



HELICOPTER PARENTS AND CAMPS SERVING YOUTH WITH T1D



Department of
**PARKS, RECREATION AND
TOURISM MANAGEMENT**
Clemson University



Hi, I'm Ryan

Assistant Professor of Parks,
Recreation and Tourism Management
at Clemson University

- Why Out-of-School-Time Programs Fail
- Overparenting
- Underrepresented Youth in Out-of-School-Time Programs
- Scientific Translation

Today

How medical specialty camps work (and don't work) for kids with T1D

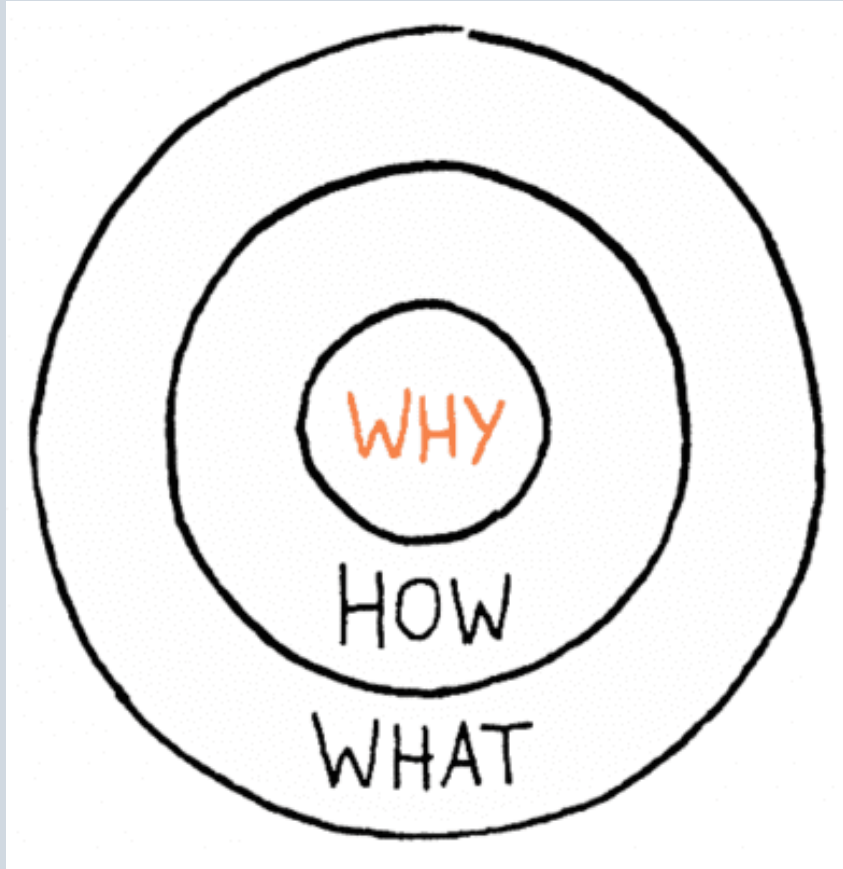
Causes and indicators of overparenting

Some influences of parents on out-of-school-time experiences like camp

Approaches camps are using related to parent engagement and management

Tips and strategies for building positive parent relationships





Please remind me...what does T1D camp do?

These camps can..

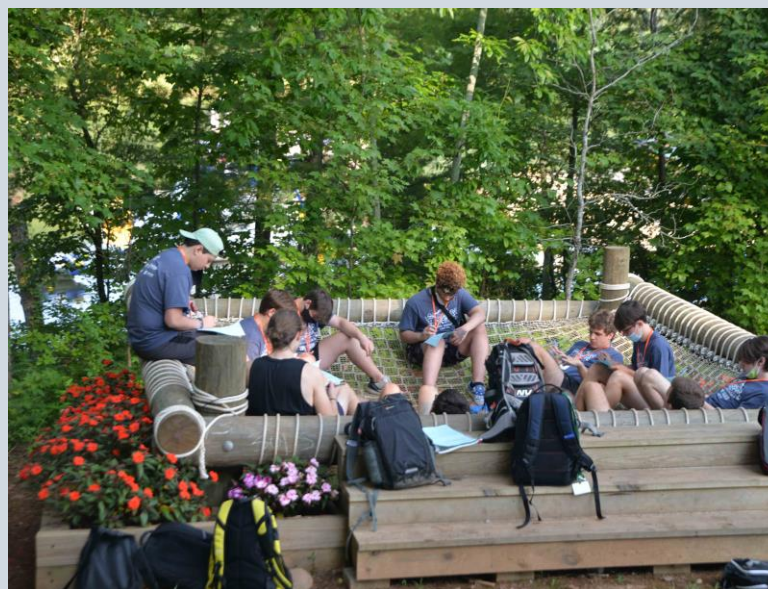
- Improve **self-esteem**
- Develop **disability management skills**
- Enhance **social skills**
- Propagate **resilience**
- Cultivate **relationship skills**
- Foster **confidence**
- Provide **respite**



