



# Including Children of All Abilities in Summer Camp: A Universal Design Approach

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# Rationale for Inclusive Camp

- Benefits to all participants
  - Increased opportunities to model appropriate behaviors, social interactions, positive attitudes, levels of independence, self-esteem, friendships, and age-appropriate recreation/physical activity performance
- Benefits to staff
  - Reduced turnover/greater meaning and contentment, increased education, and awareness of diversity
- Benefits to parents
  - More choices/opportunities for recreation, noticeable growth in child's socialization and independence, and increased friendship
  - Consistent with parental preferences

# Inclusive Camp: State of the Art

- A minimal amount of camps across the U.S. are providing inclusive experiences
  - Less than 10% of ACA-accredited camps are inclusive
  - But becoming an ACA priority (“The power of partnerships in stretching your camp’s muscle,” Tom Rosenberg, President/CEO, ACA)
- When inclusion works, a multitude of best practices are utilized from the top-down/bottom-up
  - Implemented before, during, and after camp
- Need for a valid accreditation tool to guide inclusive camps across North America

# Inclusive Camp: State-of-the-Art Summary

- Myriad benefits for all campers and staff
- Literature on evidence-based inclusive camp practices is emerging
- Research concerning best practices and camper outcomes is lacking



# A Longitudinal Study

Summers of: 2015 - 2017

Data Collected:

- Telephone Interviews with Senior Staff and Inclusion Coordinators
  - Focus Groups
  - Staff Surveys
  - Camp Visits



# Interview Questions Addressed

- How initiative had changed the way they served campers with disabilities
- Marketing strategies
- Assessment (in-take process) of campers with disabilities
- Role of the Inclusion Coordinator
- Changes in staffing patterns
- What staff training looked like (who received, about what, how much, how it changed from the prior summer)
- Preparation of campers and their families for inclusive camp
- Barriers to inclusion
- Best practices
- Specific examples of social inclusion
- Future concerns about including campers with disabilities
- Sustainability



# Staff Surveys Addressed

- Role in camp
- Perceptions of training and preparation
- Perceptions of support received
- Personal perspectives on inclusion
- Specific examples of how they helped to include a camper with a disability
- Specific examples of how campers without disabilities included a camper with a disability
- Demographics (age, prior camper, years working at camp, experience with individuals with disabilities)

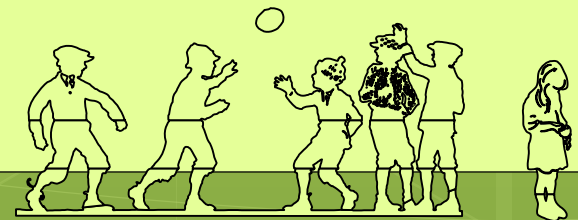


# Getting Started:

## Understanding the Continuum of Inclusion



- **Physical Integration:** Participation in activities as one's right to access has been recognized
- **Functional Inclusion:** Age-appropriate functioning in the environment and experiencing similar enjoyment and success as their peers without disabilities
- **Social Inclusion:** Participation in activities with people not paid to provide the person with support, with resulting positive social interactions and acceptance



