



This document reflects 2023 Camp Insights Survey responses related to the following societal trends:



Note that respondents rated each societal trend using the following prompt - **Please rate the extent to which the societal trend below creates significant opportunities or challenges for your camp over the next 5 years** – using a 1 to 5 scale where **1 = Not Significant** and **5 = Very Significant**. *The full list of trends and their ratings can be found in the appendix of the full [2023 JCamp 180 Camp Insights Report](#).*

In addition, respondents were asked to share areas of both strength and growth in their efforts related to the **role of parents**. This document summarizes the responses camps reported – we hope these ideas help other camps as they determine how to best respond to these societal trends.

The Role of Parents

The changing role of parents has had a significant impact on camp staff and lay leaders. The trend re: "Helicopter" or "Snowplow" parenting is the only trend whose ranking has increased each year of the survey. This year it went from the 10th to the 5th most important trend.

And the most common response to the question about what sucks the joy from working at camp was far and away related to the expectations and involvement of parents. One respondent summarized the feelings of many others when they shared that the biggest factor that sucks the joy from their work at camp is "dealing with parents for whom there is a disconnect between their child's needs, what we see and address on a daily basis, and reality."

Respondents shared both their struggles in these areas as well as new approaches to improve relationships with parents.

“Helicopter” or “Snowplow” parenting

Camps are aiming to serve a growing desire many parents have to know about or even shape their children’s experience in camp while preserving staff’s ability to manage the camp and strengthen campers’ resilience and independence. “We try to ensure that parents have the communication and window into camp that they are looking for, but balanced with the awareness that their kids are away from home and not everything needs to be micromanaged.”

Camps are trying to find ways to “educate parents about the importance of giving their kids the opportunity to solve challenges on their own” and “establishing clear expectations for appropriate behavior” or even a “parent code of conduct.”

Camps are coping in different ways. Some camps have begun to limit communications, including reducing photo access while others are moving in the opposite direction and increasing their communications with parents. Whatever the approach, camps are applying a wide range of communication techniques. These include:

- **Pre-summer**
 - Addition of language about partnering delivered through parent handbooks and spring forums
 - Pre-summer communications “focused on helping parents feel more informed and less anxious about the summer.” This includes communicating about mental health resources.
 - Enhanced information on camper forms

- **During the summer**
 - “Pre-emptive calls during the summer to allow parents to hear our perspective and how we’re managing the situation before it gets to them from their camper”
 - More newsletters
 - Blogging, vlogging, and zoom calls with a focus on pictures and videos

Emphasis parents place on enhancing their children’s skill development

In response to the emphasis parents are placing on their children’s skill development, camps are hiring more professionals/specialists to lead activities; adding new specialty programs; and better marketing their specialty programs. These specialty programs include STEAM, culinary arts, and Jewish pride/antisemitism programming. One camp even mentioned “programs at camp to address how to use camp as a leveraging building tool for campers looking toward college.”