Overparenting

Well intended behaviors taken to an excessive degree, to the detriment of the child's development of autonomy, competence, and social skills

How might overparenting manifest differently in parents of children with disabilities?



Who sends their
kid to camp?

Why?

Why not?



Camp Directors Say...

Parent communication has been identified as the **#1 most important issue** faced by camp administrators

“Communication with parents” and “managing parental fears and anxiety” are key themes of this issue

57% of camps indicated that, over the last 2 years, there has been an **increase in parents’/guardians’ expectations for communication** w/their child during camp.

How might overparenting manifest across the lifespan?



Infant/Toddler

--nanny cams, helmets, monitor bands, separation anxiety



Elementary through High School

--highly involved, monitoring, unwilling to allow independence



College/University

--expectations for direct contact with professor and administrators

How
about for
kids with
T1D?



Parenting is NOT necessarily the same in all contexts...nor is it for children with extra needs



Overparenting Research in Camps

(Garst & Gagnon, 2015; Gagnon & Garst, 2016; Gagnon & Garst, 2019; Gagnon et al. 2021))

As parents increased in overparenting, they tended to view their children as less skilled in five outcomes prior to camp.

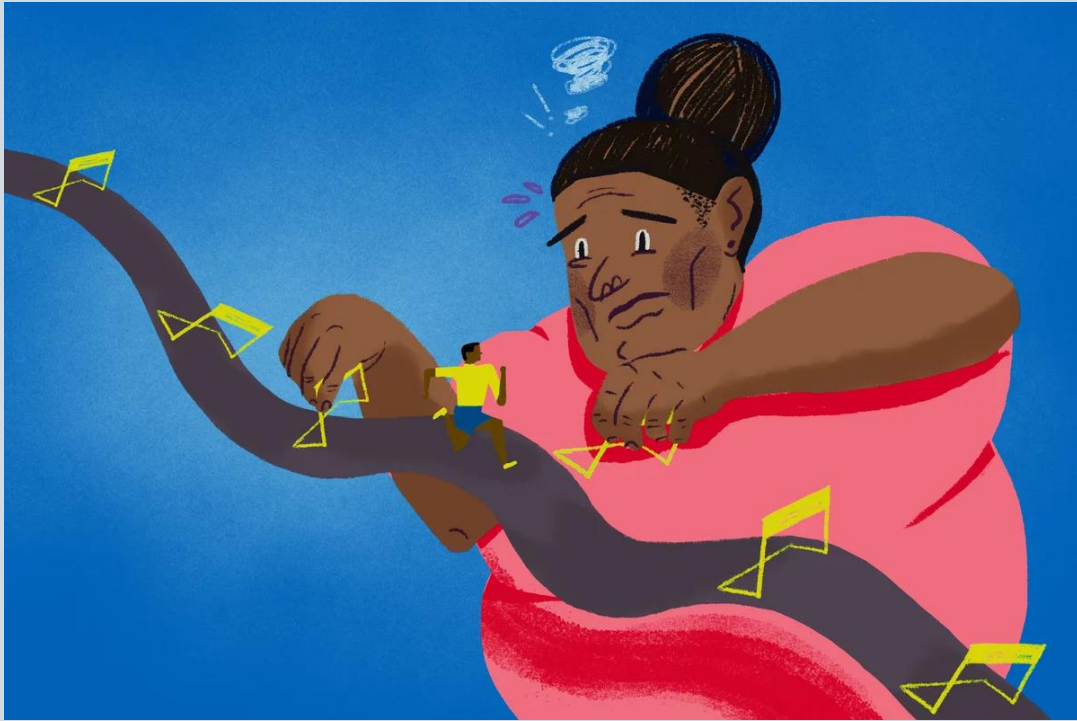
- Lack of a relationship between overparenting and parental perceptions of their child's camp outcomes suggested **overparenting may minimize a parent's perceptions of their child's growth** a result of attending camp.
- **Overparenting scores are higher in camps serving children with disabilities**



What examples of overparenting have you experienced?



