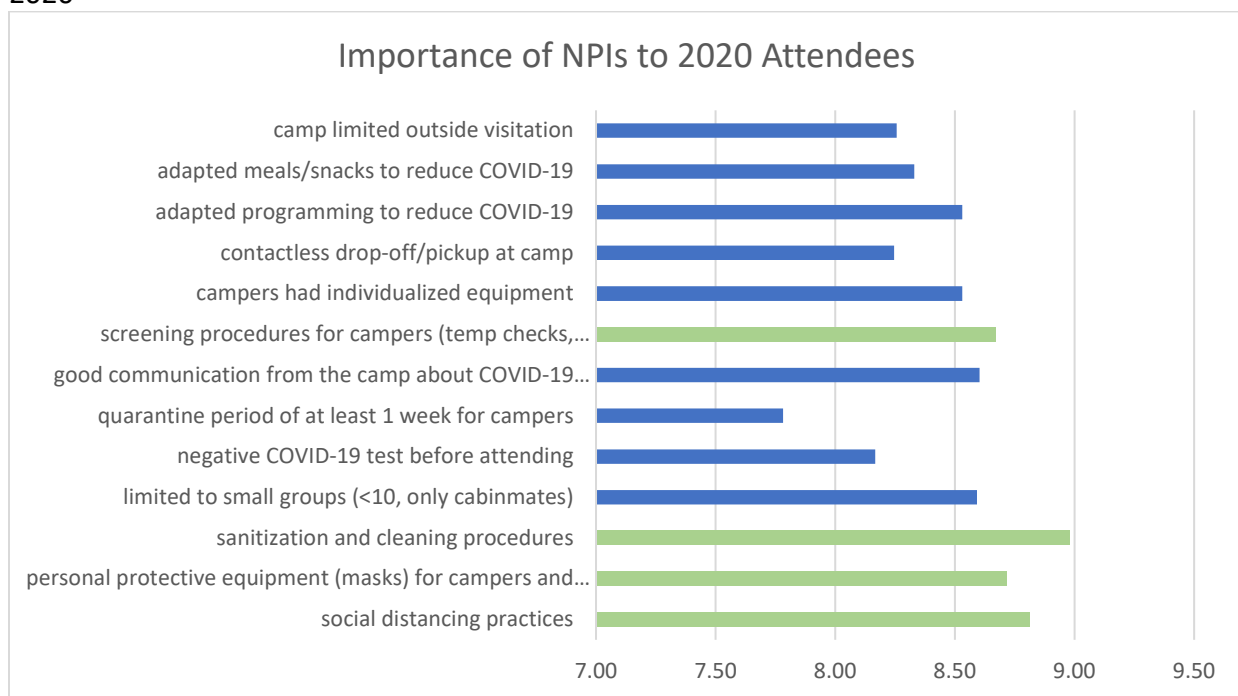


The top four important NPIs are sanitization and cleaning, social distancing, use of PPE (masks), and screening. These are highlighted in green on the preceding graph.

## Concerns for Sending a Child to Camp — Combined Camp-User and Non-Camp-User Panels

Both camp-user and non-camp-user panels were asked about concerns or constraints for sending their children to camp. Participants were asked to rate the constraints on a 1–5 scale (1 = not a concern, 5 = the main concern) indicating how much of a concern each item was in terms of sending their children to day camp and to overnight camp. The mid-point of the scale was 2.5, and some factors were quite a concern for parents. As to be expected and in light of COVID-19, the highest-rated constraint was infectious diseases, followed by supervision. Although not directly indicated, it may be that some parents indicated supervision was a concern in relation to adhering to COVID-19 protocols and safety practices.

Figure 10. Parental Concerns for Sending a Child to Camp Summer 2020



Parental Concerns for Sending Child to Camp

Day Camp    Overnight Camp
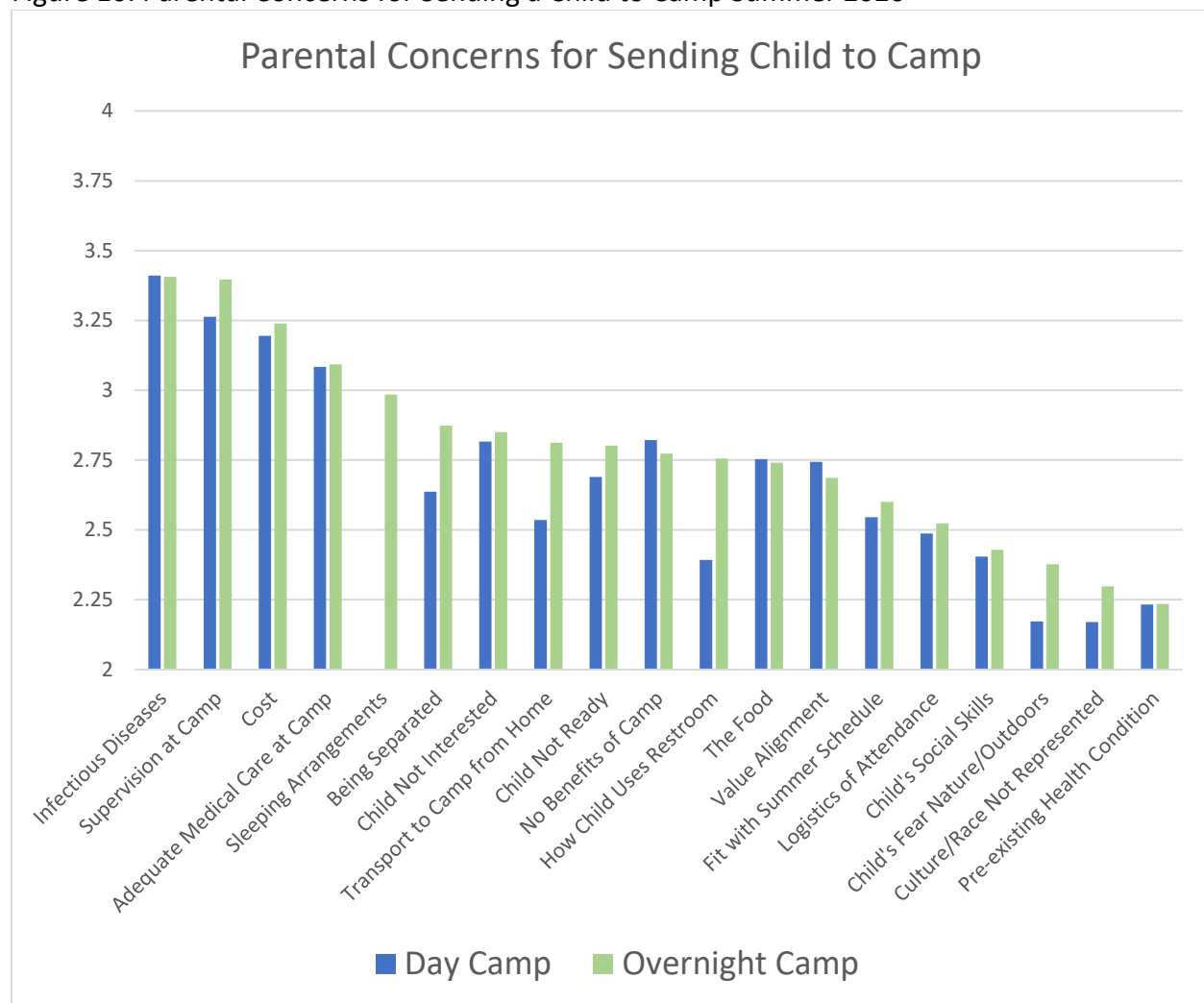
**Negotiation Strategies — Combined Camp-User and Non-Camp-User Panel**

