

Camp Benefits: Top 5 Life Skills Kids Learn at Camp

Article by: *Hailey Eisen for OurKids.net, Canada's trusted source for camps and schools.*

To many people [summer camp for kids](#) might appear like nothing more than fun and games. However, a study conducted in the past few years supports what camp directors have been saying for decades: Camp is a setting for positive youth development where invaluable life skills are acquired and nurtured.

"The major changes in [campers'] growth speaks tremendously of the summer camp experience," says Troy Glover, the director of the University of Waterloo's Healthy Communities Research Network.

Glover spearheaded the Canadian Summer Camp Research Project, the first-ever nationwide and international research and evaluation project of its kind. Conducted in the summer of 2010, the study tracked 1,288 campers, aged three to 18, from 16 overnight and day camps across Canada. The research stage was divided into two parts: one-on-one interviews with camp directors to gather anecdotal evidence, followed by camper surveys to measure behaviours, attitudes and values.

The results demonstrated that for "bubble-wrapped" youth who have been over-programmed and overprotected, camp provides a safe environment to freely learn, grow and develop their capabilities. Summer camp, according to the study, fosters emotional intelligence (or EQ), self-confidence, independence, healthy living, environmental awareness, leadership and other skills that prove beneficial long into adulthood.

Check out the five critical life skills that get a huge boost at summer camp:

1. **How to Get Along With Others:** Talk to any camp alumni and you'll likely hear how some of their most meaningful friendships and lessons on how to get along with others came from camp.

[Read more](#)

2. **How to Overcome Challenges:** It's time to unwrap the "bubble-wrapped" generation. Saturated with 24-hour news highlighting crimes in their communities, many parents today are overprotective of their children. [Read more](#)

3. **How to Get Fit:** A recent Statistics Canada study found that only seven per cent of youth aged six to 19 got the recommended hour a day of exercise they need. Enter summer camp.

[Read more](#)

4. **How to Love the Earth:** "Children need nature for the healthy development of their senses, and, therefore, for learning and creativity," says Richard Louv. [Read more](#)

5. **How to Lead:** When it comes to developing strong leaders, camp provides both implicit and explicit training. [Read more](#)

For more information on the benefits of camp and to help give your kids the best summer camp experience this year, please visit <http://www.ourkids.net/camp!>