

# Providing Quality Summer Experiences that Youth Want and Parents Value

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BEST PRACTICES IN YOUTH PROGRAMMING 2023 SYMPOSIUM  
YOUTH PROTECTION AND PROGRAM SUPPORT  
MARCH 9, 2023

- 1) National Youth Impact Study**
- 2) Parents, Kids, and Summer**
- 3) Youth and Camp Program  
Quality**



<https://www.acacamps.org/resources/national-camp-impact-study>

**Exploratory**  
2017-2018

**Mapping**  
2018-2019

**Longitudinal**  
2018-2022

## Exploratory Phase

### Method:

- Interviews with 18-25 year old camp alumni

### Focus:

- Identify distinct & transferable outcomes of summer camp experience

## Mapping Phase

### Method:

- Surveys with 18-25 year old camp alumni (2 samples)

### Focus:

- Identify which outcomes are uniquely attributable to summer camp
- Understand how camp fits into the larger learning landscape
- Identify aspects of the camp experience that contribute to positive outcomes

## Longitudinal Phase

### Method:

- Surveys & interviews with camper + parent dyads over 5 years
- Surveys & interviews with 2018 camp staff over 5 years

### Focus:

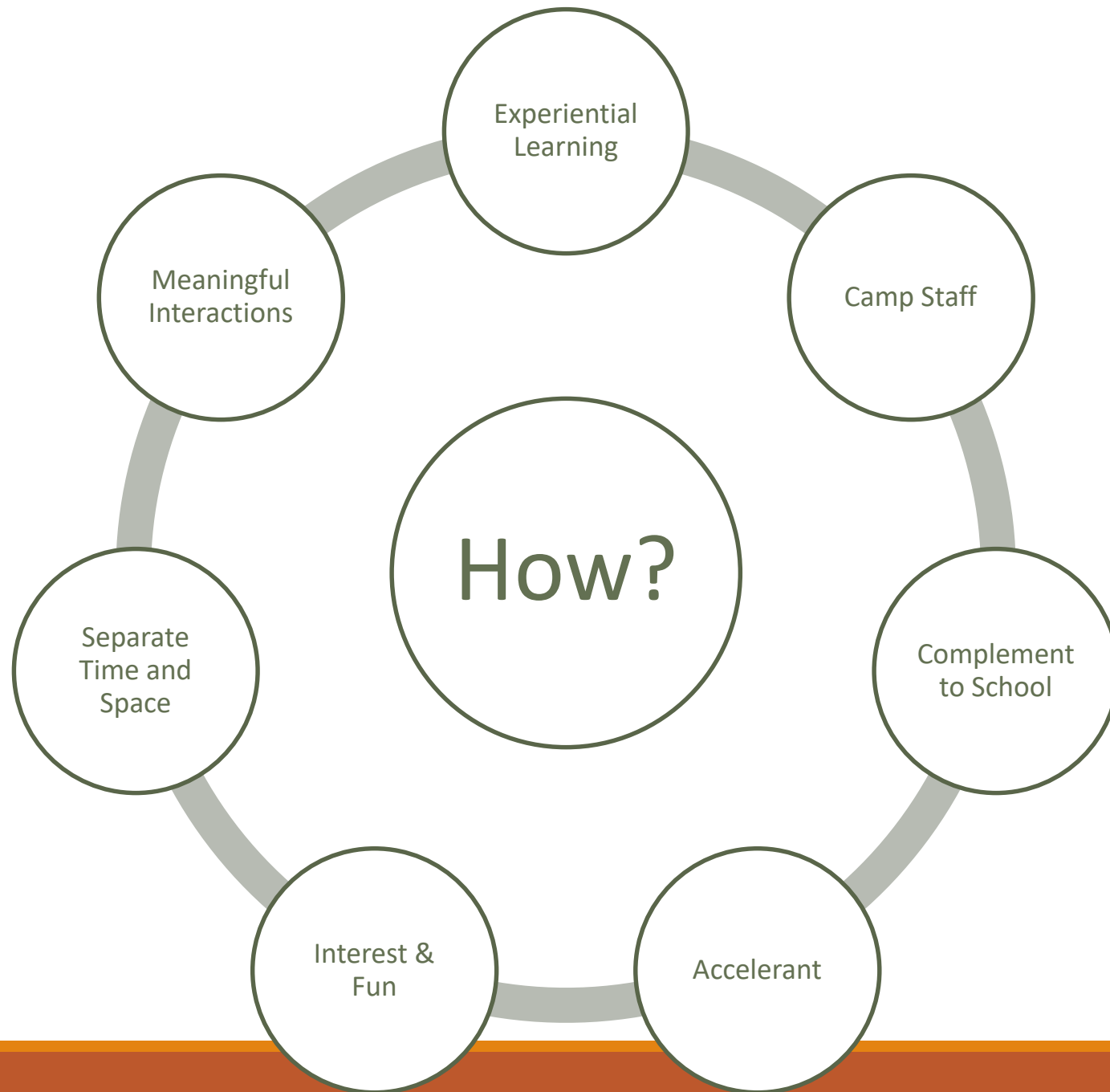
- Assess longitudinal benefits of camp participation / employment for socioemotional outcomes
- Test which aspects of the camp experience drive developmental benefits
- Learn how people make decisions regarding summer camp participation / employment



