



Evaluation of FJC  
Ruderman/Alexander  
Inclusion Initiative  
**Summer 2017**





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# Executive Summary

A carefully selected group of six overnight Jewish camps (B'nai B'rith Camp, Camp Chi, Camp Judaea, CYJ Texas, JCA Shalom, URJ Harlam) by the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) formed the cohort for this Ruderman/Alexander inclusion initiative. For the past 3 years, since 2015, under the leadership of Lisa Tobin, FJC's Director of Inclusion Initiatives, these camps have placed a deliberate focus on including children and youth of varying abilities. This initiative was an intentional effort to provide resources and training to help camps welcome and accommodate campers with disabilities in a systematic and sustainable manner.

The InFocus® evaluation team (Dr. Stuart J. Schleien, Kimberly Miller, Ginger Walton, & Carla Roth) was contracted to conduct a comprehensive, 3-year evaluation of these efforts. Myriad quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods were used to study current camp practices regarding their inclusion efforts. In this manner, practices used to include campers with and without disabilities could be identified, described, and evaluated regarding their effectiveness. Additionally, obstacles that interfered with efforts to socially include campers with disabilities could be identified and addressed. By focusing on these camps that were invested in facilitating and sustaining inclusive camp, best practices could be identified and described so that they may be replicated across other FJC camps in future years. This evaluation also enabled us to identify components of camp where more attention could be devoted (e.g., staff over-dependence on inclusion coordinator, additional training needed for certain types of staff members).

In order to identify, define, and evaluate inclusive camp practices, several methods were used to study nearly every facet of the summer camp inclusion process. The InFocus® team's knowledge of inclusive service delivery and best practices to facilitate social inclusion, along with the implementation of several complementary data collection instruments, helped us target key staff members to identify and evaluate camp practices that were implemented during the past 3 summers (2015-2017). Several of these salient practices included: hiring an inclusion coordinator year-round, recruiting campers and staff with and without disabilities, comprehensive camper intake prior to the start of camp, staff training before and during camp, facilitating a socially inclusive camp culture across the entire camp, implementing universal design principles, using programmatic best practices, addressing challenging behaviors, and strategic planning to sustain and grow these efforts. Additionally, because the inclusion coordinator (IC) played an ever-evolving role at each camp, substantial efforts were made to assess the IC's roles (e.g., coordination, training), collaborative activity, and overall effectiveness in facilitating inclusion.

Analysis of quantitative [camp staff surveys, relevant items of the *Camper Satisfaction Insights* survey, sociometric techniques (2017 only)] and qualitative data collected during telephone interviews with ICs and senior staff provided deep insights into the progress of the inclusion initiative of the six camps in the cohort. Camp staff surveys gathered data regarding demographics, training and preparation for staff roles, support received from the IC and larger camper care team, and personal perspectives on social inclusion. Telephone interviews addressed the use of findings and recommendations from the 2015 and 2016 evaluations, and their impact on 2017 staff training/hiring, the decentralized approach and

coordination by the IC, growing inclusive camp culture among staff and campers alike, evidence of inclusive camp structure, sustainability of effort, and scalability potential. Data were also collected from Camp Kaylie in 2016 and 2017, but not included in the cohort analysis, since it is a camp designed from its inception to be inclusive. However, Camp Kaylie provided further understanding of best practices for inclusive camp. Our analysis of the cohort revealed the following key findings:

