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School's NOT Out for Summer: Five Reasons Why Summer Camp Provides Crucial Enrichment Experiences for Kids

Fear not parents. The beginning of summer doesn't have to mean the end of learning and enrichment for your child. On the contrary, between the tremendous growth in academic-focused summer camps nationwide and the key life skills that traditional summer camps have always fostered in kids — including leadership, interpersonal skills, appreciation for the arts and the environment, independence, and personal responsibility — the camp experience will spark remarkable growth in over 10 million children across the country this summer. *Here are five reasons why your child should be one of them:*

1. **Camps Don't "Teach to the Test":** "What we are seeing is that schools today are increasingly "teaching to the test" and in the process stripping out invaluable parts of their curriculums such as theater, dance, art and music programs, and physical education. Parents are looking to summer camps to provide their children with a creative outlet that will positively shape the adults they become."
- Peg L. Smith, ACA CEO
2. **Learn to Love and Respect the Natural World:** "There is a real danger that our children's generation won't pick up the environmental mantle since they are spending a record-low number of hours in nature. Summer camps educate our kids about the need for environmental stewardship and instill a sense of shared responsibility to care for the natural world. Compared to a classroom setting, what better place is there to do this than singing around a campfire, paddling across a lake, or hiking along a mountain trail?"
- Peter Surgenor, ACA President

3. **Camp is a place for every child to learn:** "Nationwide there has been a 78 percent increase in camps with academic programs in the last nine years and a 40 percent increase in ACA-Accredited® camps offering performing arts programs over the last five years. So, whether your child is a math and science whiz or a budding thespian, there is a camp that will value and foster your child's unique talents and interests."
– *Ann Sheets, Former ACA President*

4. **It's about the learning, not the grading:** "In school, children study hard and push themselves — and often overstress themselves — for a grade and performance measurement. While grades are important during the school year, what camp provides is a unique learning opportunity — a chance to explore and learn without fear of a grade. The summer camp experience is truly one of discovery, connection, and growth."
– *Peg L. Smith, ACA CEO*

5. **Numbers don't lie:** A 2005 ACA study shows that the summer camp experience is a truly positive force in the development of key life skills for children including leadership, independence, acceptance of others, and self-esteem. The study reported the following:
 - 70 percent of parents reported their children were "different" after camp, mostly because they gained more self-confidence or self-esteem through their camp experience.
 - More than 96 percent of the parents agreed with the statement "The people at camp helped my child feel good about him/herself," and 92 percent of campers agreed that people at camp helped them feel good about who they were.
 - Children reported a significant increase in their own independence and an increase in leadership skills from pre-camp to post-camp.
 - 93 percent of campers agreed that "Camp helped me get to know kids who are different from me."

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About ACA

The American Camp Association® (ACA) works to preserve, promote, and enhance the camp experience for children and adults. ACA-Accredited® camp programs ensure that children are provided with a diversity of educational and developmentally challenging learning opportunities. There are over 2,400 ACA-accredited camps that meet up to 300 health and safety standards. For more information, visit www.ACAcamps.org.