# KEY CONCLUSION ECOSYSTEM

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Camp</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Sports</i>	<i>Church</i>
Affinity for Nature						
How to Live with Peers						
Leisure Skills						
Willingness to Try New Things						
Independence						
Being Present						
Empathy and Compassion						
Appreciation for Differences						
Leadership						
Perseverance						
Teamwork						
Self-Identity						
Relationship Skills						
Emotion Regulation						
Self-Confidence						
Career Orientation						
Organization						
Responsibility						





Experiential Learning

Camp Staff

How?

Complement to School

Accelerant

Interest & Fun

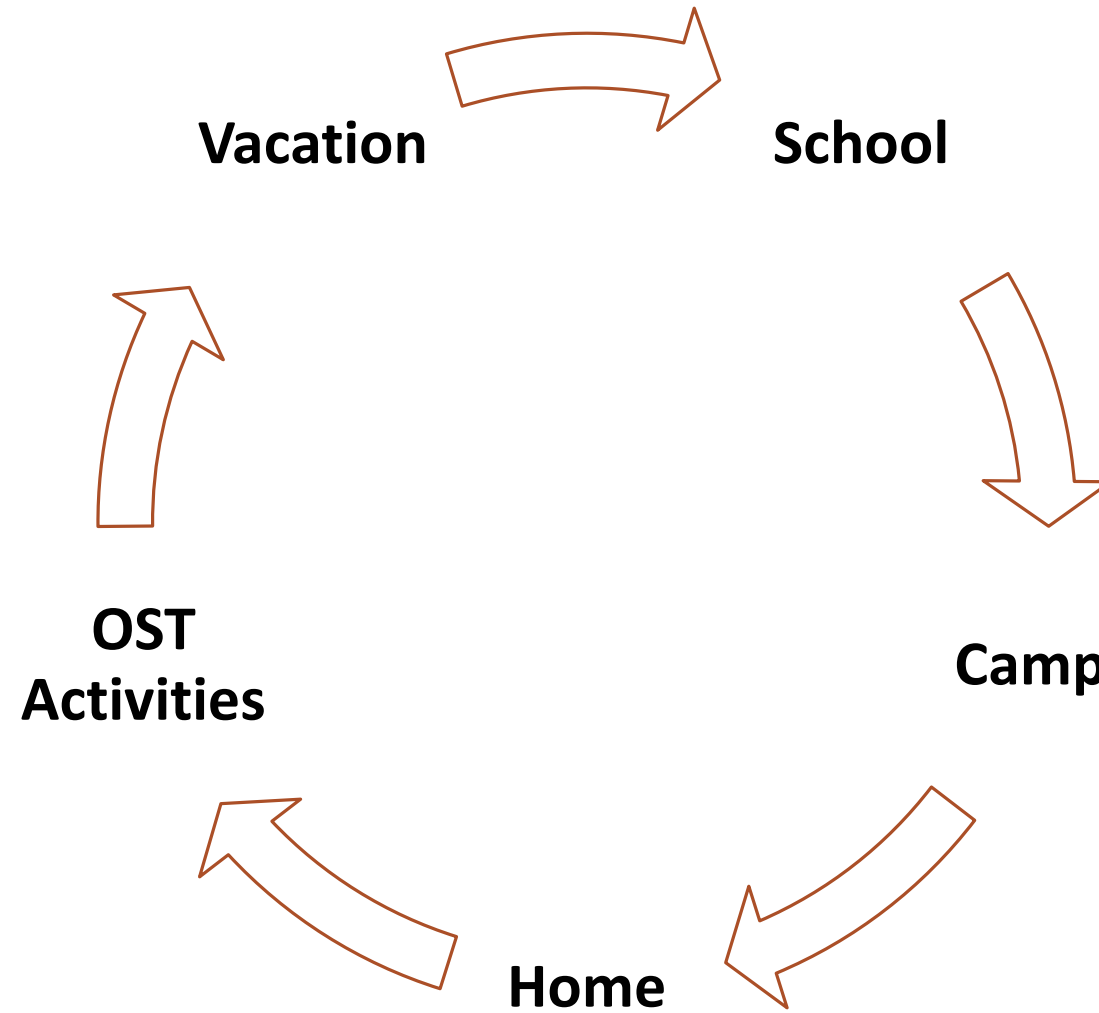
Separate Time and Space

Meaningful Interactions

*Camp experiences  
complement school  
and other  
developmental  
experiences*



# KEY CONCLUSION ECOSYSTEM



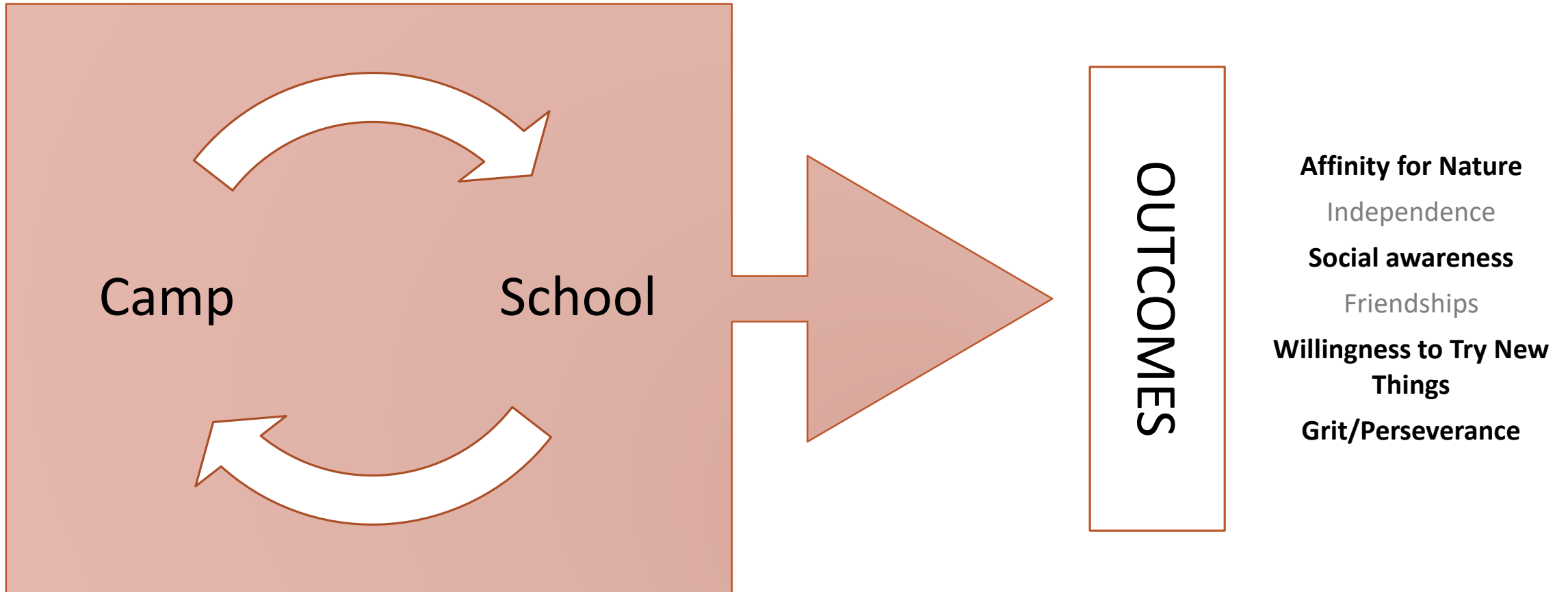
# KEY CONCLUSION ECOSYSTEM

	Camp	Other OST	School	Vacation	Home
Engagement					
Experiential Learning & Reflection					