After participants identified concerns or constraints for sending their children to camp, they were asked to select ways that would help them overcome these factors to send their children to camp. Some negotiation strategies are specific to concerns (e.g., constraint: the food at overnight camp; negotiation strategy: see a menu), whereas other are more general strategies camps can employ to build trust and help families feel more comfortable sending their children to camp (e.g., parental visit). COVID-19 communication (communication to parents and families of COVID-19-related protocols and practices such as sanitization and cleaning, social distancing, use of PPE) was the most commonly selected negotiation strategy. Similarly, other top-reported strategies of speaking with camp staff and offering a parent visit are strategies for building parent trust in camp's ability to manage the pandemic. Offering financial aid was also a commonly reported negotiation strategy and may be reflective of the current economic climate due to COVID-19.

Figure 11. Most Commonly Reported Strategies to Negotiate Constraints to Attending Camp

## Commonly Reported Negotiation Strategies

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| SAFETY COMMUNICATION | 90 |
| SEE MENU | 205 |
| ATTEND WITH FRIEND | 287 |
| TRUSTED ORGANIZATION | 298 |
| CHILD INTEREST | 387 |
| SPEAK WITH OTHER PARENTS | 397 |
| REPUTATION | 407 |
| FINANCIAL AID | 760 |
| SPEAK WITH STAFF | 761 |
| PARENTAL VISIT | 855 |
| COVID COMMUNICATION | 971 |

Legend: COVID Communication, Parental Visit, Speak with Staff, Financial Aid, Reputation, Speak with Other Parents, Child Interest, Trusted Organization, Attend with Friend, See Menu, Safety Communication

**Summer 2020 Activity Reports — Combined Camp-User and Non-Camp-User Panels**
The following data is combined across both the camp-user and non-camp-user panel groups and thus includes data from 1,019 participants. These individuals were asked to report whether their children engaged in more, about the same, or less of a specific activity during the summer. If participants noted more or less time in an activity, they were also asked if this participation was positive, neutral, or negative for their children. Our reporting cutoff is 10 percent; thus, activities are only listed if more than 10 percent of respondents indicated that time spent in this activity differed from their expectations for their children during the summer (i.e., more or less activities).

Figure 12. Commonly Reported Activities Children Spent Less Time in Summer 2020
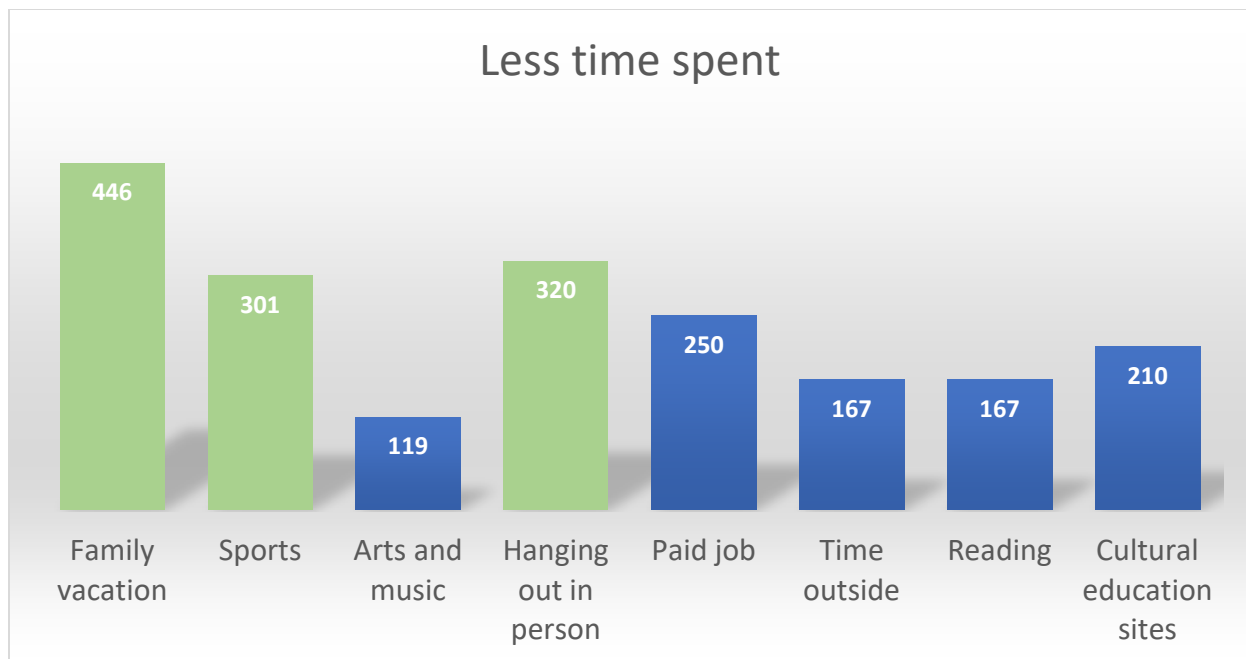
Table 7. Impact of Less Participation in Activities During Summer 2020

| Activity | Participants | Percent of participants impacted | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Family vacation | 446 | 6.5 | 35.9 | 57.6 |
| Sports | 301 | 8.3 | 25.9 | 65.8 |
| Arts and music | 119 | 14.3 | 31.9 | 53.8 |
| Hanging out in person | 320 | 6.9 | 31.6 | 61.6 |
| Paid job | 250 | 7.2 | 28.8 | 64.0 |
| Time outside | 167 | 11.4 | 29.3 | 59.3 |
| Reading | 167 | 11.4 | 28.7 | 59.9 |
| Cultural education sites | 210 | 4.8 | 31.4 | 63.8 |

The top three activities that parents reported their children spending less time in were family vacation, hanging out with others in person, and sports. These are represented in green in the preceding image. Parents largely reported negative impacts from spending less time in these activities.