1. There was a 172% increase in the number of campers with disabilities served by camps in the cohort in 2017, as compared to 2015. The proportion of campers with disabilities within any particular camp is approaching, and in a few cases, well exceeding “natural proportions,” where 8% of the overall camp population has a disability. Camps had much success in retaining campers with disabilities from 2015 to 2017.
2. As recommended earlier in the *2015 Evaluation Report*, all camps have been in the process of adopting a “decentralized model” where the IC’s worked tirelessly and successfully with camp staff (unit heads, counselors, specialists) to take on greater responsibility for campers with disabilities and others in need of accommodations. Staff are currently better prepared to address challenging behaviors and support the success of all campers, rather than being dependent on the IC as the disability “expert” and “go-to” person. By empowering their staff to take on greater responsibility for all campers through a decentralized model, ICs were able to more effectively serve and include campers with disabilities and others without diagnoses who were also in need of supports (i.e., campers falling in the “gray area”). This decentralization and sharing of responsibility resulted in an increased “culture of inclusion” throughout the entire camp cohort.
3. Training a broader number of staff to facilitate the inclusion of campers with disabilities proved to be successful. ICs spent significantly more time delegating responsibilities to staff camp-wide, and coordinated these efforts. With camp inclusion becoming an increasing priority throughout the 3 years of the initiative, staff received significantly more training on how to accommodate children and support socialization among campers of varying abilities. Role playing and modeling by the IC became significant training tools. ICs spent more time providing training to staff in real-time, when action to address a challenging situation was actually occurring. There was an increase in staff training with an emphasis on inclusion (e.g., universal design, “equitable vs. identical” opportunities, positive behavior supports, everyone’s responsibility). As recommended by the evaluation team, activity specialists received increased training in 2016 and 2017, and consequently were significantly more comfortable accommodating campers with disabilities. Camp staff were pleased with the additional responsibilities and training they were receiving. Due to the decentralized model and increasing training and support provided by the ICs, the ICs reported being in “crisis mode” significantly less frequently.
4. Year-round availability of the IC allowed them to be more involved in staff hiring, reviewing camper applications, designing staff training, making cabin assignments, and matching counselors with campers. In all camps, the IC became an integral part of the leadership team professional staff, further prioritizing the inclusion initiative and helping facilitate a culture of inclusion.

5. Challenging behaviors are exhibited by campers with and without a disability label with greater frequency, and require staff training on proactive approaches and practices (e.g., positive behavior supports). This increasing number of challenges was to be expected as a greater number of campers of varying abilities were being served. Campers without obvious disabilities (e.g., autism spectrum disorder, mental illness) presented substantial problems and time commitments of staff. Nevertheless, there was considerably less reference to certain groups of children. Within the developing decentralized model, including more substantial and ongoing staff training prior to camp and in real time, along with the use of quiet areas at camps ("chill zones"), many more staff were able to address challenging camper behaviors. ICs spent significantly less time "putting out fires," and much more time preparing and coordinating staff, and facilitating social inclusion among campers.
6. Within a decentralized model of staff responsibility and support, and with more staff focused on social inclusion rather than physical integration only, camps progressed along a continuum of inclusion. Camps across the cohort made big strides over 3 years - - moving from a mere physical integration of campers, to functional inclusion where campers behaved and participated more appropriately, to social inclusion. Interviewees clearly identified the development of friendships and more socially inclusive behaviors between differently-abled campers, and currently have many rich "stories" to share with board members, families, and the larger community. Universally designed approaches at camp where all campers receive benefits, along with many new "stories" of social inclusion becoming the norm, have become "the sell" by camp leaders for additional resources.
7. All camps reported value in being inclusive and a commitment to sustaining the inclusion initiative beyond the 3 years of grant funding. Despite additional growth stemming from a sharing of stories about inclusion and effective word-of-mouth marketing, there remains a concern regarding additional staff and other resource needs. In particular, camp leaders have identified a need for additional resources in support of inclusive camp, including increased funds to support IC salaries, potentially IC assistants, 1-on-1 support personnel, and an extra counselor in each cabin. Also, additional housing may be necessary for these added staff members, and the renovation of cabins will likely be necessary to accommodate campers with disabilities.

