

# THE IMPACT OF CAMP ON KIDS WITH T1D ... AND THEIR PARENTS

\* THIS PRESENTATION BORROWS "LIBERALLY" FROM  
PAST PRESENTATIONS AT THE AMERICAN CAMP  
ASSOCIATION AND THE ACADEMY OF LEISURE  
SCIENCE PROVIDED BY DR. GAGNON AND DR.  
GARST





# Hi, I'm Ryan

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- 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
- Some influences of parents on out-of-school-time experiences like camp.
- Adapted from camp director training to work ~~deal with~~ parents



Medical specialty camps can serve as a powerful context for positive youth development.

- These camps can..
  - Improve **self-esteem**
  - Develop **disability management skills**
  - Enhance **social skills**
  - Propagate **resilience**
  - Cultivate **relationship skills**
  - Foster **confidence**
  - Provide **escape**



Medical specialty camps often provide these opportunities to campers free-of-charge

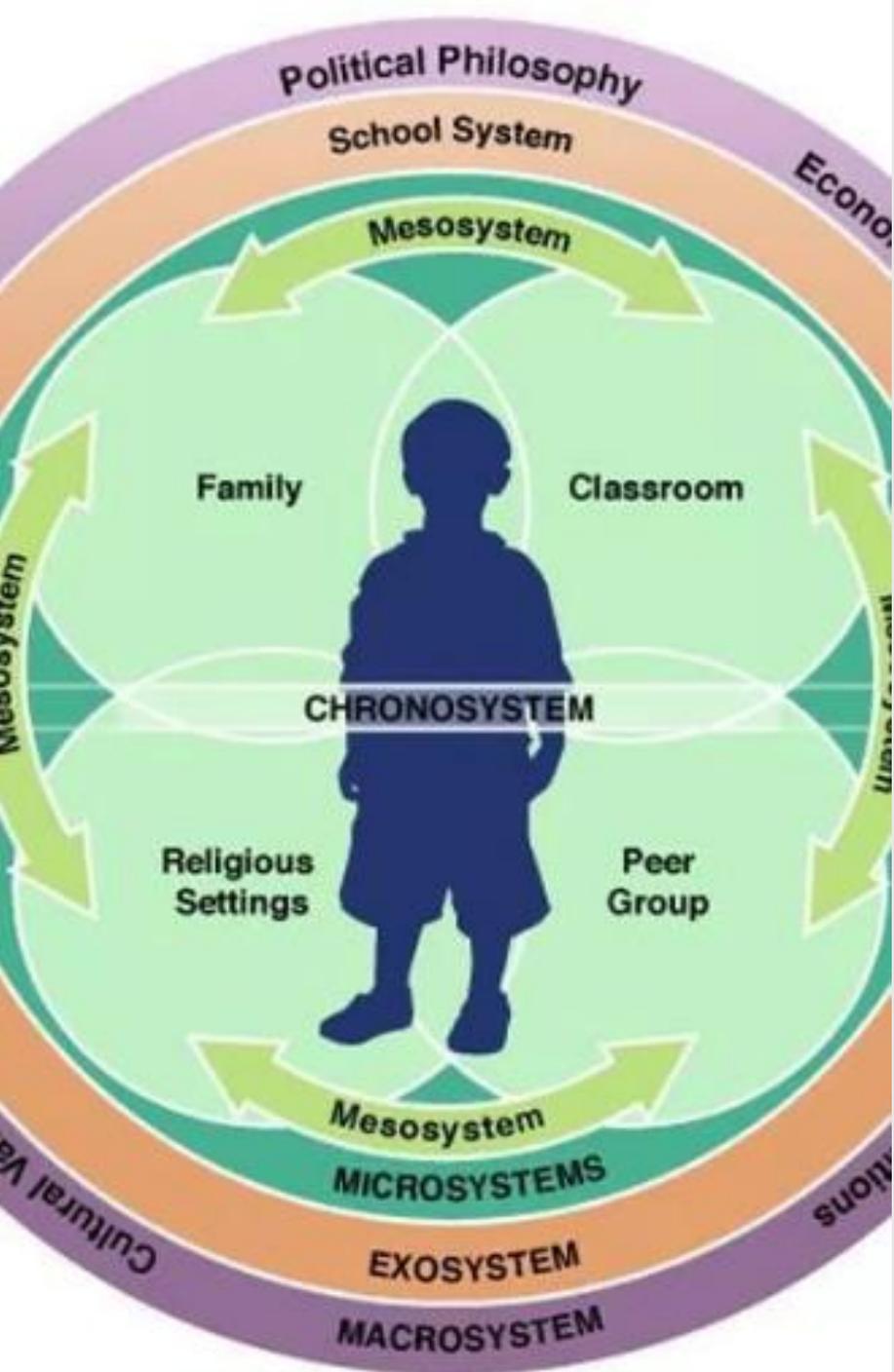
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- Across out-of-school contexts funding is increasingly tight
  - A notable shift from public (government) to private (foundation) based models
- Increased bar of evidence to demonstrate program efficacy from the donation pipeline to outcome production
  - Demonstrate Results

# Is more camp better?

- Kids who go to camp get better...and kids who go to more camp get “**betterer**”?
- Conventional wisdom suggests that more camp lead’s to better outcomes <sup>1</sup>
- Some research indicates year-to-year attendance of out-of-school-time (OST) programs leads to increasingly meaningful positive development <sup>2</sup>