Causes?



Modern culture exerts powerful influences on parents, and this socio-cultural context contributes to both parental anxiety and overparenting behaviors.



Modern Parenting

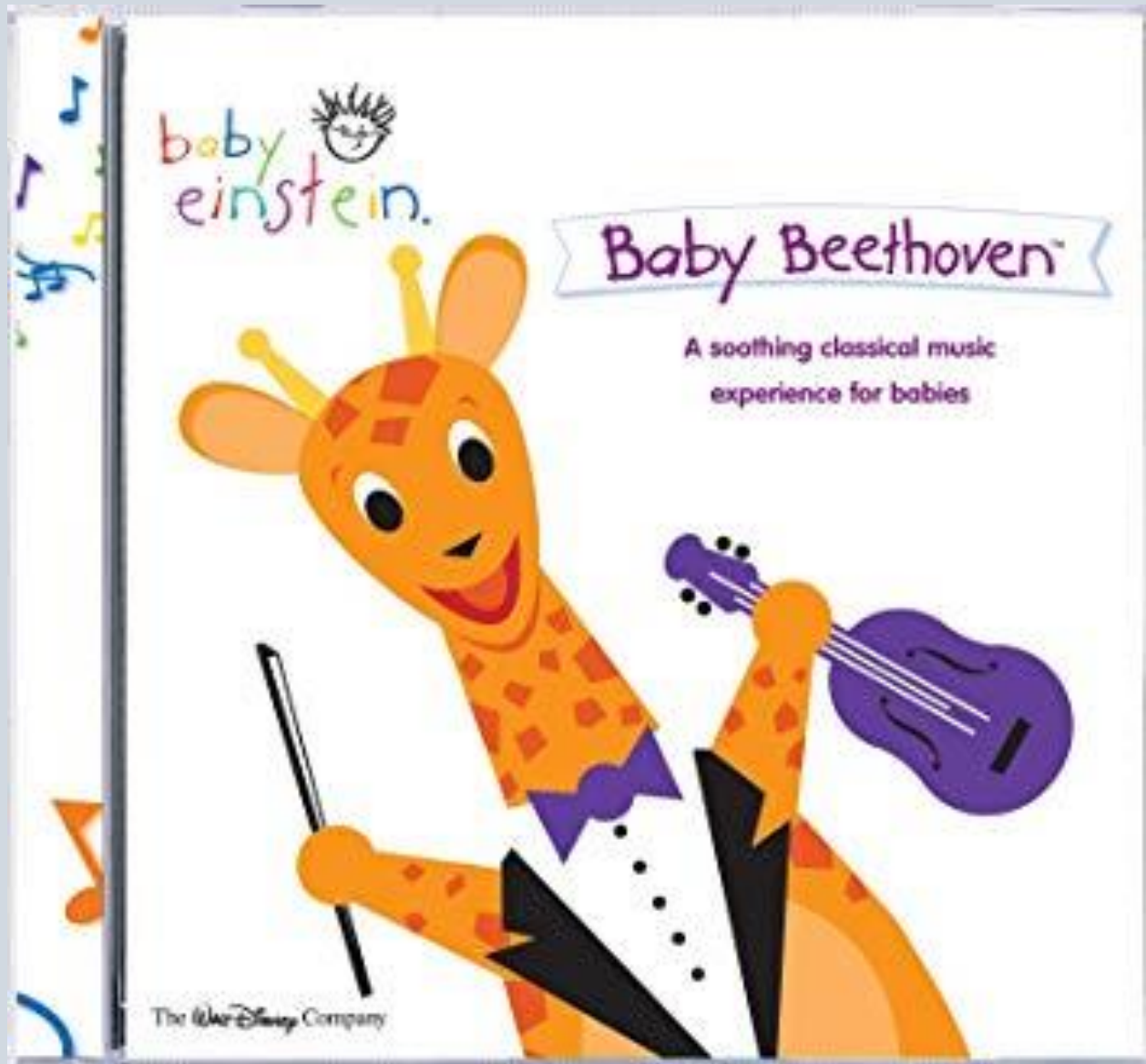
Early learning, constant enrichment

Protection from harm, discomfort

Constant monitoring, consistent supervision

Pervasive recognition

Increasing pressures for academic and life success.



