



THE RESEARCH

All figures used in the Camp Builds materials come from peer-reviewed, scholarly research. The primary sources include the following projects and publications.

Sorenson, J. (2023). The role of Christian summer camp staff experiences in faith formation and leadership development. *Journal of Youth Ministry* 21:2.

The Camp and Church Leadership Project included interviews of past camp staff, a survey of Lutheran clergy, and surveys of more than 800 summer staff at 50 Lutheran camps in 2021. There was clear and consistent growth among camp staff in leadership, teamwork/relationship skills, and resilience. There was also clear evidence that serving on camp staff plays a significant role in vocational discernment, for both ministry leaders and those in non-ministry fields.

Povilaitis, V., Sibthorp, J., & Richmond, D. (2021). Camp employment as a developmental setting for emerging adults: a mixed-methods study. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership* 13:1, 64–81.

The American Camp Association sponsored the Youth Impact Study, conducted by the research team at the University of Utah. It included qualitative interviews and a longitudinal study of 250 summer camp staff at a representative sample of ACA accredited camps in 2018–19. Among the findings were consistent and significant growth in social awareness, task leadership, and appreciation for being present in the moment.

Botting, R., Ribbe, R., & Robinson, G. (2021). Assessing the impact of summer camp employment on the development of workplace skills. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership* 13:1, 82–95.

This study used a convenience sample of 27 Christian camps that were members of the Christian Camp and Conference Association. It included pre and post-summer surveys of more than 500 staff in summer 2019. The study found significant impacts in three domains related to career development: teamwork, resilience, and leadership.

Duerden, M. et al. (2014). The impact of camp employment on the workforce development of emerging adults. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* 32:1, 26–44.

This article identifies the major elements of the workforce readiness gap and the common outcomes of working on summer camp staff, drawing from multiple studies of employers and research on camp staff. The authors make the case that working on summer camp staff directly addresses the major workforce development needs.

Hart Research Associates. (2015). Falling short: college learning and career success. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. <https://aacu.org/research>.

This study of more than 1,000 business executives and hiring managers assessed the most highly valued skills and knowledge areas of prospective employees, along with the observed gap between career needs and the readiness of college graduates. The most highly valued skills also had the greatest perceived gaps in graduate preparation. Among these were some of the skills most observed among camp staff: ability to work effectively in teams, oral communication, self-motivation, ability to work independently, and ethical judgment/decision-making.