Belonging					
Supportive Relationships with Non Familial Adults				<i>Infrequent</i>	<i>Infrequent</i>





# KEY CONCLUSION ECOSYSTEM



*Decision making  
is complex and  
depends on  
needs, values,  
and constraints*



# Goals for a High Quality Summer

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## Top 5 parents goals for child's summer

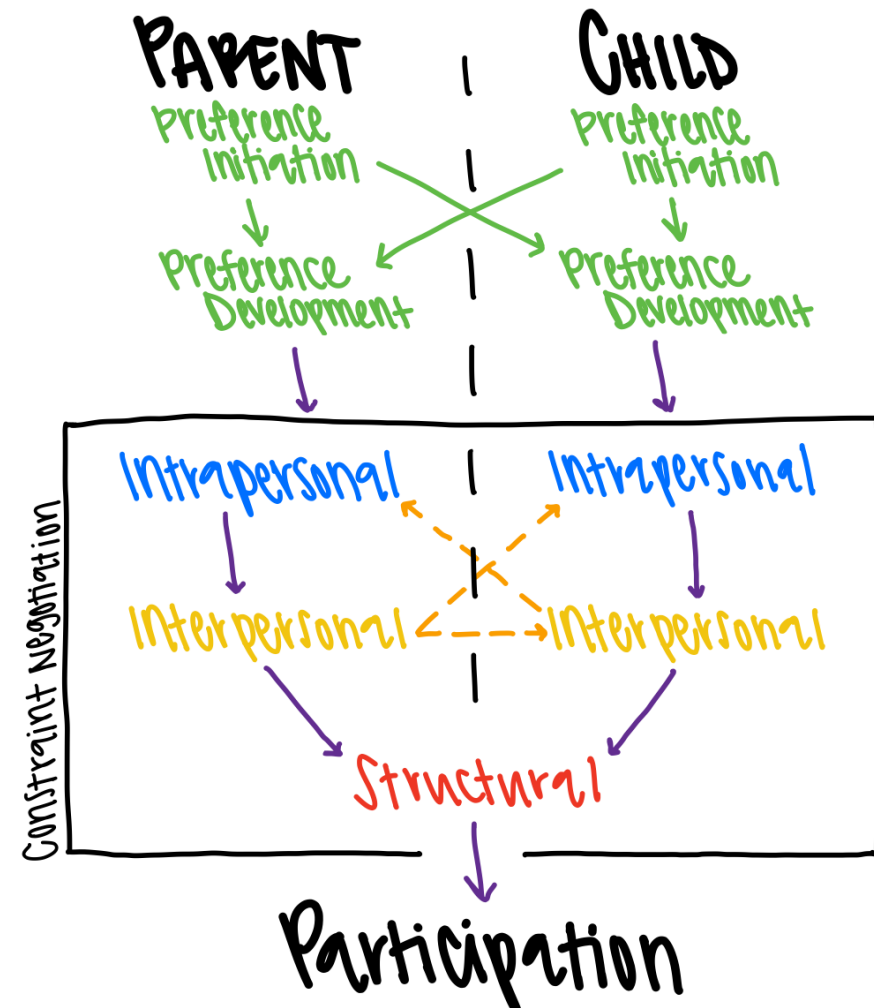
1. To have fun
2. To be physically active
3. To spend time outside
4. To spend time away from tech
5. To experience new things