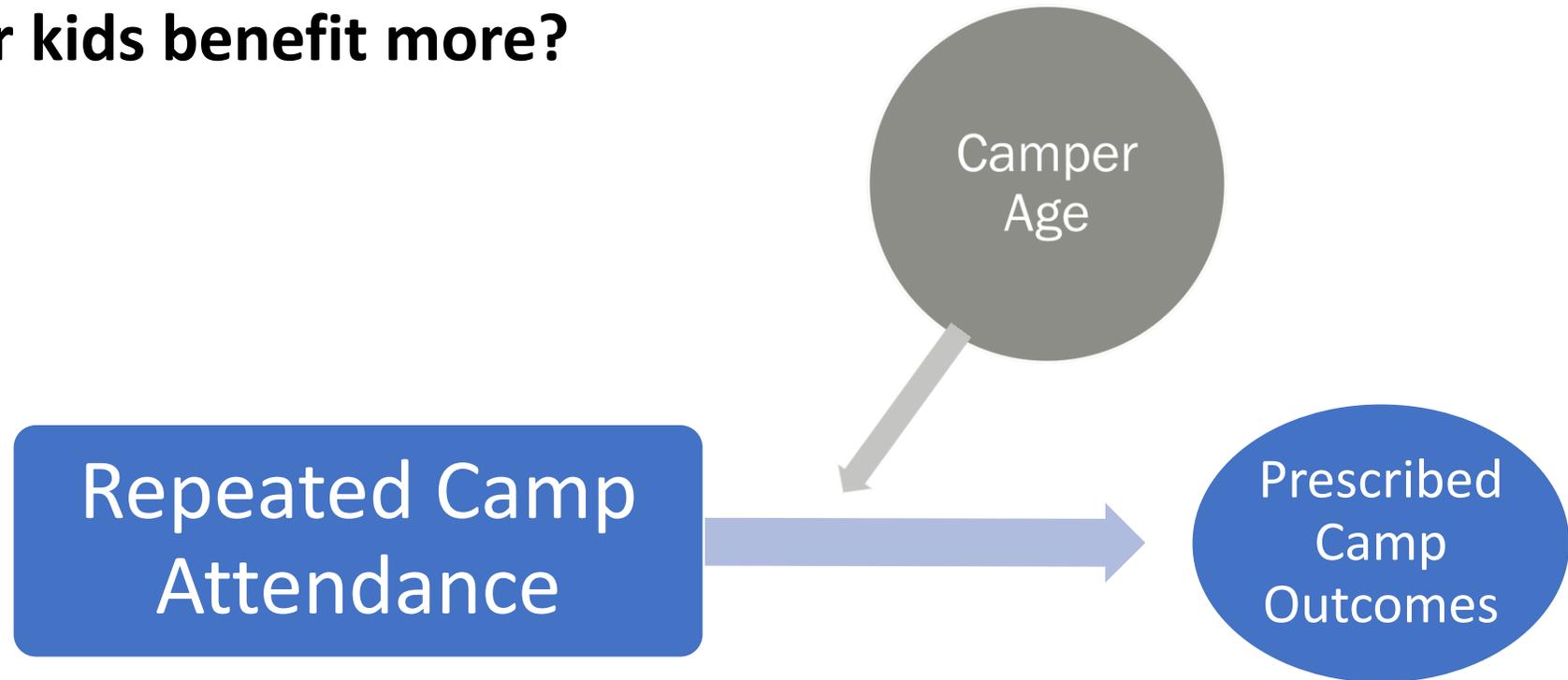




# Orthogenetic Principle & Ecological Systems Theory

- ...as a child develops (i.e., ages) they interact with an increasingly sophisticated array of people, places, and systems; thus, an environment (i.e., summer camp) which could serve as a powerful developmental context for a younger child, may not have the same degree of influence on an older child.
- Camp outcomes should be better for younger kids...

- Does repeated camp attendance result in escalating levels of outcome achievement?
  - **Is more camp better?**
- Does camper age moderate the relationship between camp attendance and outcome achievement?
  - **Do younger kids benefit more?**



# Methods (Setting & Procedures)

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- Large non-profit camp serving children with disabilities located in the Southeast United States
- Part of larger Summer study exploring the development of self-determinate behaviors in youth with disabilities
- Data collected on last day of camp by trained counselors through a paper survey
- Youth with Type 1 Diabetes
  - Mostly Female (67.3%)
  - Average Age of 12.86 Years (SD = 3.17 years, range = 10 – 17)
  - Average of 3.17 years attending this camp (SD = 2.12 years, range = 1 to 11 years)



# Methods (Measures)

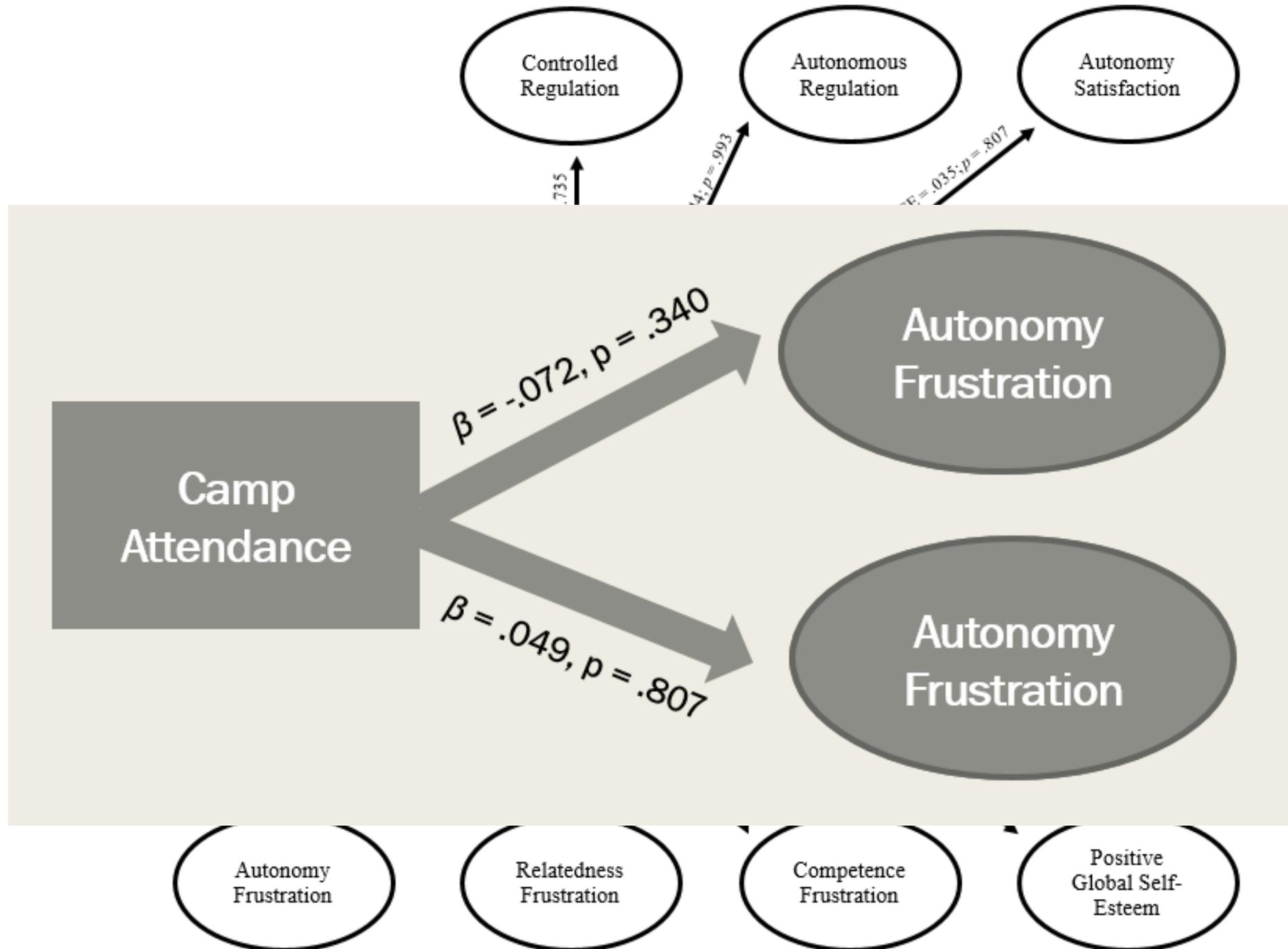
- Diabetic Autonomous and Controlled Regulation (TSRQ; Williams et al. 2004; 15-items)
- Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (BPNSFS; Chen et al., 2015; 24-items)
  - Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness
- Global Self-Esteem (RSES; Rosenberg 1965; 10-items)
- All 7-point Likert Scale



# SEM Results

Is more camp better?