Who has heard
of the Mozart
effect?



Perceived Danger?

2013 gun crime rate back to levels of 1993 New Study

2013 gun crime rate back to levels of 1993 New Study

ate in

Parents are drowning in bad news!

(1993–2012); Homicides ↓ down
(1993–2012); Forcible rape ↓ 34.5% (1993–2012)...

FBI Uniform Crime Reports



Camp directors say...

(Garst & Gagnon, 2015)

- Parental separation and related loss of communication
- Lack of camp experience on the part of parents
- Lack of trust in administration and staff
- Tendency to show overparenting behaviors
- Fear of physical, emotional, or social harm
- Lack of adequate preparation for the program or the setting

Camp parents say...

(Garst, Gagnon, Olsen, & Owens, 2020)

- Parental separation and related loss of communication
- Safety and concerns about peers/bullying
- Lack of trust in administration and staff
- Lack of parental control and overparenting
- Child's adaptability for camp and their behavior
- Child's social needs and enjoyment



Trust

Many parents haven't trusted their child to another adult in the same way they have to with camp program staff and administrators.

Why not?



Other Reasons for Overparenting?

- 1.FOMO- Missing important developmental changes
- 2.When my child isn't successful → I'm not successful
- 3.ROI- parents demand a “return on the investment” (ROI) they've made in their kids
- 4.Fears of poor health outcomes?
- 5.What else?





Strategies to ~~deal~~
~~with~~ manage parents



Before camp

e-Newsletter

Private Facebook group

Pre-camp web chat with individual families

New parent meetings via Zoom or Google Hangouts

In-person parent orientation and training programs

“Emotion packing lists” (W. Mogel)

Do these help? Why? Why not?

[REQUEST INFORMATION](#)

Phone: (815) 713-4110 | 6903 West White Eagle Road, Leaf River, IL 61047

Empowering...Challenging...Diverse...Fun!



Girls Camp

150 DAYS TO CAMP!

[CAMP](#)[GIRLS](#)[BOYS](#)[BLENDED](#)[PARENT RESOURCES](#)[RENTAL](#)[BLOG](#)[STAFF](#)[DONATE](#)[CONTACT](#)

Are You Ready To Send Your Child To Camp?

Fill out the fun camp quiz below to see if you're ready to send your child to camp.

Step 1 of 10

10%

What is your email? *

When your child stays overnight at a friend's house without you, do you...