Figure 13. Commonly Reported Activities Children Spent More Time in Summer 2020

**More time spent**

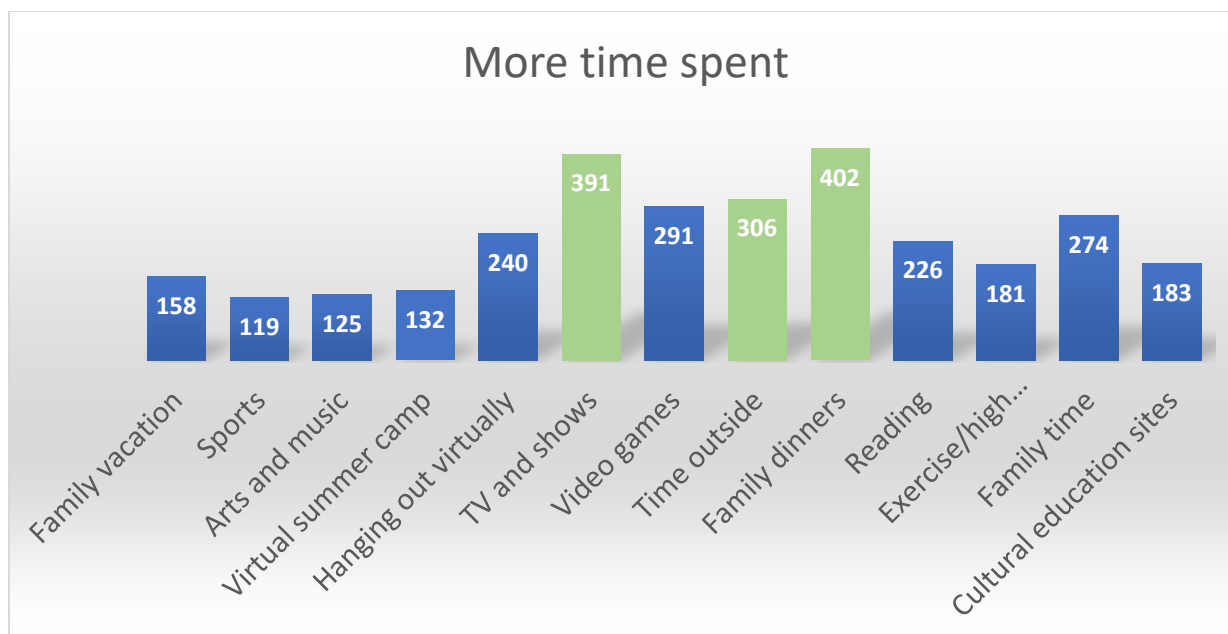| Activity | Value |
|---|---|
| Family vacation | 158 |
| Sports | 119 |
| Arts and music | 125 |
| Virtual summer camp | 132 |
| Hanging out virtually | 240 |
| TV and shows | 391 |
| Video games | 291 |
| Time outside | 306 |
| Family dinners | 402 |
| Reading | 226 |
| Exercise/high... | 181 |
| Family time | 274 |
| Cultural education sites | 183 |

Table 8. Impact of More Participation in Activities During Summer 2020

| Activity | Participants | Percent of participants impacted | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Family vacation | 158 | 83.5 | 11.4 | 5.1 |
| Sports | 119 | 79.8 | 16.8 | 3.4 |
| Arts and music | 125 | 73.6 | 23.2 | 3.4 |
| Virtual summer camp | 132 | 70.5 | 26.5 | 3.0 |
| Hanging out virtually | 240 | 50.4 | 42.1 | 7.5 |
| TV and shows | 391 | 32.0 | 44.8 | 23.3 |
| Video games | 291 | 33.3 | 35.1 | 31.6 |
| Time outside | 306 | 35.0 | 38.2 | 26.8 |
| Family dinners | 402 | 51.0 | 22.9 | 26.1 |
| Reading | 226 | 81.9 | 17.3 | 0.9 |
| Exercise/high exertion play | 181 | 85.1 | 13.3 | 1.7 |
| Family time | 274 | 81.4 | 16.4 | 2.2 |
| Cultural education sites | 183 | 83.1 | 15.3 | 1.6 |

The top three activities that parents reported their child spending more time doing were family dinners, watching TV and shows, and spending time outside. These are represented in green in the preceding above. Parents generally felt that more time having family dinners was positive for their children, while they felt that time spent watching TV and shows did not impact their children positively or negatively. Parents had fairly mixed opinions about how time spent outside impacted their children, with 38.2 percent reporting a neutral impact, 35.0 percent a positive impact, and 26.8 percent a negative impact.

Important to note is that 132 respondents also indicated their children spent more time in virtual summer camp than they originally expected. For the most part, parents reported this as positively impacting their children (70.5 percent). Virtual summer camp was better than no summer camp.

## Summary

Findings from the camp-user and non-camp-user panel surveys indicate that summer 2020 was different for all families, and many people changed how they spent summer 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a lot less family vacation, sports, hanging out in person, and visits to museums, parks, zoos, etc. There was a lot more hanging out virtually, watching TV and shows, playing video games, and family time. Looking to summer 2021, a widely available and accessible vaccine will allow camps to operate in safe ways and closer to full capacity. Otherwise, parent responses indicate that camps should prioritize cleaning and sanitizing procedures, implementing social-distancing practices, mandating PPE, and COVID-19 testing (especially for overnight camps). These practices must be communicated to parents in order to build parents' trust in camps' abilities to manage the COVID-19 pandemic and keep children safe.

# National Youth Impact Study

## Purpose

The National Youth Impact Study is a multiphase, longitudinal, mixed-methods study. The third phase began in the spring of 2018. Families who sent a child to camp during summer 2018 were asked to complete an initial survey at this point, and thereafter completed surveys and optional interviews twice yearly. The data in this report are from the fall 2019 and fall 2020 data collections.