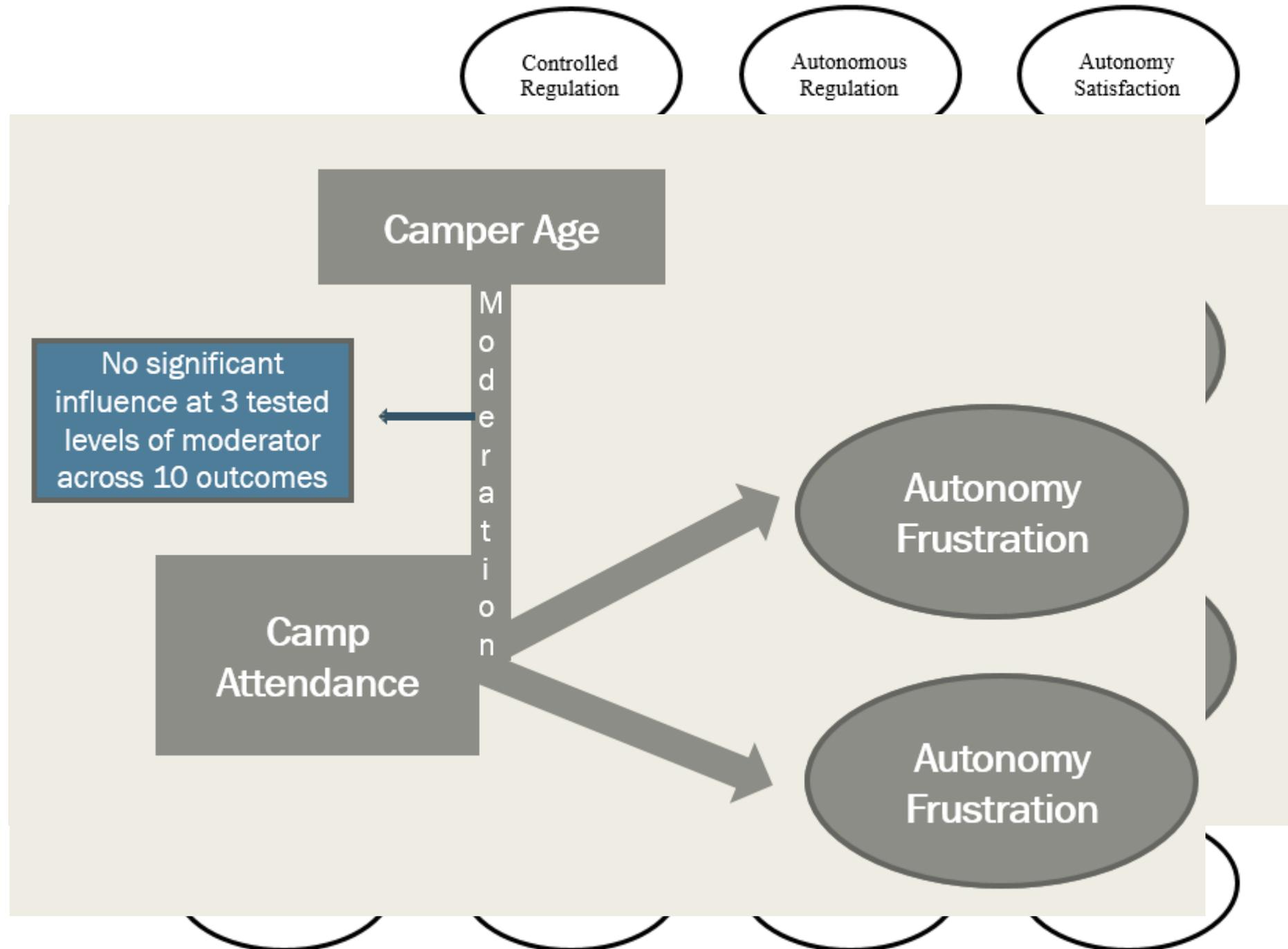
No?



# SEM Results

Is there an age related effect?

No



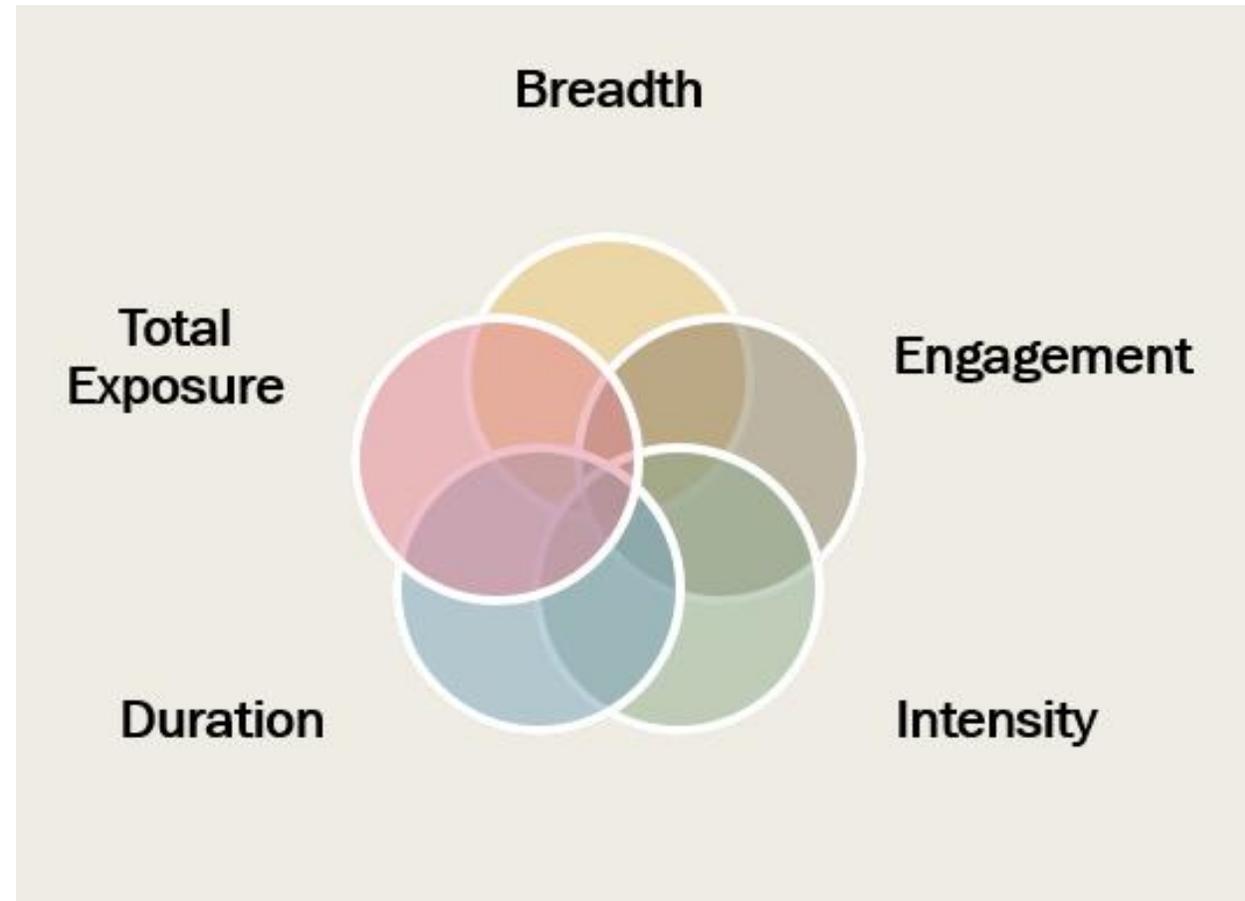
# Discussion (Implications for Research)