# You are not in this alone!

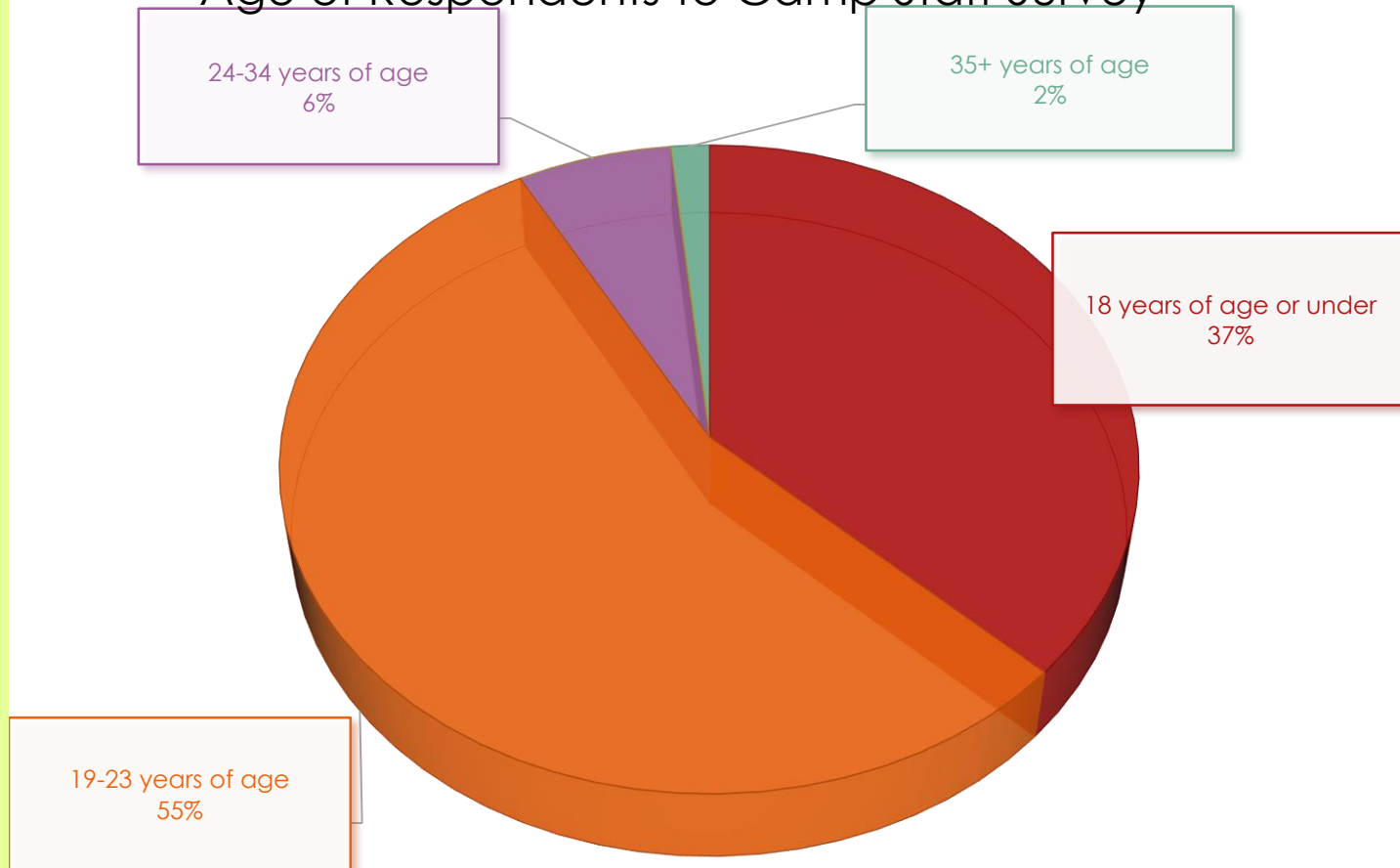


- Trained floaters can fill in as needed if another staff member needs a break
- Floaters can provide assistance or an alternative for a low-interest activity
- Floaters also share in the responsibility for peer socialization/Trainer-advocacy model
- Take precautions to prevent camper dependence on a specific floater
- Floaters can save the day!



# Most camp staff are young & inexperienced

Age of Respondents to Camp Staff Survey



# Inclusive Camp – Best Practice: Roles of the Inclusion Coordinator

**Year 1:** Inclusion Coordinators provided direct support to campers with disabilities

**Year 2:** Inclusion Coordinators started partnering with other staff members/shared responsibility

**Year 3:** Inclusion Coordinators were an integral part of leadership team, “coordinating” inclusion supports within a decentralized model