## Population

At the outset of the study participants were recruited through a stratified sampling of ACA-accredited camps representing camp types and geographic diversity. This included day and overnight camps, for-profit and nonprofit camps, agency-affiliated (e.g., YMCA, Girl Scouts), religiously affiliated, single-gender, and co-ed camps from all regions of the US. The 48 camps in the study sent research study information to families of campers ages 9–12 enrolled for programming in the summer of 2018. The research team emphasized building a sample that included racial and ethnic diversity and a mix of income levels. A total of 447 families completed the initial survey. One parent was the main contact and responded to questions about themselves, the child of interest in the study (age 9–12 and enrolled in camp in summer 2018), and their partner, if applicable. Demographic information, including parent race, income, marital status, educational level, and zip code were collected. Participating families were compensated with gift cards to an online retailer.

The National Youth Impact Study focuses on collecting data to inform a multitude of different research questions; however, the study also allows flexibility for introducing other timely and relevant aspects of study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, additional analysis of existing and new data provided insights informing the opportunity gap and how COVID-19 may have impacted access and use of camp programs for different types of families.

## Methods

### Survey

Data in this report are from the fall 2019 and fall 2020 survey responses and are parents' retrospective accounts of children's activity participation during summers 2019 and 2020. Parents completed "time diaries" for their children, indicating how many weeks their children spent in different activities. Of particular interest to this report is the comparison of activities between summer 2019 and 2020 and change in structured activity participation during summer 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A focus is on summer camp participation during summer 2020.

### Response

There were 325 parents who completed retrospective time diaries in both fall 2019 and fall 2020 and are included in this report. Detailed demographic information is included in Appendix D.

**Reporting**

The authors analyzed quantitative data (time diary) using descriptive statistics and compared high-income and lower-income groups using independent samples t-tests. Families were categorized into high-, medium-, and lower-income groups using a tool from the Pew Research Center that takes into account income, family size, and ZIP code (Fry & Kochhar, 2018). Based on the Pew Research Center Tool, the sample was divided into three categories, as depicted in Table 7.

Table 7. Youth Impact Study Income Categories

| Income | |
|---|---|
| Lower income | 15.38% |
| Middle income | 43.69% |
| High income | 40.92% |

## Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used, and frequencies and means were calculated to identify averages within groups. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare responses by different demographic groups (i.e., lower-, middle-, and high-income groups).

## Findings

This section includes comparisons among demographic groups and time diary data reflecting youth activity participation during the weeks of summer 2019 and summer 2020. First, time diary data from two summers is presented from the overall Youth Impact Study, followed by time diary data segmented by income groups.

## Demographic Comparisons

In comparing groups of respondents based on demographic variables, it was found that the lower-income group was comprised of 58 percent White and 28 percent Black or African American parents, while the high-income group was 90.2 percent White and 0.8 percent Black or African American parents. In regard to education, parents in the lower-income group were less likely to have a four-year degree or higher (36 percent) than parents from the middle (80.1 percent) and high-income (95.5 percent) groups. Further, parents in the lower-income group were more likely to be single parents (52 percent) as compared to those in the middle- and high-income groups (16.9 percent and 3.8 percent, respectively). Additionally, parents from the lower-income group were more likely to be laid off or furloughed during the pandemic (20 percent) than those from the middle (10.6 percent) and high-income (5.3 percent) groups.

## Time Diary Data — Overall Youth Impact Study Activity Analysis

As part of the fall surveys, parents completed time diaries for their children for 13 weeks of summer (June 1st to August 31st). While the number of participants who responded differs slightly in fall 2019 and 2020, the percentage of the respondents who indicated their children

participated in each activity is reported, followed by the average number of weeks for those who participated each year. Table 8 provides this information.

Table 8. Average Weeks in Activities Summer 2019 v. Summer 2020

| Activity | Percent of sample who spent time in activity | | Average Weeks | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 |
| School | 42.0 | 18.7 | 3.00 | 1.95 |
| Family vacation | 74.0 | 51.8 | 2.29 | 1.94 |
| Day camp | 59.4 | 13.4 | 4.39 | 2.41 |
| Overnight camp | 68.0 | 7.5 | 2.74 | 3.33 |
| Sports | 37.3 | 29.2 | 1.97 | 3.33 |
| Arts or music | 14.6 | 15.0 | 1.34 | 1.85 |
| Home | 84.0 | 85.8 | 4.99 | 8.99 |
| Childcare | 8.0 | 5.3 | 2.40 | 3.47 |
| Other | 9.7 | 3.1 | 2.86 | 4.45 |

These data indicate that overall, fewer youth were participating in activities outside of the home in summer 2020. In particular, there was a large decrease in the number of participants who attended day and overnight camp during summer 2020 as compared to summer 2019. In addition, youth were spending, on average, four more weeks at home during summer 2020 as compared to summer 2019.

## Time Diary Data — Income Group Activity Analysis

Data were also analyzed specific to income groups as per the Pew Research Center categories previously described. Comparisons between years and income groups are presented in Table 9. For additional information related to this study, see the abstract accepted to ACA's National Research Forum 2021 by Dan Richmond, Jim Sibthorp, Jessie Dickerson, Victoria Povilaitis, and Mar Godwin here (page 11).

Table 9. Average Weeks in Activities Summer 2019 vs. Summer 2020 by Income Group

| | | Summer 2019 | | | Summer 2020 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower Income | Middle Income | High Income | Lower Income | Middle Income | High Income |
| Activity | | (n=50) | (n=142) | (n=133) | (n=50) | (n=142) | (n=133) |
| School | | 1.13 | 1.16 | 1.44 | 1.38 | 0.61 | 0.77 |
| Family Vacation | | 1.19^ | 1.54 | 1.97 | 0.87* | 1.16 | 1.37 |
| Day Camp | | 1.94 | 2.56 | 2.66 | 0.60 | 0.53 | 0.31 |
| Overnight Camp | | 1.29^ | 1.58 | 2.44 | 0.41 | 0.23 | 0.37 |
| Sports | | 0.21^ | 0.81 | 0.90 | 0.44^ | 1.18 | 1.07 |
| Arts or Music | | 0.28 | 0.16 | 0.21 | 0.22 | 0.44 | 0.26 |
| Home | | 6.20^ | 4.73 | 2.97 | 8.34 | 8.57 | 8.42 |
| Childcare | | 0.12 | 0.24 | 0.14 | 0.72 | 0.24 | 0.21 |
| Other | | 0.64 | 0.23 | 0.26 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.22 |
| | Total Weeks | 13.00 | 13.00 | 13.00 | 13.00 | 13.00 | 13.00 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Weeks at Camp, Vacation, Sports, Arts, Music* | ***4.91^*** | *6.64* | *8.19* | *2.54* | *3.54* | *3.38* |

*Note.* * indicates a statistically significant difference in mean weeks between lower-income children and high-income kids ($p < .05$).
^ indicates a statistically significant difference in mean weeks between lower-income children and high-income kids ($p < .01$).