- Conventional wisdom indicates more camp is better
  - Of course it does!
  - Some camp may be better in greater doses
- No moderational or direct influences of age on outcomes
  - Universal programming has universal outcomes
- Bonus Science! Negative valanced questions...
  - Criterion validity
  - Allows respondent to share negative experiences (camp isn't always good)
- What about unintended effects? Don't more experienced campers gain other stuff?



# Gee-I-Wish-I (Limitations)

- Slopes versus intercepts
  - How did differing groups of campers change over time versus cross-sectional (end-of-camp)
- Only measured one-dimension of “experience” (**duration**)



# Discussion (Implications for Practice)

- When making a funding decision...in this camp...in this sample...select the less experienced camper
- The lack of age related effect...(again in this camp...in this sample)...suggests that universality of programming leads to universality of outcomes



# On parenting and youth programs

¶

Please take a moment and circle the best answer below. There isn't a right or wrong and your answers won't be shared or collected. It's just part of the presentation ¶

¶	Strongly disagree¶	Disagree¶	Somewhat disagree¶	Neither agree or disagree¶	Somewhat agree¶	Agree¶	Strongly agree¶	¶
Q1. I make important decisions for my child.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q2. I have told my child that they need my support to succeed in life.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q3. I try to limit or control who my child's friends are.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q4. I try to protect my child from negative influences.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q5. I intervene in settling disputes with my child's classmates or friends.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q6. I intervene in settling disputes with my child's teacher, coach, or youth program leader.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q7. When my child is engaged in an important task or project, I do some of it for them.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q8. I solve any crisis or problem my child might have.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q9. If something doesn't work out for my child, I do what I can to fix it.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q10. When something goes wrong in my child's life, I jump in to take care of it.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q11. I get actively involved in helping my child solve the problems they experience¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶
Q12. I manage most important decisions in my child's life.¶	1¶	2¶	3¶	4¶	5¶	6¶	7¶	¶

¶

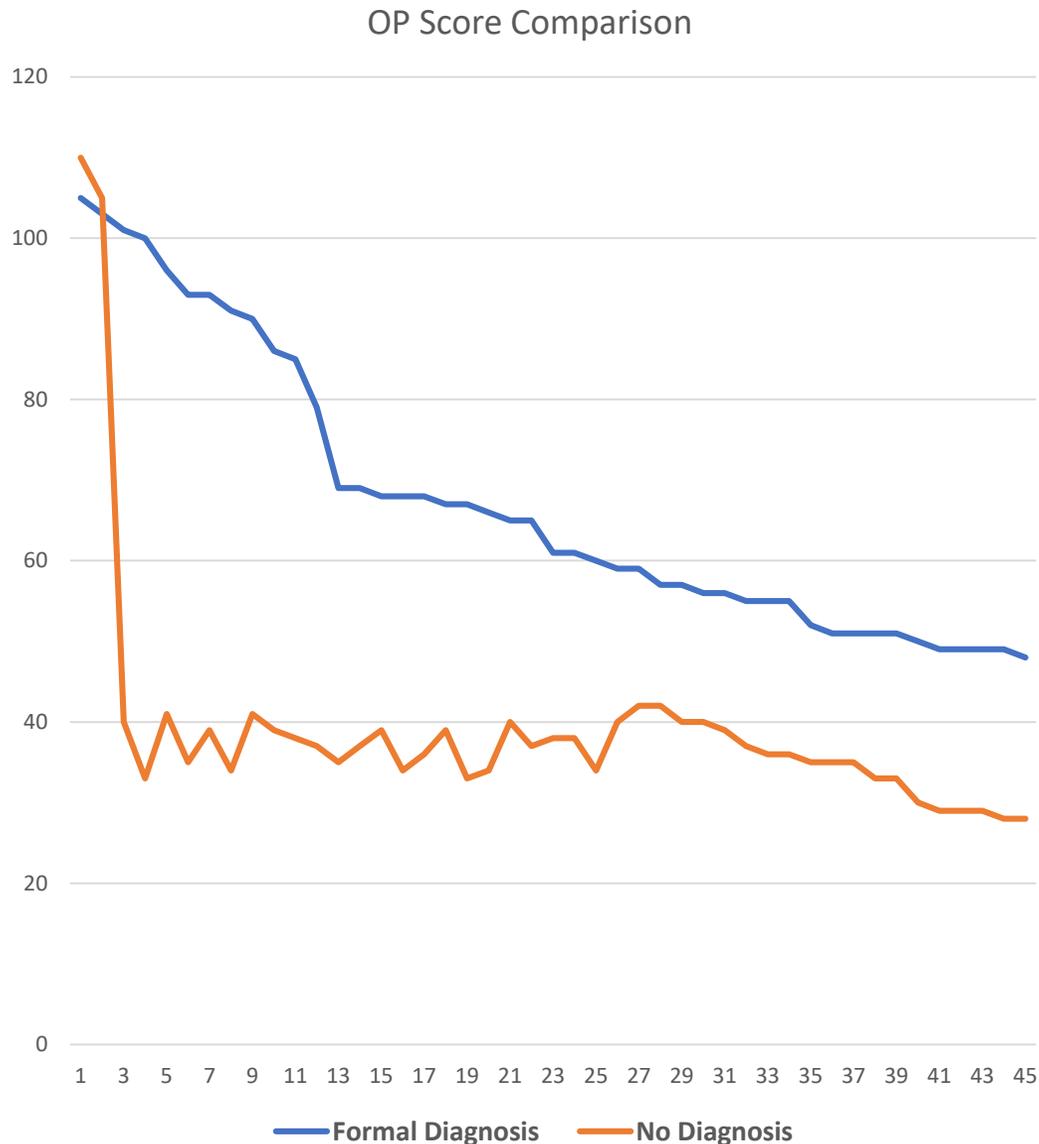
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Poll Everywhere

- Go to [Pollev.com/ryangagnon259](https://pollev.com/ryangagnon259)

Or

- Text RYANGAGNON259 to 22333



# What's a high score (an excessive one)?

- ...extreme scores are more extreme. 70 and up across all 4 (“total total”)
- 16 and up per dimension sub-dimensions
  - Q1-Q4 Control
  - Q5-Q8 Warmth and Support
  - Q9-Q12 Problem Solving
- Any overparents?