# Inclusive Camp – Best Practice: Decentralized Model

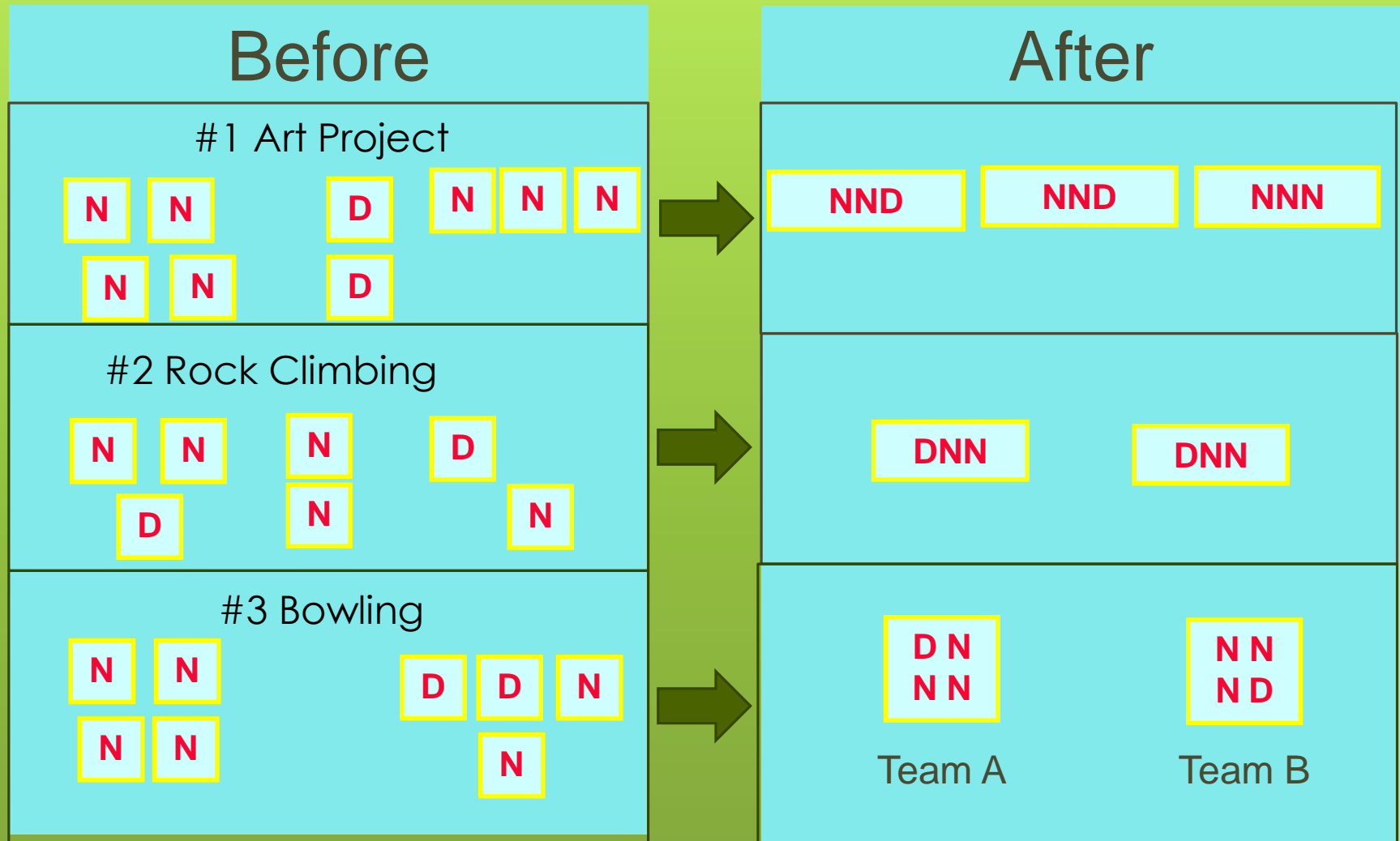
**Year 1:** Inclusion Coordinators known as “inclusion experts” – “putting out fires”