## Top 5 child hopes for summer

1. To have fun
  2. To spend time outside
  3. To be able to do what they want
  4. To relax and take it easy
  5. To develop friendships
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Activities like camp may provide an avenue for fulfilling both parents' and youths' goals for summer

# KEY CONCLUSION PARENTS ARE THE STEWARDS OF SUMMER



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## Goals for Camp

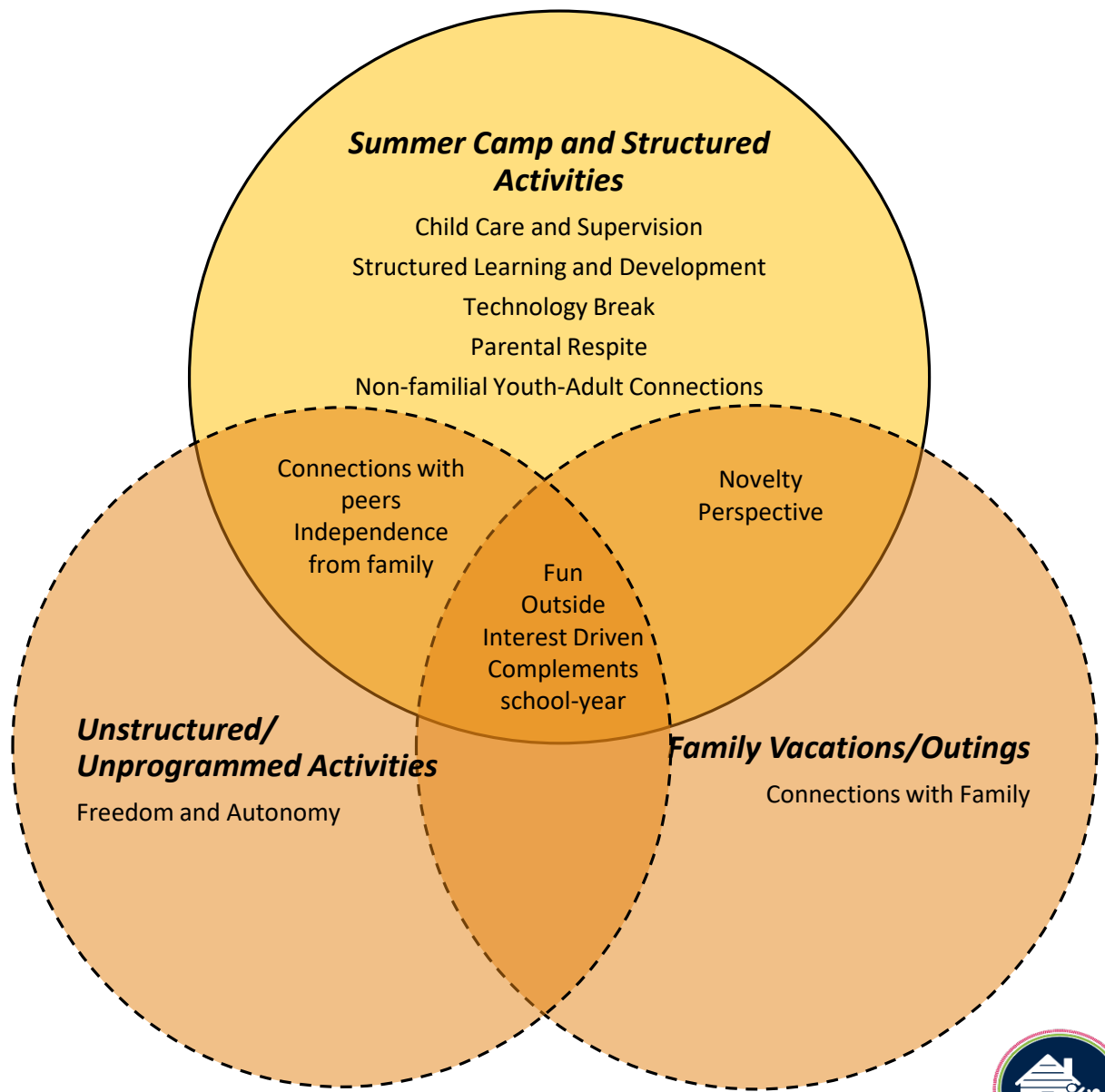
- Interactive learning
- Intrapersonal development
- Fun and belonging