Results indicated that children from homes with high incomes spent an average of 8.19 weeks of summer participating in activities outside the home, (i.e., a combination of day and overnight summer camps, family vacation, sports, and arts or music) as compared to 4.91 weeks for children from lower-income homes and 6.64 weeks for children from middle-income homes. As to be expected, time diary data indicates that children from all income groups saw a significant increase in time spent at home during summer 2020. The opportunity gap persisted and widened during summer 2020, as children from middle- and high-income homes spent an average of 3.54 weeks and 3.38 weeks, respectively, participating in activities outside the home, while children from lower-income homes spent 2.54 weeks in these activities. While all groups saw reduced participation in camps, high-income children were still able to spend more time on vacation and participating in sports during the pandemic than kids from lower-income homes.

## Summary

Data from the National Youth Impact Study during which parents reflected on summer 2019 and 2020 showed that there was a large reduction in youth participation in activities outside of the home during summer 2020. In particular, this impact was more apparent for youth from lower-income homes, highlighting the importance of continuing to provide support for these youth to access and attend camp programs during summer 2021 and beyond.

# Synthesis and Takeaways

Findings from all these studies can be considered together.

Takeaways:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic affected camp directors, families who have children who typically attend summer camp, as well as those whose children do not attend. This was a very different summer for everyone and resulted in a lot of changed behaviors.
2. Camps should make a decision about how they will or will not be operating during summer 2021 as early as possible and communicate that to their camp families so that families can plan for summer in advance.
3. Camp should also clearly communicate their COVID-19 safety protocols in order to build parents' trust in camps' ability to manage the pandemic safely.
   a. Adequate supervision is a key concern for parents (above and beyond "infectious diseases")
   b. Cleaning and sanitizing procedures
   c. Implementing social-distancing practices
   d. Mandating use of personal protective equipment for campers and staff
   e. Testing (especially for overnight camps)
4. One silver lining of COVID-19 was camps recognized their ability to pivot and offer accessible online programming for previously noncamp families. This is a recruitment method that may be beneficial in the future. In addition, virtual programming offers opportunities for outreach and community building during the nonsummer months.
5. Families missed camp during summer 2020 and were not entirely satisfied with alternative noncamp activities. Looking to summer 2021, there is a latent demand for camp programming that camps may capitalize on. Will some camps need to expand program offerings?
6. During summer 2020, many camps pivoted and went "back to basics" with programming. Camps should consider if this is a sustainable strategy for summer 2021 or if their campers are looking for new or more innovative programming?
7. Some camps reduced or eliminated scholarship funding for campers as a result of the pandemic. Youth from families with high and middle incomes engaged in other programs during summer 2020, but youth from families with lower incomes spent more time at home. Camps should strive to provide equitable access to camps and must find alternative ways to offer scholarship opportunities for these campers. Consider applying for state and national grants or engaging alumni to continue reducing the opportunity gap for youth from families with lower incomes.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Camps and COVID-19 Sample Demographics

**Regions**

ACA member camps that participated in this study were located across the United States. The most commonly reported region where camps were located was the New England region. The lease prevalent region where camps were located was the Mid-Atlantic region.

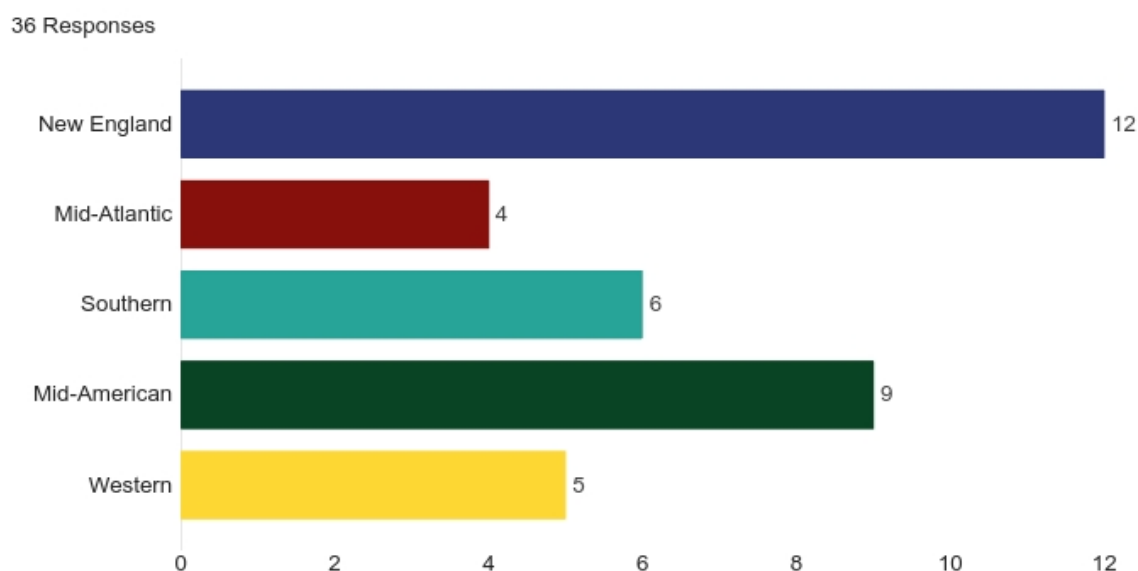*50 States, D.C., and Puerto Rico - Grouped into Regions*
*New England = CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT*
*Mid-Atlantic = DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA, WV*
*Southern = AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, PR*
*Mid-American = IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI*
*Western = AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID MT, NM, OR, NV, UT, WA, WY*



| Region | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| New England | 33.33% |
| Mid-Atlantic | 11.11% |
| Southern | 16.67% |
| Mid-American | 25.00% |
| Western | 13.89% |

**Camp Business Model**

Most camps represented in this study reported being either an independent nonprofit camp or a nonprofit camp affiliated with another entity. One-quarter of camps indicated that they were

an independent for-profit camp. Only one camp indicated being a for-profit camp affiliated with another entity.