Within 3 years of this inclusive camp initiative, there now exist many impressive qualities in place at the six camps (plus Camp Kaylie) within the cohort. An adopted "culture of inclusion," the presence of highly skilled ICs, a decentralized model of supports, and buy-in from camp leadership and board members, all serve as a strong foundation moving forward. Camp staff are attracted to the inclusion concept and most would be willing to continue to work in this type of setting. It appears that inclusion is sustainable from philosophical, programmatic, and resource standpoints, and that many, if not all of the practices being used to include and support campers of varying abilities are relevant and achievable at other camps under the FJC umbrella. Benefits accrued by campers with and without disabilities, and the overall Jewish camp movement appear to far outweigh the necessary efforts and costs associated with inclusive camp. Ms. Lisa Tobin, FJC Director of Inclusion Initiatives, provided effective leadership and support to these camps helping ensure that the Ruderman and Alexander Foundations achieved their

goals to enhance the inclusion of campers with disabilities and all of its resulting benefits (e.g., strengthening the Jewish community) throughout the United States. These evaluative efforts and progress toward creating inclusive camp would not have been possible without the ongoing efforts and support of senior staff, inclusion coordinators, camp staff (camper care teams, unit heads, counselors, specialists), and campers and their family members throughout the cohort.

Creating a socially inclusive and sustainable camp takes much effort and commitment, and we believe it is a most worthwhile endeavor. But this work is never complete!

# Cohort Top 10 Changes From 2015 to 2017

1. Labels do not define the person or one's needs
2. Less "us" and "them" language
3. All staff means *all staff* in a decentralized model
4. Staff expect to accommodate campers
5. Training and delegation lead to success
6. Improved staff communication
7. Universal design is embraced
8. Camps being recognized as inclusive
9. Social inclusion is readily identified by campers and staff
10. Inclusion benefits everyone

# Background

## Inclusive Summer Camp

FJC's established definition of an inclusive camp formed the philosophical foundation for the evaluation protocols and data analyses. As stated in *The Inclusion Training Guide for Jewish Summer Camp* (Tobin & Blas, 2015)<sup>1</sup>:

*"Inclusion of children with disabilities at camp is the participation of such campers to the greatest possible extent in the full experience of a regular camp setting alongside their peers. Campers with and without disabilities do all camp activities together, live together and eat together, with no separation. The inclusive camp or program is structured to allow all campers to live and participate together while receiving appropriate support and services based on their individual needs. Behavioral support and accommodations are incorporated into daily living, oftentimes under the guidance of an inclusion coordinator. The inclusion coordinator works closely with all staff to collectively provide and implement necessary accommodations and programmatic changes to achieve success for each camper."* (pp. 15-16)

## Inclusive Camping Vision Statement by Lisa Tobin, Foundation for Jewish Camp

One of the key teachings in the Torah is that each human being is created *B'Tzelem Elohim* – in the Divine image. Jewish camp is a sacred community which, as a rule, has always been willing to find common ground in respecting and accommodating individual values and needs. The values and needs of campers with disabilities should not be an exception. The 24/7, joyous environment of summer camp builds Jewish identity, strengthens the Jewish community, and fosters Jewish leadership. The Foundation for Jewish Camp is committed to ensuring that every Jewish child—regardless of ability—is able to experience joyous Jewish summers.

Fourteen percent of children in North America are defined as having disabilities, and the percentage is even larger when those with physical disabilities are included. However, in 2012, campers with disabilities represented only 3% of overall Jewish overnight campers. Based on feedback from families of children with disabilities, advocacy groups, and camp professionals, FJC engaged in a research project with Laszlo Strategies in 2013, the first of its kind in the Jewish community.

The results guided FJC to envision a future where campers with disabilities and their families would experience camp as fully and completely as their neurotypical peers. *Our ultimate goal is for children with disabilities to comprise at least 10% of the total camper population at Jewish camp across North America.* Our intention is to serve children with complex disabilities as well as behavioral disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Tobin, L. & Blas, H. (2015). *Inclusion training guide for Jewish summer camps*. New York, NY: Foundation for Jewish Camp.

