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How Summer Camp Fills the Learning Gap and Teaches Skills Needed for Success

For today's youth, being successful requires more than just reading, writing and arithmetic. To be successful both at school and in life demands a variety of skills. According to Paul Tough, author of [How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character](#), what matters most in a child's development is "whether we are able to help them develop a very different set of qualities, a list that includes persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit and self-confidence." It is these qualities Tough states that "are more crucial than sheer brainpower to achieving success." Schools however, can't do it alone. Schools and parents need to seek resources and support from other enrichment channels in order to meet children's expanded needs and extend the learning done in the classroom. With studies that show children lose a lot of what they've learned during the summer months, researchers agree that summer learning programs not only fill the learning gap, but offer children a different set of experiences than those provided during the regular school year. Summer programs offer innovative approaches to learning, integrating varied instruction with physical, recreational, cultural, and development activities.

The flow of curiosity that can happen with enriching summer experiences can be exponential; with curiosity leading to exploration, discovery, pleasure, repetition, master, new skill development, self esteem, and ultimately more exploration. If you do the math from the time your child is in kindergarten – 12th grade, you'd see your child spends 10 weeks per year or 120 weeks in total being on summer vacation. Since each school year is 40 weeks, summertime really equals a total of 3 years of schooling – a large amount of time families can make the most of, giving them time and the right environment to explore and grow.

For Pre-School age children, Summer camp can be a great way to prepare your child for when they go to school, teach them how to socialize and get them used to be away from parents and home for longer stretches. It's also a great way to expose young children to a variety of different types of activities to see where their interests lie and start the flow of curiosity early on.



Selecting the Right Camp

In selecting the right camp for your child, there are a number of questions parents will want to get answers to before choosing the right one or ones:

1. **Location** – Is it convenient?
2. **Schedule** – Do the times work? Is after care offered?
3. **Options** – Can both my younger and older child attend?
4. **Staff** – Are they qualified?
5. **Staff Ratio** – Is there at least an 8:1 camper to staff ratio or better for younger campers?
6. **Friends** – If my child doesn't attend with friends, how does the camp help children develop new friendships?
7. **Lunch** – Is it provided or available for purchase?
8. **Return Rate** – Do a high percentage of campers return?
9. **Quality** – How is my child spending their day? Are they just keeping busy or learning things that will stay with them? Do the activities and projects encourage creativity and problem solving?
10. **Owners/Founders** – Are they involved?
11. **Value** – Are their discounts offered, such as early bird, first time camper, multiple week, sibling and/or referral?

Once your child goes to camp, make sure the learning doesn't stop there. Be sure to read the handouts the camp provides, check out resources related to the camp's sessions or themes, communicate with the Camp Director and respond to surveys as that's the best way to improve any camp's offerings.

Contributed By: Margot Segal, Edventure More

Edventure More's summer camps, [Camp Edmo](#) and [Camp EdTech](#) integrate proven scientific techniques and the latest in education and development into their award winning, hands-on curriculum to create a 'whole child' framework that builds Intellectual, Social, Emotional, and Physical Intelligence. Edmo Jr. at the organization's San Francisco Noe Valley/Twin Peaks location is designed especially for 4-year-old Preschool campers! Edmo Jr. is centered around four weekly themes where campers get to explore science and social emotional learning through hands-on activities, story time and play time with their own dedicated Edmo Jr. staff.

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