Who sends their kid to camp?

- Why?
- Why not?



# Overparenting

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- 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? (not that you are an overparent...)
  - Application of Diabetes management?





## 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.**

# Overparenting 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

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

HEALTHY LIVING

# Yes, Helicopter Parenting Happens, Even At The Doctor's Office

"You can never be too available to your kids, but you can be too interfering."

12/20/2015 06:53 am ET



REUTERS | Lisa Rapaport

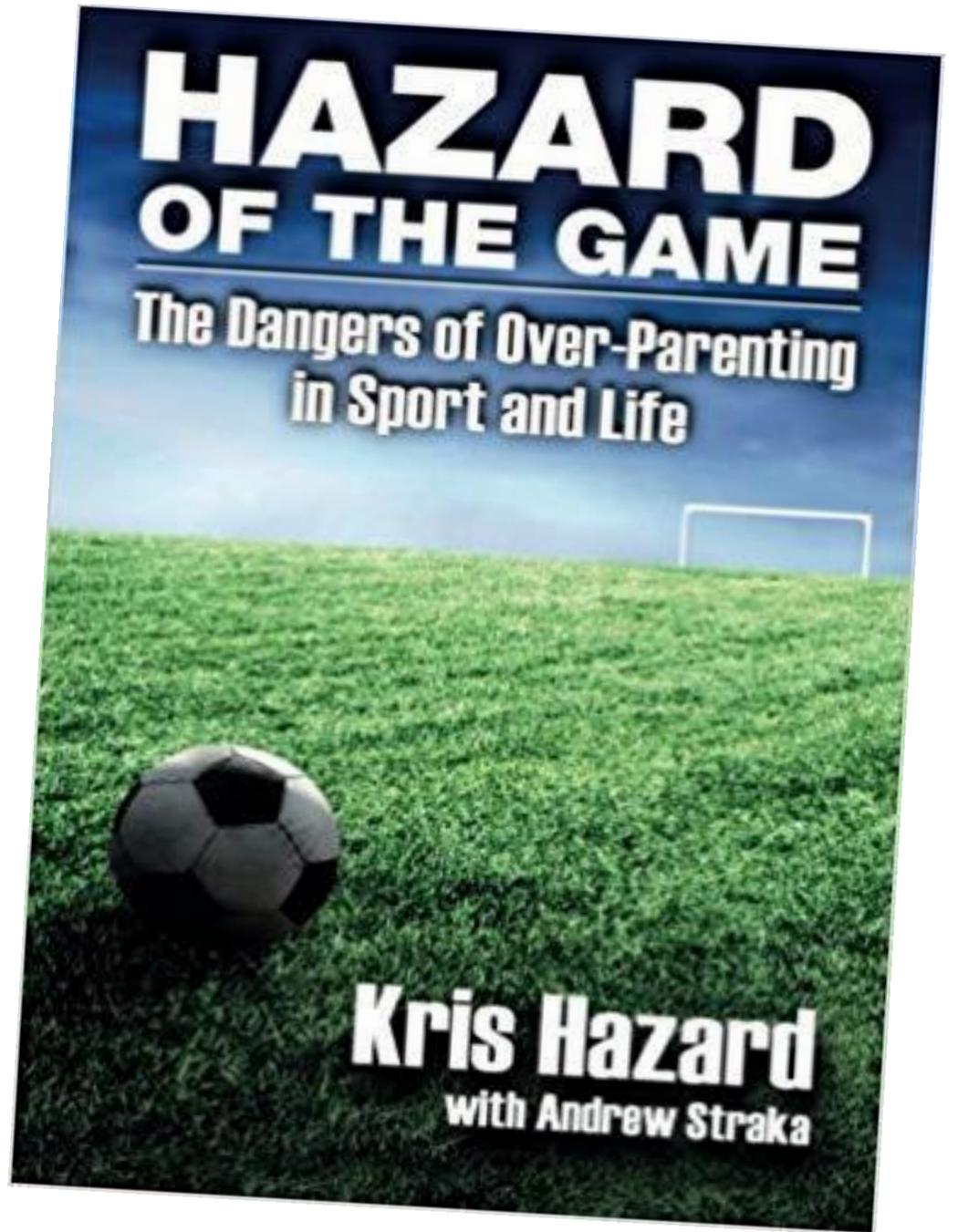


MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES LTD VIA GETTY IMAGES



# HAZARD OF THE GAME

## The Dangers of Over-Parenting in Sport and Life



# Ramifications of Overparenting



**DEVELOPMENTAL**



**LEGAL**



**OPERATIONAL**

# Overparenting Research in Camps

(Gagnon & Garst, 2016; Garst & Gagnon, 2015; Gagnon & garst, 2019)



- Surveyed **parents of youth campers ages 9-13**; Parents completed measures of parent anxiety, parent perception of outcomes, and overparenting.
  - 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.



What examples of overparenting have you experienced?