Based on our research, and in consultation with experts, we believe that this goal is ambitious but achievable. FJC's strategy focuses on three distinct but overlapping areas:

- Staffing and Training
- Physical Accessibility
- Vocational and Life Skills Training Programs

To achieve these lofty goals, an investment of this magnitude should begin first and foremost with a training initiative that enables camps to ready themselves to serve campers in an effective way and to ensure that they will benefit from a successful, meaningful, and fun summer experience.

FJC aims to make it possible for camps at different stages of readiness to become involved in the disabilities enterprise and recognizes the ability to include more children with disabilities will require not only training, but more accessible bunks and facilities. This will be achievable only with significant investments of time and money by philanthropists, federations, and camp communities. FJC is keenly aware that Jewish children with disabilities have been underserved by the field of Jewish camp. As a research and data-driven organization, with a reputation for delivering programs of excellence that elevate the field of Jewish camp, FJC will continue to broaden access to Jewish summer experiences for all Jewish children.

The FJC Ruderman/Alexander Inclusion Initiative has allowed FJC to focus on staffing and training, paired with an advocacy awareness campaign. FJC began work with a cohort of six camps across the U.S. Each camp hired an inclusion coordinator who would be present at camp in the summer on a full-time basis and on a part-time basis during the year in order to work with staff, parents, and conduct proper intakes. FJC provided training for each camp's leadership team—director, assistant director, and inclusion coordinator—with a focus on universal design, developing strategies to manage camper behaviors, preparing inclusive environments, and cooperative learning strategies for all campers. Each camp receives support from a mentor. A community of practice (CoP) was also put into place to further support these inclusion coordinators along with others across the field. Topic-based webinars and camp-specific projects are an integral part of the CoP.

An important aspect of this initiative is to assess the administrative and programmatic processes used to create and sustain an inclusive summer camp model, so that camp staff and campers alike are supported toward the goal of socially inclusive camping. To better achieve this, FJC contracted with the InFocus® research team to conduct a 3-year longitudinal study to examine inclusive camp processes and camper outcomes. With the support of this research, camps will be able to make course corrections and develop best practices. The ultimate goal of the research will be to identify best practices at all levels of the camp environment that can be used to create successful and scalable inclusion models across Jewish camps.

## **Purpose of the Evaluation**

This comprehensive evaluation assessed the processes used to create, implement, and sustain the inclusive Jewish camp experience in overnight camp. Results from Summers 2015 through 2017 within the

context of this 3-year longitudinal evaluation, helped identify best practices at leadership, staffing, programmatic, and camper-parent levels that resulted in inclusive and sustainable camp practices. Additionally, shortfalls and obstacles that interfered with the full social inclusion of campers with disabilities were identified. Based on this comprehensive and longitudinal evaluation and recommendations, it is our hope that the FJC will reach their goals to facilitate a community of practice where inclusion is and remains the priority in the field of Jewish camp, and make it possible for children of varying abilities to participate in immersive, joyous, Jewish summer experiences.

# Methodology

A mixed-method evaluation approach was used, combining the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data across multiple data sources. Data were collected through telephone interviews, surveys, a review of camper data, and sociometric evaluation. Sources of data included senior staff, inclusion coordinators (ICs), counselors, unit heads, one-on-one supports for campers with disabilities, activity specialists, other camp staff, as well as campers. Data from parents' perspectives were also assessed and included in the data analysis, through the *Camper Satisfaction Insights* survey. Triangulation of data provided a rich and vivid image of the inclusive camp initiative.

Participants of this evaluation were representative staff (depending on the data collection method) from the six camps comprising the cohort of the inclusion initiative: B'nai B'rith Camp, Neotsu, OR; JCA Shalom, Malibu, CA; Camp Judaea, Hendersonville, NC; Camp Young Judaea Texas, Wimberley, TX; JCC Camp Chi, Wisconsin Dells, WI; and URJ Camp Harlam, Kunkletown, PA. Data were also collected from Camp Kaylie, Wurtsboro, NY, but not included in the cohort analysis, as it is a camp designed from its inception to be inclusive. However, Camp Kaylie provided further understanding of best practices for inclusive camp.