**Year 2:** Number of staff responsible for inclusion broadens

**Year 3:** All staff becoming responsible for inclusion, with emergence of fellow campers also taking responsibility



# Inclusive Camp – Best Practice: Peer Supports Through Cooperative Activities

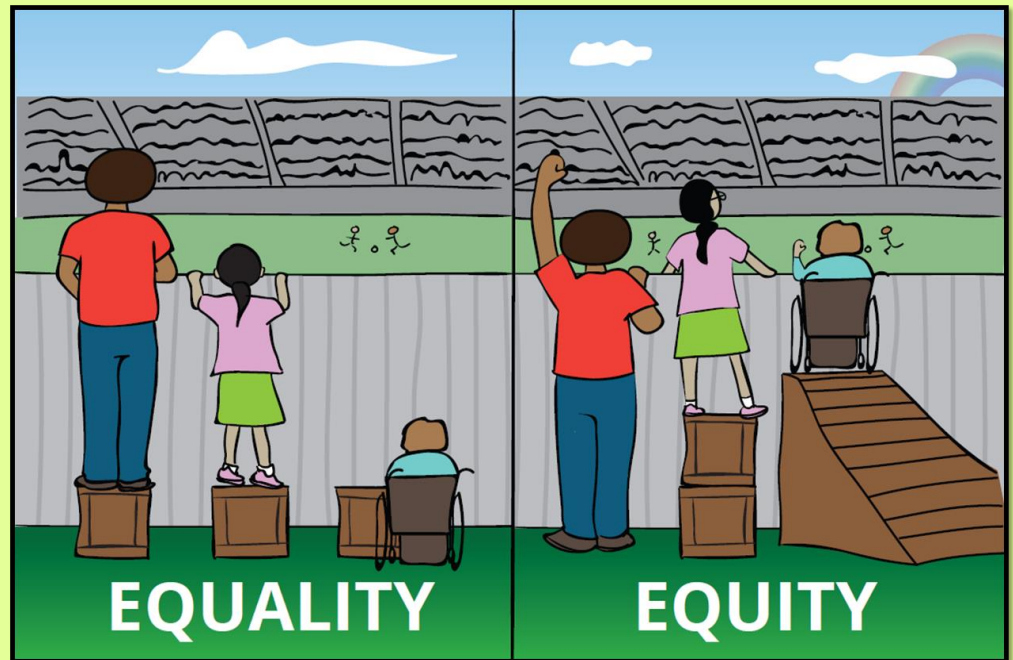


**N** = Participant without disability

**D** = Participant with disability

# Inclusive Camp – Best Practice: Identical vs. Equitable

- Equity provides children with opportunities to participate in modified, although not identical, versions of activities
- Floaters available to provide equitable activity



## Equality



## Equity



# Inclusive Camp – Best Practice:

## **Universal Design Principles**

- Universal Design creates environments and programs, from inception, that cater to the broadest number of people and abilities
- A sampling of UD principles include: simple and intuitive, flexible, varying physical effort, and tolerance for error
- Users are able to achieve their personal goals through effective environmental design



# Seven Principles of Universal Design

1. Equitable Use
2. Flexibility in Use
3. Simple and Intuitive Use
4. Perceptible Information
5. Tolerance for Error
6. Low Physical Effort
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use

# Examples of Universal Design in Camp Settings



Chavurah	Thursday, June 23
8:00	Boker Tov
8:30-9:00	Aruchat Boker/Staff Meeting
9:00-9:30	Nikayon
9:50-10:45	Art
10:55-11:50	Athletics
11:50-12:00	Pre-Lunch Dancing
12:00-12:50	Aruchat Tzohorayim (Lunch)
1:00-1:55	Menuchah
2:05-3:00	JLife: One & One 1A
3:10-4:05	Green Time
4:15-4:25	Snack
4:35-5:30	Free Swim
5:40-6:35	Shower Time
6:45-7:45	Aruchat Erev (Dinner)
7:55-8:25	T'filah
8:35-9:25	Evening Program
9:35-9:45	Green Time/Siyum L'Yom
9:50	In Cabin Evening Ritual
10:05	Lights Out



# Examples of Accommodations (cont.)





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an environment and/or program that is designed from the outset to cater to and reach the broadest number of people.

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flexible, diverse, and uses approaches and strategies that do not stigmatize, but on the contrary, make people feel welcome.

# The Epiphany

*Universal Design embodies a new and important understanding about programs, curriculum, and the overall environment:*

*Poor performance may reflect program/curriculum/environmental disability, rather than participant disability.*



# Sustaining an Inclusive Camp?

- Borrow from evidence-based practices already described
- Work with camp leadership & board members
- Hire prior campers with disabilities for staff positions
- Document outcomes (for those with/without disabilities; staff)
- Establish a community of practice (for full-time staff)
- Solicit \$ for inclusion coordinator, accommodations, & smart environmental design



*Do something bigger altogether*

# Literature Support

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