## Camp Fit

- Logistics/costs
- Program quality
- Child fit
- Institutional ties
- Social connections



# KEY CONCLUSION PARENTS ARE THE STEWARDS OF SUMMER



*High quality camp  
experiences are  
linked to  
youth development*



# KEY CONCLUSION QUALITY





# Pyramid of Youth Program Quality



Why Quality?

Focus in on the immediate context and point of service

Program Quality

- What we can influence

# CAMP PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

Social Emotional Learning

the  
**forum**  
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT



DAVID P. WEIKART

CENTER FOR YOUTH  
PROGRAM QUALITY

# CREATING SAFE SPACES | Staff provide a safe and welcoming environment

	ITEMS		SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES	
1. (I)	<p><b>1</b> The emotional climate of the session is predominantly negative (e.g., disrespectful, tense, exclusive, even angry or hostile); negative behaviors, such as rudeness, bragging, insults, “trash talking,” negative gestures or other such actions are not mediated by either campers or staff.</p>	<p><b>3</b> The emotional climate of the session is predominantly positive. Negative behaviors are mediated (e.g., countered, curtailed, defused) by staff or campers.</p>	<p><b>5</b> The emotional climate is always positive (e.g., mutually respectful, relaxed, equitable; characterized by teamwork, camaraderie, inclusiveness); campers and staff are observed offering encouragement, affirmations, or support to others.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p><b>1</b> Staff use negative or disrespectful words, tone of voice, or body language.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff use neutral or respectful words, tone of voice, and body language.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff use positive and warm words, tone of voice, and body language that convey enthusiastic welcome, sincere affection, or genuine interest in campers’ well-being (e.g., “Wow! It is so good to see you back at the program!” “Awww...I am so sorry your pet died!” Staff smile frequently; staff make appropriate and culturally relevant gestures that are responded to positively by campers—high fives, fist bumps, handshakes, bows, pats on the back, etc.)</p>	

## Camp Program Quality Assessment Short Form Checklist

### C-PQA Staff Best Practices

#### Staff friendliness and Circulation

- Staff mainly use a warm tone of voice and respectful language
- Staff generally smile, use friendly gestures, and make eye contact
- When campers approach them, staff are attentive and responsive to campers
- Staff circulate (and spread out if multiple staff) to interact with every camper (in groups or individually) at some point during every activity.
- Staff interact one-on-one at least once with every (or almost every) camper during every activity.
- Staff are actively involved with campers (e.g.. they provide directions, answer questions, work as partners or team members, check in with individuals or small groups).

#### Emotional Safety

- Staff show respect for all campers and insists that campers show respect for each other (e.g., use kind words, take turns, help each other).
- Staff address any incidents in which a camper or campers are made fun of.
- Campers seem like they feel free to be themselves.
- When there is a conflict or an incident involving strong feelings, staff ask about and/or acknowledge the feelings of the campers involved. Adults ask campers what happened.

# Camp Program Quality Short Form and Staff Checklist are free to download

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<https://www.acacamps.org/resources/camp-program-quality-assessment-c-pqa>