## Telephone Interviews

In the 2015 and 2016 camp evaluations, the InFocus team conducted pre- and post-camp interviews with each of the ICs and one senior staff member representing each camp in the cohort. The interviews revealed plans prior to the camp season, as well as the successes, struggles, and problem-solving that followed camp. As camps were able to articulate specific goals and strategies for summer 2017 during the post-camp interviews of 2016, it was determined that a post-camp interview alone would provide necessary information concerning growth and sustainability of the inclusion initiative in 2017.

Thirteen (13) telephone interviews were conducted by the evaluation team. Using semi-structured interview guides, a senior staff member (director, associate/assistant director) at each of the 6 camps in the cohort, and the IC at each camp (plus Camp Kaylie) were interviewed post-camp (see Appendix for copies of the two semi-structured interview guides). The IC at Camp Kaylie was also interviewed post-camp. Interviewee data were analyzed using constant comparative methods which allowed common phenomena (i.e., camp practices, obstacles to inclusion) to be identified across camps.

## Camp Staff Survey

The Camp Staff Survey collected information in four major areas: training and preparation for role in camp and for inclusion, support that staff received to facilitate inclusion, personal perspectives on camp inclusion, and demographics. Statements of agreement in the "Training and Preparation" and "Support from Inclusion Coordinator" sections were asked using a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 -"strongly disagree" to 6 -"strongly agree." For these Likert scale questions, a "not applicable" (N/A) option was also provided. The same Likert scale, but without the N/A option, was provided as response options in the "Personal Perspectives" section. Additional open-ended questions were also contained in each primary area. A copy of the Camp Staff Survey appears in the Appendix, as well as data describing the survey respondents.

## Sociometry

Senior staff and ICs over the first two years of the initiative communicated a desire to measure camper outcomes, and more specifically social inclusion. Sociometry is a technique used since the 1930's to analyze interpersonal relationships within a group. Sociometric measures can be utilized to grasp social status within a group and are simple to use. For this reason, sociometry was selected to study the social relationships of campers, and if these changed over the course of the camp session. ICs at five of the six cohort camps chose to participate in this assessment by selecting two male cabins and two female cabins at their respective camps that included campers with disabilities. For each cabin, the IC made a list of campers in the cabin. Each camper in the cabin was provided with the list of names. During the first week of camp, the campers in the cabin were asked to circle the names of three other campers with whom they "would like to hang out with during free time at camp." A sociogram was developed for each cabin based on the data collected. A sociogram creates a visual representation of the social relationships that were documented. A line is drawn from a camper to each of the campers that they chose to "hang out with." The campers were then asked the same question during the final week of camp. Sociograms were again developed based on the data collected. The evaluators then compared the pre- and post-sociograms to determine changes that had occurred in social relationships among the campers.

## Camper Satisfaction Insights

Four additional questions were added to the 2017 *Camper Satisfaction Insights* (CSI) survey for camps in the cohort and Camp Kaylie. Camper families were asked to indicate: (1) whether their child, or at least one of their children that attended camp this past summer, had a disability; (2) how favorably they viewed the inclusion initiative; (3) to what degree the inclusive nature of camp impacted their decision to register a child for that particular camp; and (4) to what degree their camper benefitted from attending an inclusive camp. This final question was new to the CSI.

# Findings

## Key Finding #1: Serving Campers with Disabilities

There was a **172% increase** in the number of campers with disabilities served.

Camps reported significant growth in the number of campers with disabilities they served over the course of the grant initiative. Table 1 presents the number of campers with disabilities for each year of the project and the percent increase in the number of campers with disabilities from 2015 to 2017.