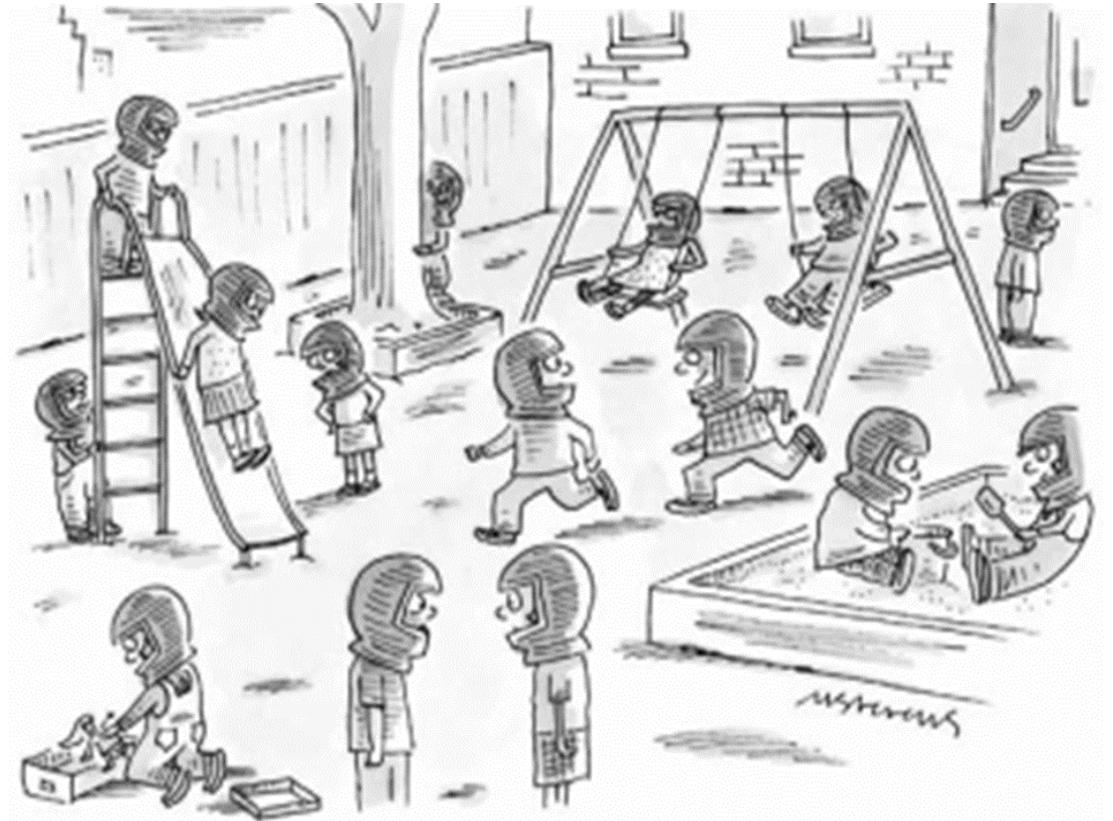
Causes?



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.



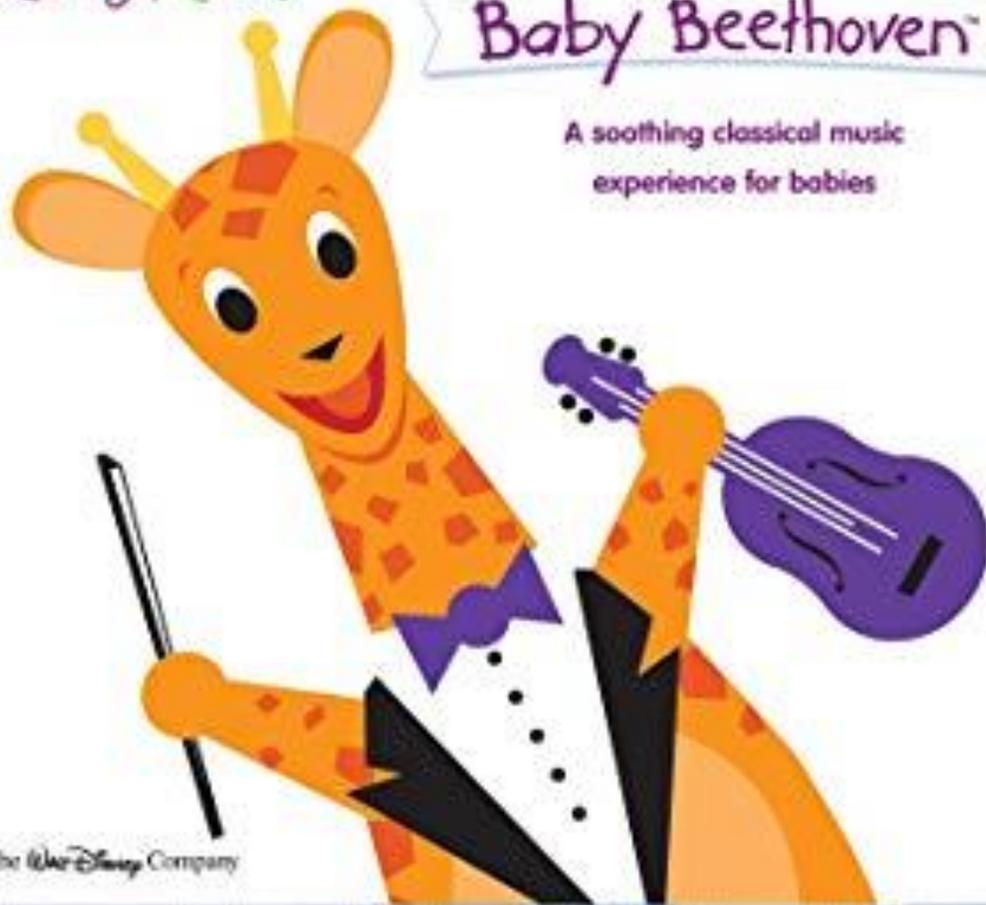
*"I liked recess a lot better before the safety helmets."*

baby  
einstein.