36 Responses
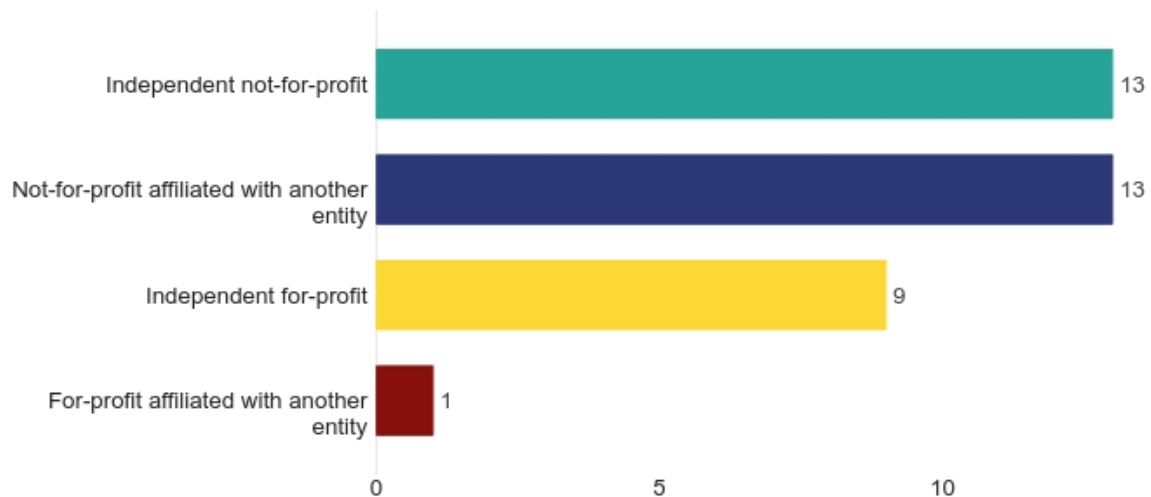
| Camp Business Model | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| Independent nonprofit | 36.11% |
| Nonprofit affiliated with another entity | 36.11% |
| Independent for-profit | 25.00% |
| For-profit affiliated with another entity | 2.78% |

**Operating Budget**
ACA member camps that participated in this study reported a variety of annual operating budgets. The most commonly reported operating budget was between $1,000,001 and $5,000,000.

32 Responses
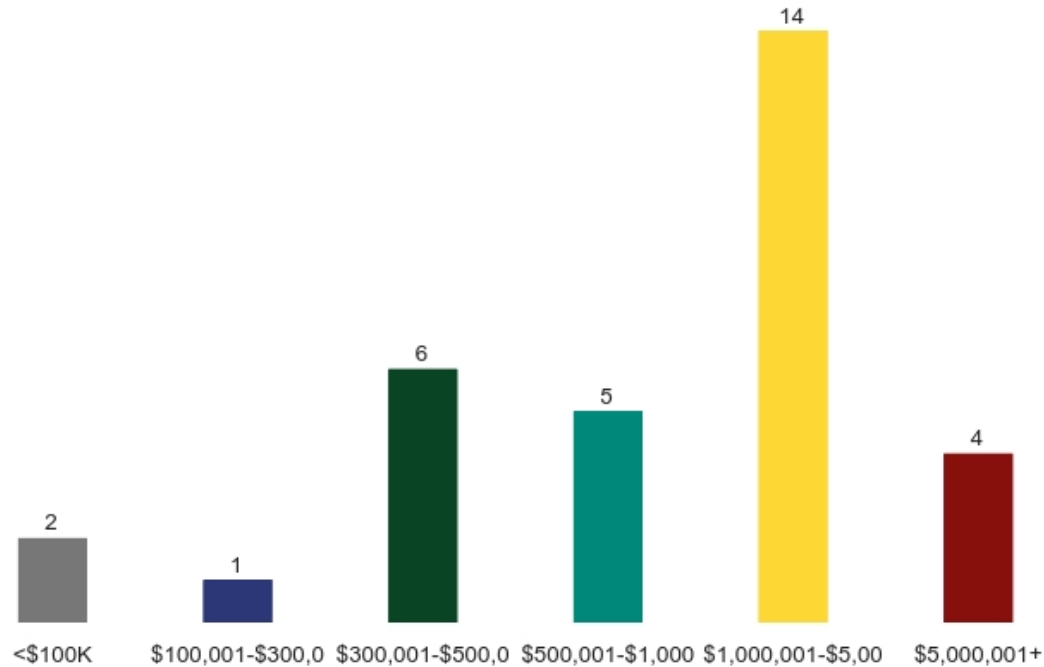


| Operating Budget | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| <$100,000 | 6.25% |
| $100,001 - $300,000 | 3.13% |
| $300,001 - $500,000 | 18.75% |
| $500,001 - $1,000,000 | 15.63% |
| $1,000,001 - $5,000,000 | 43.75% |
| >$5,000,001 | 12.50% |

**Camp Program Offerings**
Most ACA member camps represented in this study reported offering some combination of day, overnight, and rental group programming. Almost one-third of respondents reported offering overnight camp only.