**Table 1. Percent Increase in Number of Campers at Each Camp**

Camp	Total Campers with Disabilities <sup>2</sup> in 2015	Total Campers with Disabilities in 2016	Total Campers with Disabilities in 2017	Percent Change in Number of Campers with Disabilities from 2015 to 2017
B'nai B'rith	24	52	52	+116.7%
Camp Chi	23	72	97	+321.7%
Camp Harlam	35	107	139	+297.1%
Camp Judaea	68 <sup>3</sup>	25	42	<sup>4</sup>
CYJ Texas	14	21	29	+107.1%
JCA Shalom	39	47	50	+28.2%
Total	203	324	409	+171.9% <sup>5</sup>

While significantly increasing the number of campers with disabilities each year, camps did not increase proportionally the number of campers without disabilities. Consequently, campers with disabilities comprised a larger proportion of the overall number of campers at each camp, nearly doubling the percentage of campers with disabilities since 2015. This more closely approximates natural proportions (see Table 2). Natural proportions imply that the number of individuals with disabilities in a setting is nearly equivalent to the proportion living in the overall community. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 8.5% of school-age children are receiving specialized education services, not including those students with specific learning disabilities (i.e., those in the 8.5% are those children and youth with more significant disabilities, consistent with the FJC definition of disability).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> These are campers reported by the camp as meeting the FJC definition

<sup>3</sup> Camp believes 2015 numbers were overstated due to not understanding how "disability" was defined by the FJC

<sup>4</sup> Not reportable due to having unusable data in 2015 (see footnote 3)

<sup>5</sup> Camp Judaea's camper numbers are not included in calculation of total percent change

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, 2016, *Children and Youth with Disabilities*, Retrieved from [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cgg.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp)

**Table 2. Percentage of Camper Population that were Campers with Disabilities, 2015-2017 Comparisons**

Camp	Total Campers	Total Campers with Disabilities in 2017 <sup>7</sup> (2015 comparison)	Percentage of All Campers who had a Disability in 2017 (2015 Comparison)
B'nai B'rith	555	52 (24)	9.4% (4.7%)
Camp Chi	1,578	97 (23)	6.1% (1.7%)
Camp Harlam	965	139 (35)	14.4% (3.4%)
Camp Judaea	654	42 <sup>8</sup>	6.4% <sup>9</sup>
CYJ Texas	527	29 (14)	5.5% (2.5%)
JCA Shalom	836	50 (39)	6.0% (4.5%)
Total	5,115	409 (203)	8.0% (4.2%)

The breadth of disability types being served continues to grow. Campers with intellectual/developmental disabilities, developmental delays, language processing disorders, and Down syndrome were better represented in 2017, and in particular, autism spectrum disorder. There were also campers served with orthopedic impairments, hearing impairments, and dwarfism. While these populations continue to grow in the cohort camps, so too does the population of campers needing inclusion support with ADHD and other emotional/behavioral conditions. A population that was not mentioned in prior camper demographics of campers requiring supports that appeared this year was transgender campers. While this does not meet the criteria of the FJC disability definition, it does represent the adoption of an inclusive philosophy and practices that are broad in scope. Since 2015, many more campers have been described as requiring supports who arrived at camp without a label or diagnosis. This was described by several camp leaders as a “gray area,” consisting of campers whose support needs are recognized by staff, but who arrive at camp without an identified disability. The reported numbers reflected in this evaluation may or may not include campers in this “gray area,” as staff are finding it more difficult, albeit appropriately, to label campers.

<sup>7</sup> Campers reported by the camp as meeting the FJC definition

<sup>8</sup> Comparison to 2015 not made due to Inclusion Coordinator reporting that numbers were inaccurate in 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Comparison to 2015 not made due to Inclusion Coordinator reporting that numbers were inaccurate in 2015.