## Baby Beethoven

A soothing classical music  
experience for babies



The Walt Disney Company

# Risk Society

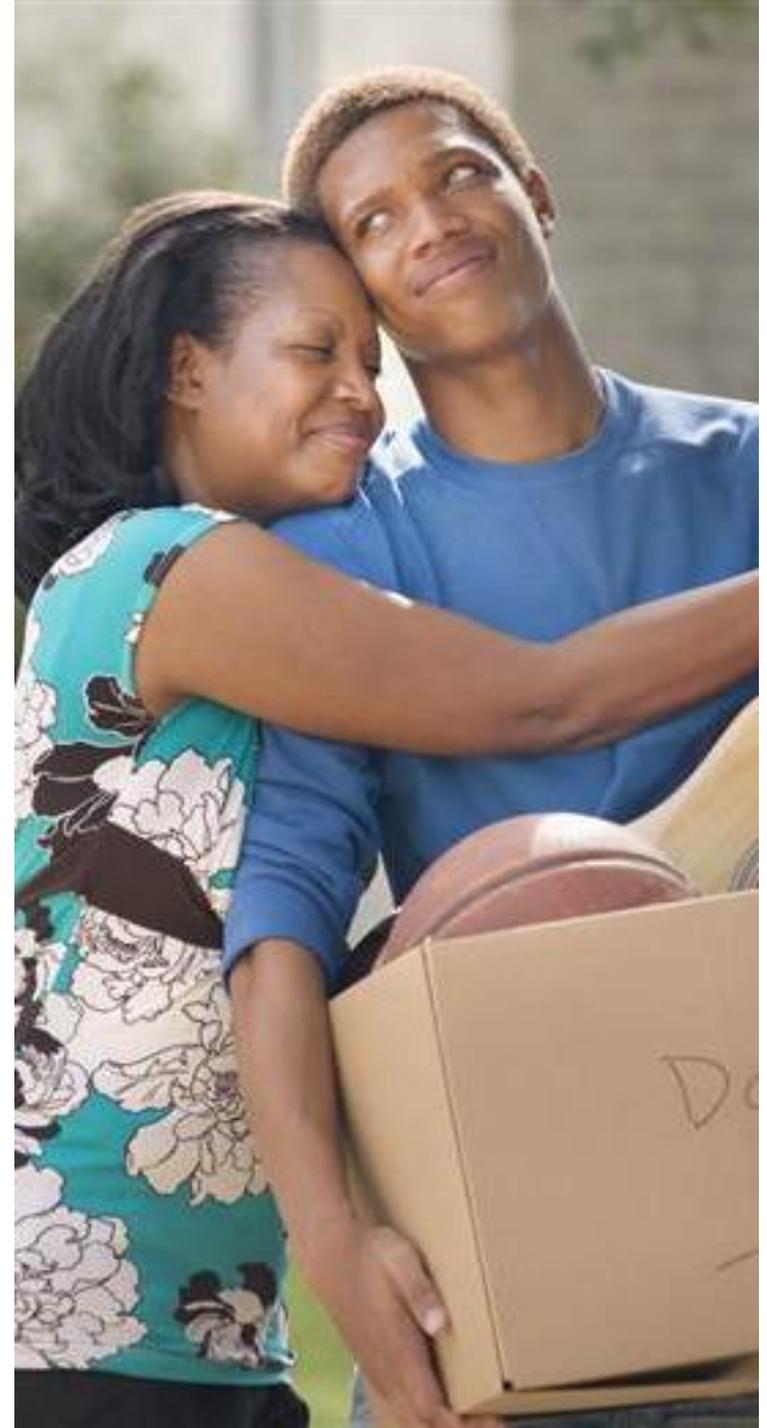


- Occasional **anxious feelings** are a **universal quality** of parenting
- Broader social context in which **parents are constantly engaged in assessing and managing risk** in all areas of their child's life
- **Limits on childhood experiences impede healthy development** (Parents act as gatekeepers due to fears and perceived risks!)



# Gen-X as Parents

- **More involved, but less patient** and reasonable, than their baby-boomer predecessors
- **↑ action-oriented, ↑ self-reliant, and ↑ cynical** than “boomers” ...less respect for individuals in authority
- **↑ expectations of youth program providers** (to help resolve their child’s difficulties) as quickly as possible
- **Less financially secure** than “boomers” were (\$\$ is major source of stress)





# Safety?

- **2013 gun crime rate back to level of early 1960s...Pew Study**
- **2014 violent crime rate down *another* 4.4%...USA Today**
- **Pedestrian, bicyclist and car deaths ALSO at lowest rate in decades... Council on Foreign Relations**
- **Violent crime ↓ 48% (1993–2012); Homicides ↓ down 50.5% (1993-2012); Forcible rape ↓ 34.5% (1993–2012)... FBI Uniform Crime Reports**



# Safety?

- 2013 gun crime rate back to level of early 1960s...Pew Study

**Parents are drowning in bad news!**

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# Camp directors say...

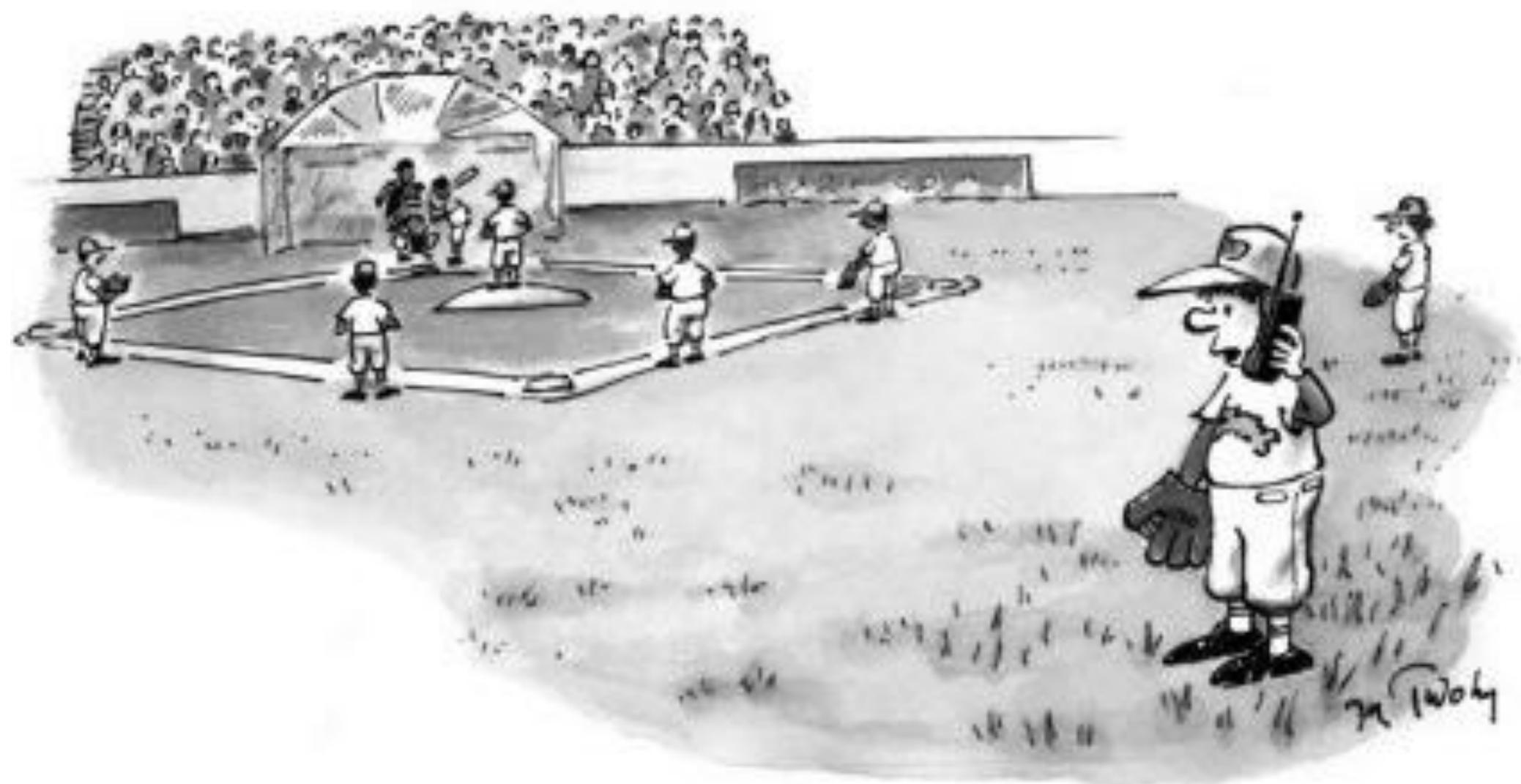
(Garst & Gagnon, 2015)