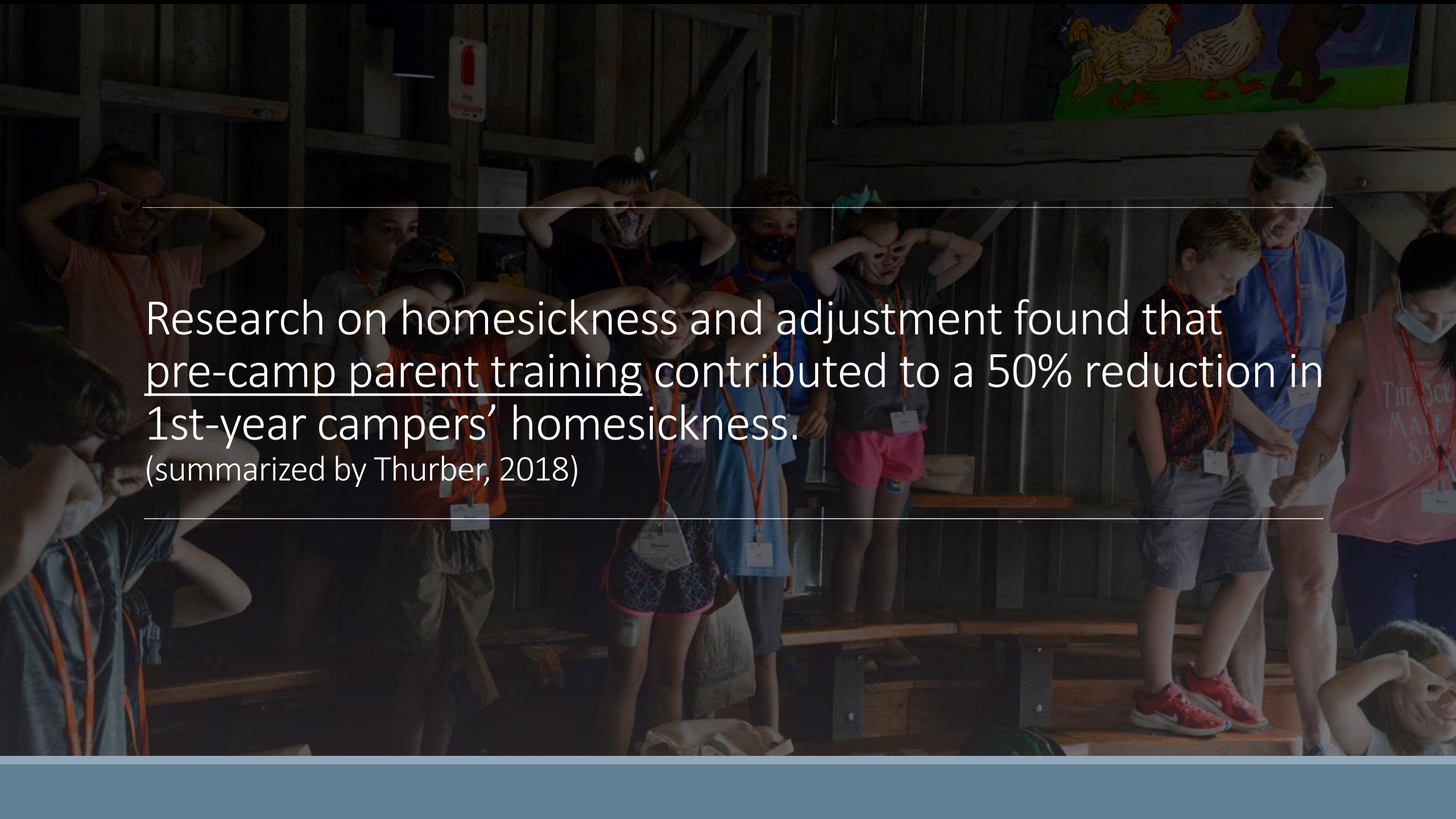
- ☐ Cry uncontrollably and call them every 5 minutes?
- ☐ Text them once or twice just to check in?
- ☐ Pour a glass of wine and celebrate your freedom?

Next



Camp Kupugani has been named one of the 50 Most Amazing Summer Camps for Kids.



A group of children and adults are gathered in a rustic wooden cabin. Several children are standing on wooden benches, some with their hands behind their eyes, suggesting a game or activity. An adult is visible on the right, interacting with the children. The cabin has wooden walls and a fire extinguisher is visible on the wall. A painting of a chicken is on the wall in the background.

Research on homesickness and adjustment found that pre-camp parent training contributed to a 50% reduction in 1st-year campers' homesickness.
(summarized by Thurber, 2018)



Questions to Guide Your Relationships with Parents

1. How can I build trust with parents?
2. How can I improve how I communicate with parents about their children?
3. What information can I gather from parents to improve our relationship (and how can I better use that information)?
4. What information can I share with parents to improve our relationship?

Ask Questions. Seek Answers.

Parent expectations

Parent fears

Parents stressors

Parent “pain points”





Talking with Anxious Parents

(Michael Thompson, 2013)

Describe their child's day-to-day experiences. What have you seen or heard? **KEY MOMENTS!**

Normalize what the parent is saying or feeling ("Over the years, many parents have...")

Try to quote the child's words ("I saw Zoey in one of the morning activities, and she said...")

Set boundaries (i.e., time-limited phone calls, meetings)



Avoid these approaches!

(Michael Thompson, 2013)

Repeated reassurances

“Trust Me”

Being judgmental of the
parent’s parenting style

“She’s fine” / “He’s fine”

Violating your own rules,
policies, or procedures

Overcommunicating

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents' Code of Conduct.

I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.

I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of my personal desire to win.

I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.

I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches' Code of Conduct.

I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.

I will remember that the game is for youth - not adults.

I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.

I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect

Establish Boundaries with Parents

Tell parents how they can and cannot be involved.

Be clear on how they can communicate with you.

Be clear on how they can communicate with their child.

Some youth programs are using a parents' code of conduct. Would that approach be right for you?



Connect Parents and Staff

Give parents an opportunity to build a connection with your staff.

Staff profiles through organizational webpages, FB groups, or LinkedIn.

Brief staff videos.