36 Responses
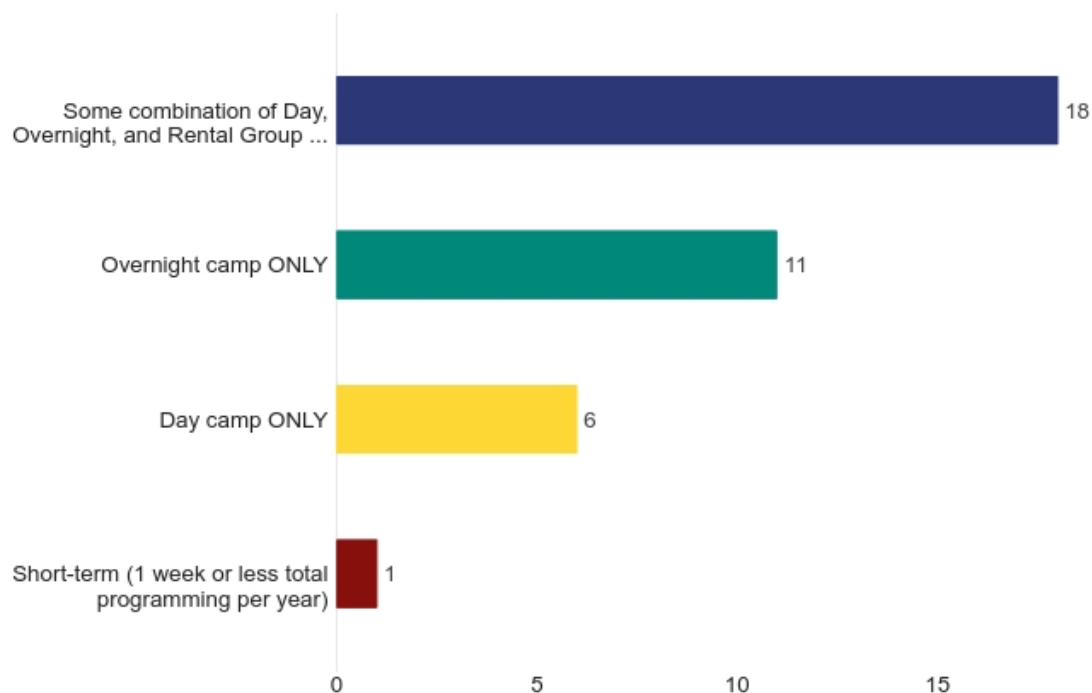


| Camp Program Offerings | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---:|
| Some combination of day, overnight, and rental group programming | 50.00% |
| Overnight camp only | 30.56% |
| Day camp only | 16.67% |
| Short-term (1 week or less total programming per year) | 2.78% |

**Summer 2020 Programming Plans** *(as of May 2020)*
ACA member camps participating in these interviews represented all three categories of offering either (1) regular or adapted programming, (2) virtual or distance programming, or (3) canceling all or most of their programming. Two camps indicated not yet having made a decision about their summer 2020 programming plan, and two responded "other" and elaborated in optional text boxes with "Staggered delay" and "Combination of 'camp to go' and small in person with local Parks and Rec program if allowed to gather."

36 Responses
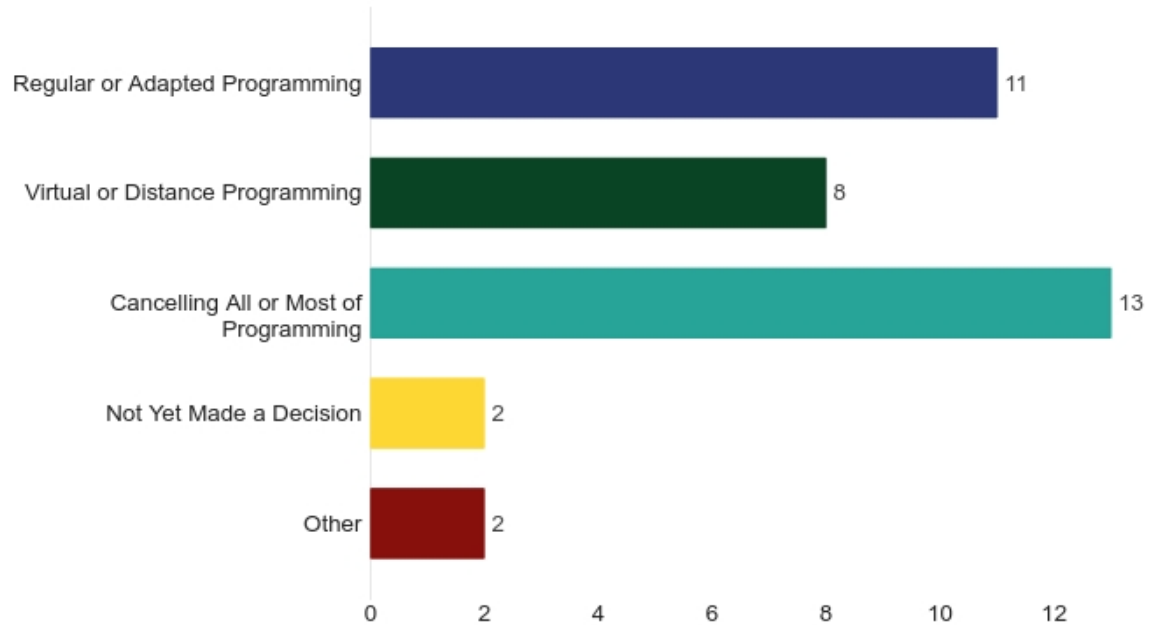


| Summer 2020 Programming Plans (as of May 2020) | Percent of Respondents |
|---|---|
| Regular or adapted programming | 30.56% |
| Virtual or distance programming | 22.22% |
| Canceling all of most of programming | 36.11% |
| Not yet made a decision | 5.56% |
| Other | 5.56% |

## Appendix B: Camps and COVID-19 Interview Guides

All interviews followed a semistructured protocol. The interviewer followed the guide and pursued interesting lines of inquiry as they arose.

**<u>Early Summer Interview Guide</u>** (June 3$^{rd}$ – July 7$^{th}$, 2020)

**Introduction and Rapport Building**
1. Tell me about you and your role at (name of camp).

**Plans for Summer 2020**
2. How are you thinking about summer 2020?
3. How is COVID-19 changing your planning?

**Decision-Making Process**
4. What is shaping your decision-making?
5. Where are you getting your information?

**Implications**
6. What do you anticipate to be the biggest impacts of COVID-19 on camp (e.g., operations, staff, campers, outcomes, program quality)?

**Needs Assessment**
7. What would be most helpful to you and your camp moving forward?

**Wrap-Up**
8. Do you have any questions or final comments for me?

**<u>Mid-Summer Interview Guide</u>** (July 30$^{th}$ – August 19$^{th}$, 2020)
**Introduction and Rapport Building**
1. How have things been going for you so far?
2. Have your plans for summer 2020 changed? How?

**If camp is OPEN**
3. What are you doing, and how are you managing all of the COVID-19 recommendations?
4. How has it been going?
   E.g., Navigating recommendations and restrictions? Making decisions? Key challenges and success

   *Focus on now. What is shaping things RIGHT NOW?*

**If camp is CLOSED**
5. How are you using your time?

6. What are you looking at in the future?
   E.g., Fall? Next year?
7. What is shaping your thinking?

   **Needs Assessment**
8. What would be most helpful to you and your camp moving forward?

   **Wrap-Up**
9. Do you have any questions or final comments for me?

**Post-Summer Interview Guide** (October 12th – October 30th, 2020)
   **Introduction and Rapport Building**
1. How have things been going?
2. How are you feeling about 2020 overall?

   **If camp was OPEN**
3. How did it go?
   E.g., Lessons learned? Biggest success? Anything you'd do differently? Anything from this summer that really worked / that you plan to carry into next year, regardless?
4. What challenges are you facing now?
5. How are you thinking about summer 2021? (A normal summer or another COVID-19 summer?)

