

Increasing Capacity and Sustainability in Summer Camp Evaluation

American Evaluation Association 2014 Conference, Denver, CO

Link to Camp Program Quality Assessment (including link to free pdf of C-PQA short form):
<http://www.acacamps.org/camp2grow/camp-quality-assessment>

Link to Youth Outcomes Battery:
<http://www.acacamps.org/research/youth-outcomes-battery>

Link to Parent and Staff Perceptions Tool:
<http://www.acacamps.org/research/youth-outcomes-battery/staff-parent-perceptions>

Camp Program Quality Assessment

The Camp Program Quality Assessment (C-PQA) is an observational tool that helps camps assess the types of interactions and experiences available in the camp setting that contribute to positive youth development. The resulting quantitative scores are documented with specific evidence gathered during the observation period. The C-PQA is based on the High/Scope Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA), which was scientifically validated in 2004 and continues to be improved through its use in youth program networks across the United States.

Like the Youth PQA, the C-PQA is designed to support a robust assessment process that can be used under a range of conditions and for a variety of purposes:

- The C-PQA can be used in a wide variety of day and residential camp settings serving children 10 years old or older
- The C-PQA has valid application as:
 - (1) a self-assessment by internal staff teams,
 - (2) a monitoring and feedback tool for supervisory staff, and
 - (3) a quality metric for external evaluation and research
- The C-PQA can be used easily by administrative staff after a brief training
- Support services and trainings are being developed to help camp professionals incorporate this tool into their improvement and evaluation plans.

The C-PQA consists of 3 forms:

- *FORM A: Program offerings.* This observational form is designed for structured programs that youth attend for a set time with a set purpose while at camp. These offerings may be referred to as programs, clubs, workshops, classes, etc.
- *FORM B: Informal climate.* This observational form is designed to capture youth experiences in non-program offering times. Form B also includes an optional segment that focuses on the camp's attempts to develop an affinity for nature component in their programs for campers. Examples include meal times, transition times, group time, etc.
- *FORM C: Camp structure and administration.* This form is intended to capture how the camp's structure and administration support program quality. This form is completed through an interview with the camp director or other appropriate person.

Youth Outcomes Battery

Provides eleven measures that focus on youth outcomes common to the camp experience. The statistically tested questionnaires are designed for camp and youth programs, age-appropriate, and easily administered tools that can be individualized to your camp.

The tools:

- Help you evaluate your program goals
- Document the changes in your campers so that information can be shared with key stakeholders (parents, funders, staff, etc.)
- Demonstrate your commitment to quality programs that make a difference in people's lives

- Meet expectations for trust worthy instruments (high reliability and validity statistical checks prove the questionnaires accuracy)
- Can be combined to measure socially relevant concepts (e.g., Environmental Leadership could be measured by combining the scales for teamwork, responsibility, independence, problem-solving, and affinity for nature)

These tools focus on 11 outcomes common to many camp programs. They include questions that ask if the camp experience has helped campers develop:

- **Friendship Skills** (i.e., make friends and maintain relationships)*
- **Independence** (i.e., rely less on adults and other people for solving problems and for their day-to-day activities)*
- **Teamwork** (i.e., become more effective when working in groups of their peers)*
- **Family Citizenship** (i.e., encourage attributes important to being a member of a family)**
- **Perceived Competence** (i.e., believe that they can be successful in the things they do)*
- **Interest in Exploration** (i.e., be more curious, inquisitive, eager to learn new things)*
- **Responsibility** (i.e., learn to be accountable for their own actions and mistakes)*
- **Affinity for Nature** (i.e., develop feelings of emotional attraction toward nature)*
- **Problem-Solving Confidence** (i.e., believe they have abilities to resolve problems)*
- **Camp Connectedness** (i.e., feeling welcomed and supported at camp)*
- **Spiritual Well-Being** (i.e., having purpose and meaning in life, transcendence)

* Also available in the Staff and Parent Perceptions Tool

** Also available in the Parent Perceptions Tool

Staff and Parent Perceptions Tool

These tools offer camps feedback from staff and/or parents on outcomes' growth in the youth in their programs, especially very young participants.

Directions: Determine your overall purpose and intent for collecting this outcome information.

Select a reasonable time period for assessment. For the Staff Tool, select the most appropriate staff member to assess each camper. Create the final survey. Allow the camp staff time and space to complete the surveys. Analyze the data to serve the intended purposes. For the Parent Tool, create a Parent Progress Report if desired.

“Change Only” (basic) is used when you want to see if any improvement occurred as a result of your program. With the staff or parent version, those adults would indicate toward the end of the program (or after the child returned home) their perception of change based on observations of the child.

“Status” or “Status + Retrospective Change” (detailed) is used to report the state or position of the child on a particular outcome, so it identifies actual strengths and weaknesses. When combined with the retrospective change statement, it’s possible to determine how much of their current status on an outcome can be attributed to that specific program.

For more information, contact:

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Thanks for attending!