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**Recommendation #1:** *Continue to market inclusive camp to more diverse populations.*

The camps in the cohort have done a great job reaching out to families of children with disabilities. Several camps in the cohort have reached natural proportions, with the percentage of campers with disabilities across the cohort reaching 8% of the total camp population.

**Recommendation #2:** *Continue to be prepared for the growing number of campers in the “gray area.”* ICs spoke frequently about the number of campers to whom they provided inclusion supports, but who did not have an identified disability (the “gray area”). ICs also indicated that this number continues to grow every year. This reflects the growing diversity of the camper base.

**Recommendation #3:** *Continue to focus on a quality camp experience and camper retention.* The use of universal design practices and substantial preparation of all staff leads to many campers feeling welcomed and accepted. When campers feel welcomed and accepted, they wish to return to camp the following summer. This focus on quality inclusive camp experiences leading to camper retention should be prioritized over simply concerning oneself with numbers of campers only.

**Recommendation #4:** *Scaling up requires quality before quantity.* Camps attempting to implement inclusive practices are advised to take their time and do it right the first time. Including too many campers with substantial challenges prior to proper supports being put in place can be detrimental to the experiences of many.

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## Key Finding #2: Growth Along the Continuum of Inclusion

*“A culture of inclusion is in place.”*

During the 3 years of the inclusive camp initiative, a continuum of inclusion (Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1997)<sup>10</sup> existed which depicted the progress that each camp has made. Early on in the initiative (2015), each camp was making progress along this continuum and had reached a level of *functional inclusion*. At this point in time, leadership committed to including campers with disabilities alongside typical campers. At this level on the continuum, campers with disabilities had a physical presence at camp but were not often involved in its social life. Many camp leaders and staff were hard-pressed to identify successful stories illustrating campers of varying abilities enjoying one another’s company and initiating friendly behavior (rather than feeling an obligation to be kind to a camper less fortunate).

In 2016, camps began to separate themselves along this continuum of inclusion. Camps were making substantial progress as they had all reached, to some extent, the second level on the continuum, *social integration*. Rather than reports of being physically present only, staff were beginning to identify

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<sup>10</sup> Schleien, S., Ray, M.T., & Green, F. (1997). *Community recreation and people with disabilities: Strategies for inclusion* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

examples of specific occurrences of pro-social activity among campers of varying abilities. ICs, along with unit heads, counselors, and specialists following their lead, were noting progress as a greater number of campers were actively participating in formal and informal activities and were becoming socially included in camp life. It was clear that all camps were moving forward on this continuum. The decentralization of supports for an inclusive camp was identified as contributing significantly toward this end.

In 2017, a cultural shift occurred throughout the cohort. All the camps reached some facet of the third level on the continuum, *social inclusion*. A cultural “infusion of inclusion” was experienced, where an integration of Jewish values and social inclusion transpired. With a substantially larger number of staff (including specialists, kitchen staff, etc.) receiving training and supported by a Camper Care Team, stories about friendships being formulated between campers, campers having opportunities to participate with their friends in equitable activities such as clubs of choice and silent discos rather than identical activities, and a reported “culture of kindness,” it appears that social inclusion became the norm. Camp staff spent less time asking for supports to address challenging behaviors and how to serve a particular disability group, and significantly more time attempting to facilitate social inclusion. Staff became less interested in children’s labels, with much less reference to the “inclusion kids or inclusion campers.” The “we/they” language of the past diminished greatly. Moving well beyond a mere physical presence at camp, and with campers learning to not only tolerate, but also to live, learn, and play together, these camps are currently dedicated to serving a broad range of campers over the long term.

Additionally, it appears that campers, themselves, grew in their understanding of the benefits of social inclusion. Rather than becoming tolerant and kind to their fellow campers with disabilities, they frequently commented on their similarities rather than differences, began to respect the talents and skills of those with disabilities, and appreciated the overall value that those with disability brought to their group and the overall camp. Campers were engaging in welcoming and inclusive behaviors, oftentimes without being prompted to do so by staff. A “top-down/bottom-up” shift in the culture took root, as camps and campers internalized the benefits of socially inclusive camp.