What else have you tried?

Keeping in Touch During Camp

Parent Liaison



The Parent Liaison, **Grace Wallace**, is a special member of our staff who pays extra attention to our first time campers. With Grace's many years of camp experience, she has a keen eye for how children are adjusting to camp, and working with our counselors, will sometimes make suggestions to ease a girl's transition to camp life. She also will contact parents should there be an issue of some kind or even just to let you know how your camper is doing.

If you have a specific question or concern, please feel free to contact our office to speak with the Parent Liaison or one of our other

directors.

Parent Liaison

A photograph of a classroom during a camp session. Several young children are seated at small wooden tables, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. They are wearing orange lanyards. In the background, two adults are visible; one is standing near a whiteboard and another is sitting at a table. The room is filled with various items like boxes, bags, and supplies, suggesting a busy camp environment. The text "DURING CAMP" is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

DURING CAMP



Staff Daily Diary for Parents



Join Our

Facebook Group

(We are always chatting!)



Facebook
Group
(closed?)

Parents and Guardians

You can take advantage of our Text Messaging Service

Our school utilizes the SchoolMessenger system to deliver text messages, straight to your mobile phone with important information about events, school closings, safety alerts and more.

You can participate in this free service* just by sending a text message of "Y" or "Yes" to our school's short code number, 67587.

You can also opt out of these messages at any time by simply replying to one of our messages with "Stop".

SchoolMessenger is compliant with the Student Privacy Pledge™, so you can rest assured that your information is safe and will never be given or sold to anyone.



**Opt-In from
your mobile
phone now!**



**Just send
"Y" or "Yes"
to 67587**

Information on SMS text messaging and Short Codes:

SMS stands for Short Message Service and is commonly referred to as a "text message". Most cell phones support this type of text messaging. Our notification provider, SchoolMessenger, uses a true SMS protocol developed by the telecommunications industry specifically for mass text messaging, referred to as "short code" texting. This method is fast, secure and highly reliable because it is strictly regulated by the wireless carriers and only allows access to approved providers. If you've ever sent a text vote for a TV show to a number like 46999, you have used short code texting.

*Terms and Conditions – Message frequency varies. Standard message and data rates may apply. Reply HELP for help. Text STOP to cancel. Mobile carriers are not liable for delayed or undelivered messages. See schoolmessenger.com/faq for more info.

©2015 West Corporation [06082016]. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced without expressed written permission.



Texting Services

(Remind; Groupme)



AFTER CAMP



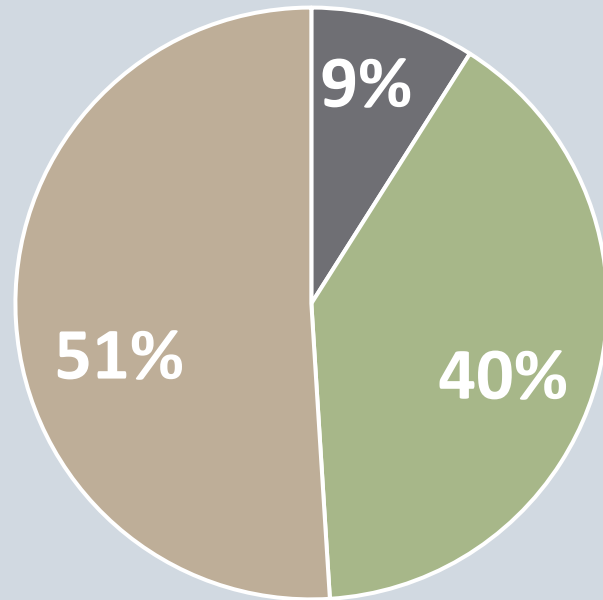
Close the loop!

Share end-of-camp info about campers' growth, development, health

- Camper progress card
- Camper diary or journal completed by staff
- Other?

Focus parents on the transition back home—specific things parents can do to maximize “camp magic” and/or improved camper outcomes, or to maintain health/wellness

Sharing post-camp info w/parents?



- No post-camp information shared
- Post-camp information shared only if parent asked for it



Questions?

rjgagno@clemson.edu

Measure & “stuff” available upon request

(and at ryangagnon.com)



HELICOPTER PARENTS AND CAMPS SERVING YOUTH WITH T1D



Department of
**PARKS, RECREATION AND
TOURISM MANAGEMENT**
Clemson® University