   **If camp is CLOSED**
6. How did it go?
   E.g., Lessons learned? Biggest success? Anything you'd do differently? Anything from this summer that really worked / that you plan to carry into next year, regardless?
7. What challenges are you facing now?
8. How are you thinking about summer 2021? (A normal summer or another COVID-19 summer?)

   **Needs Assessment**
9. What would be most helpful to you and your camp moving forward?

   **Wrap-Up**
10. Do you have any questions or final comments for me?

## Appendix C: Demographic Information for Camp-User and Non-Camp-User Panel

| | User Sample (n=506) | | Non-User Sample (n=513) | | Total (n=1019) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** |
| **Gender** | | | | | | |
| Female | 288 | 56.9% | 347 | 67.6% | 635 | 62.3% |
| Male | 217 | 42.9% | 165 | 32.2% | 382 | 37.5% |
| Gender Nonconforming | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Other | 1 | .2% | 1 | .2% | 2 | .2% |
| **Ethnicity** | | | | | | |
| Hispanic | 49 | 9.7% | 51 | 9.9% | 100 | 9.8% |
| Latino, Latina, Latinx | 10 | 2.0% | 11 | 2.1% | 21 | 2.1% |
| Neither | 447 | 88.3% | 451 | 88.0% | 898 | 88.1% |
| **Race** | | | | | | |
| White | 339 | 67% | 321 | 62.6% | 660 | 64.8% |
| Black or African American | 98 | 19.4% | 116 | 22.6% | 204 | 21% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 15 | 3.0% | 23 | 4.5% | 38 | 3.7% |
| Asian | 60 | 11.9% | 50 | 9.7% | 110 | 10.8% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 2 | .4% | 11 | 2.1% | 13 | 1.3% |
| Other/One or more races | 17 | 3.4% | 25 | 4.9% | 42 | 4.1% |
| **Highest Level of Education** | | | | | | |
| Less than high school degree | 3 | .6% | 14 | 2.7% | 17 | 1.7% |
| High school graduate (high school | 58 | 11.5% | 128 | 25.0% | 186 | 18.3% |
| Some college but no degree | 74 | 24.6% | 108 | 21.1% | 182 | 17.9% |
| Associate degree in college (2-year) | 60 | 22.9% | 47 | 9.2% | 107 | 10.5% |
| Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) | 139 | 27.5% | 114 | 22.2% | 253 | 24.8% |
| Master's degree | 136 | 26.9% | 85 | 16.6% | 221 | 21.7% |
| Doctoral degree | 18 | 3.6% | 11 | 2.1% | 29 | 2.8% |
| Professional degree (JD, MD) | 18 | 3.6% | 6 | 1.2% | 24 | 2.4% |
| **Employment Status** | | | | | | |
| Employed Full Time | 335 | 66.2% | 254 | 49.5% | 589 | 57.8% |
| Employed Part Time | 67 | 13.2% | 46 | 9.0% | 113 | 11.1% |
| Unemployed looking for work | 41 | 8.1% | 76 | 14.8% | 117 | 11.5% |
| Unemployed not looking for work | 52 | 10.3% | 117 | 22.8% | 169 | 16.6% |
| Retired | 7 | 1.4% | 14 | 2.7% | 21 | 2.1% |
| Full Time Student — Not Working | 4 | .8% | 6 | 1.2% | 10 | 1.0% |
| **Living with Spouse or Partner** | | | | | | |
| Yes | 253* | 83.5% | 400 | 78.0% | 653 | 64.1% |
| No | 50* | 16.5% | 113 | 22.0% | 163 | 16.0% |
| **Entire Household Income** | | | | | | |
| Less than $10,000 | 23 | 4.5% | 52 | 10.1% | 75 | 7.4% |
| $10,000 to $19,999 | 19 | 3.8% | 42 | 8.2% | 61 | 6.0% |
| $20,000 to $29,999 | 37 | 7.3% | 50 | 9.7% | 87 | 8.5% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $30,000 to $39,999 | 45 | 8.9% | 38 | 7.4% | 83 | 8.1% |
| $40,000 to $49,999 | 42 | 8.3% | 44 | 8.6% | 86 | 8.4% |
| $50,000 to $59,999 | 67 | 13.2% | 38 | 7.4% | 105 | 10.3% |
| $60,000 to $69,999 | 32 | 6.3% | 30 | 5.8% | 62 | 6.1% |
| $70,000 to $79,999 | 26 | 5.1% | 39 | 7.6% | 65 | 6.4% |
| $80,000 to $89,999 | 12 | 2.4% | 22 | 4.3% | 43 | 3.3% |
| $90,000 to $99,999 | 32 | 6.3% | 22 | 4.3% | 54 | 5.3% |
| $100,000 to $149,999 | 92 | 18.2% | 84 | 16.4% | 176 | 17.3% |
| $150,000 or more | 79 | 15.6% | 52 | 10.1% | 131 | 12.9% |
| **US Region** | | | | | | |
| Northeast – CT, ME, MA, NH, VT, NJ, NY, PA | 110 | 21.7% | 94 | 18.3% | 204 | 20.0% |
| Midwest – IN, IL, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD | 96 | 19.0% | 101 | 19.7% | 197 | 12.3% |
| South – DE, D.C., FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX | 218 | 43.1% | 214 | 41.7% | 432 | 42.4% |
| West – AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA | 82 | 16.2% | 104 | 20.3% | 186 | 18.3% |

*n = 303

## Appendix D: Demographic Information for National Youth Impact Study Respondents

Demographic information for the parent who completed the surveys is below. Not all percentages total 100, as some participants chose not to respond to all questions.

| Race | |
|---|---|
| Asian | 2.4% |
| Black or African American | 6.7% |
| Latinx | 4.0% |
| Multiracial | 4.3% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.3% |
| Other | 0.3% |
| White | 80.7% |
| **Educational Attainment (as of Summer 2018)** | |
| Less than high school degree | 0.3% |
| High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) | 1.2% |
| Some college but no degree yet | 11.3% |
| Associate degree in college (2-year) | 5.8% |
| Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) | 28.1% |
| Master's degree | 37.9% |
| Doctoral degree | 4.9% |
| Professional degree (JD, MD) | 98.9% |
| **COVID-19 Impact on Working Status (as of Fall 2020)** | |
| No impact | 27.5% |
| Laid off or furloughed | 9.8% |
| Hours or salary reduced | 11.9% |
| Work from home | 41.9% |