- 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



*"I am standing up straight!"*

# 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?**



## Reasons for Overparenting?

1. Broader societal context of risk aversion
2. Parents are generally less experienced (smaller families, working parents)
3. Fears of “stranger danger” (abduction)
4. FOMO- Missing important developmental changes
5. When my child isn't successful → I'm not successful
6. ROI- parents demand a “return on the investment” (ROI) they've made in their kids
7. Fears of poor health outcomes?
8. **What else?**



# Strategies



## 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?

# Parenting

- What the child needs

Help parents prepare themselves

Parenting  
the parent needs



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



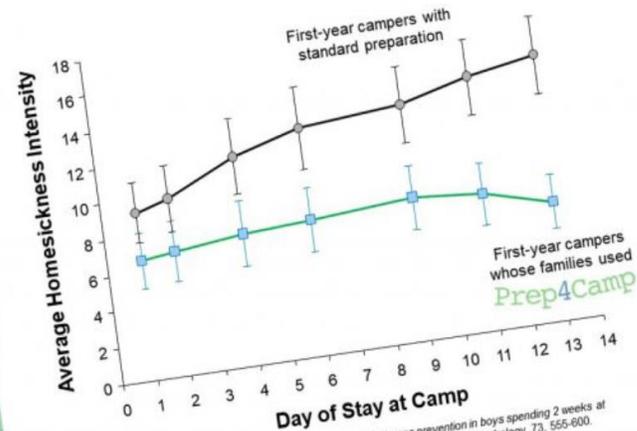
*Camp Kupugani has been named one of the 50 Most Amazing Summer Camps for Kids.*



Research on homesickness  
and adjustment found that  
pre-camp parent training contributed to a 50%  
reduction in 1st-year campers' homesickness.

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(summarized by Thurber, 2018)



# Prep4Camp

Less homesickness  
and more fun. Simple.

Prep4Camp is how  
smart families get the  
most out of camp.



The graph above tells the story. Homesickness intensity increases over time for the average first-year camper. But there's another story: With proper preparation, homesickness intensity can be cut in half and actually decrease over time. The result? More fun! (Source: *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*)

Prep4Camp includes a 25-minute video for families to watch together, a podcast for parents to listen to (on their way home from opening-day drop off), and a PDF tip sheet for kids to bring to camp. Get Prep4Camp today to enjoy all the benefits of camp tomorrow...without the hassle of intense homesickness.



# CAMP PEMIGEWASSET

A camp for boys in the White Mountains of NH, founded in 1908

Parents

Al

learn  
ABOUT

choose  
ACTIVITIES

e  
C

## BUILD LIFE SKILLS



### Camp Pemigewasset: "Letting Go"

from Camp Pemigewasset



03:26



vimeo



## 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”



"Before I write my name on the board, I'll need to know how you're planning to use that data."

# Talking with Anxious Parents (Michael Thompson, 2013)



- Normalize what the parent is saying or feeling (“Over the years, many parents have...”)
- Describe their child’s day-to-day experiences. What have you seen or heard? **KEY MOMENTS!**
- 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



# 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?**

**PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

Player's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**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 regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.

I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.

I promise to make a commitment to volunteer and assist my system when asked, making time whenever I can.

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Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Connect Parents and Staff

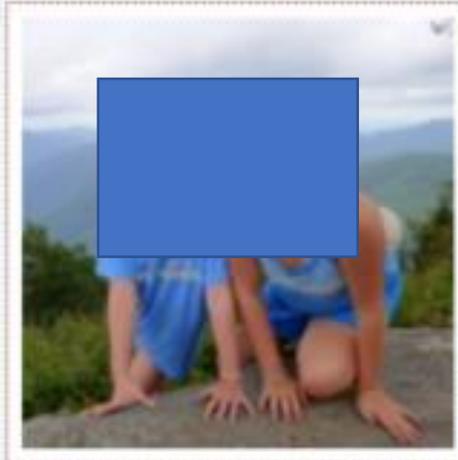
- Give parents an opportunity to build a connection with your staff.
- Staff profiles through organizational webpages, FB groups, or LinkedIn.
- Brief staff videos.
- What else have you tried?



# Parent Liaison

## Keeping in Touch During Camp

### *Parent Liaison*



The Parent Liaison, [REDACTED] is a special member of our staff who pays extra attention to our first time campers. With [REDACTED] 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 Panels for Staff Training



**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/mt](http://schoolmessenger.com/mt) for more info.)



# Texting Services (Remind; Groupme)



**AFTER CAMP**



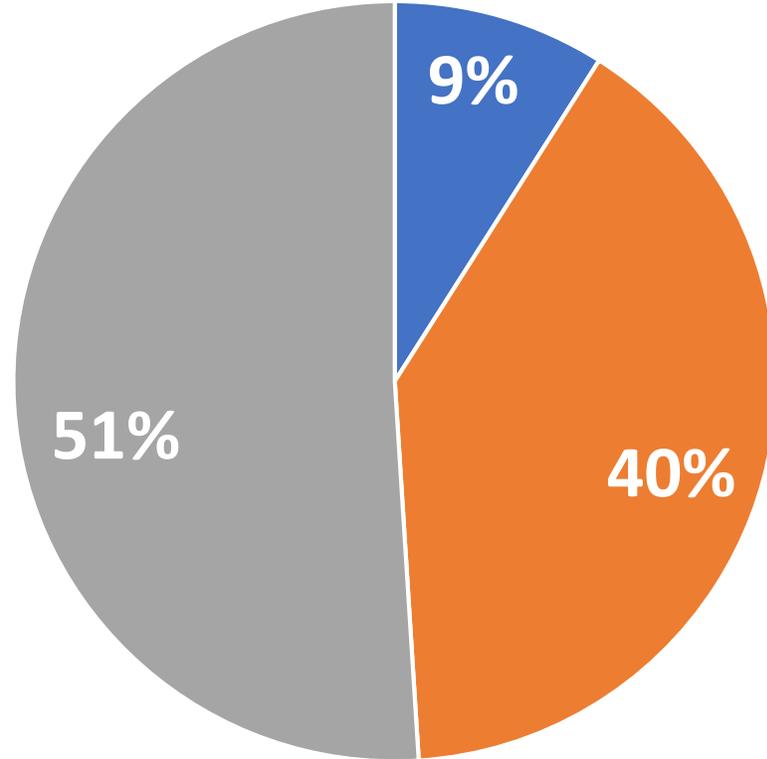
## Close the loop!

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
- Post-camp information shared w/parent

“Transition of care” from a child’s academic year to summer, and from summer to a child’s academic year is critical for ensuring that a child’s health and well-being are properly supported” across the year and across different settings.

# Questions?

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[rjgagno@clermson.edu](mailto:rjgagno@clermson.edu)

Measure & “stuff” available upon request  
(and at [ryangagnon.com](http://ryangagnon.com))