Several camps in the cohort are approaching the upper end of the continuum of service, where social inclusion is being facilitated. In prior years, camps were physically integrating campers with disabilities and/or helping campers participate in functional and socially appropriate ways. In the past, there was little mention or observation of social inclusion. Currently, every IC and camp leader is readily able to share social inclusion stories that they have observed. When these efforts become sustainable (see Key Finding #6), the upper reaches of socially inclusive camp will have been reached.

There exists a strong and genuine drive for continued improvement in serving campers with disabilities at camp. With significant progress being made along the continuum of service, camp leadership is keenly aware of areas where they need to improve, and are desirous to do so. Rather than viewing the inclusion initiative as a challenging, all-or-nothing undertaking, they are voicing a desire to continue to serve campers of varying abilities and make improvements as inclusive camps. There is a genuine belief that many additional children with disabilities deserve the opportunity to experience organized Jewish camp.

Generally, the 2017 interviews revealed a change in the culture of camps pertaining to all camp families and their expectations for their children's camp experiences. When telephone interview questions were posed regarding family preparation, the response was by and large, "Families understand who we are." In fact, when pressed to consider the potential benefit of prepping families with intent to promote inclusion, one respondent voiced that she would expect to hear, "That's what you should be doing!" These sentiments were not heard 3 years ago, as they illustrate a cultural shift of which camp leaders are proud.

The camp philosophy of inclusion has been publicized on websites, in brochures, during camp tours, and by word-of-mouth in the community. For 10 weeks prior to camp, Camp Harlam sends weekly online camp information to all camp families. A description of inclusion is part of the content, as explained in their "Open and Safe" statement. This information is also shared through the *Harlam Essentials* handbook.

Here is an example from the Camp Harlam blog, written by Lisa David, Director:

*"One of the things we have emphasized to our community members is our belief that if everyone is truly created in God's image, they can all contribute something of value to our community; that excluding anyone from our community diminishes the experience for everyone, and lessens our chance of achieving our goal of a more perfect world through tikkun olam (repair of our world)."*

*"Including people, making people feel safe, helping others to be successful – these are not only things we do here at Harlam because it is a nice thing to do for those who might struggle at times or in other places. These are things we are obligated to do because of our Jewish values. These are things that we do because we derive great value from the gifts each person adds to our experiences here. We don't always do things perfectly, and at times ensuring each child is successful can be incredibly hard. But both the successes and the learning that come from the challenges are things that enrich each person and our community. I'm grateful that our kids have naturally internalized this, have lived this here this summer, and I hope it will help all of them, and all of us, to continue to make the world outside of camp a more open and safe place for all."*

Another example is found on the Camp Harlam blog, written by Lori Zlotoff, Inclusion Coordinator:

*"No matter our differences, disabilities, gender identities, opinions, ideas, backgrounds, diagnoses, or histories, we all share one common thread – and that is Harlam. Our differences make us richer, more layered, more interesting, and more human, but our commonalities are what link us together as a community – now and forever."*

Blog posts are available for families to learn more about a camp's philosophy at several camps. Descriptions are found that describe friendships between campers of varying abilities. Consider this excerpt from an April 2017 blog by Bar Twito of CYJ Texas, in which the author describes an evolving friendship between a camper with autism spectrum disorder and his neurotypical peer:

*"Each camper wants to feel accepted, and respected, no matter what their differences may be. By showing campers that accepting our differences makes everyone's camp experience better, the resulting friendships, confidence, and personal growth can be life changing."*

Camps recognize the importance of nurturing compassion in their campers. At CYJ Texas, there is an evolving element of helpful behaviors that are valued. There were reported many moments when campers were nervous about differences, but then realized they can assist other campers. It was shared that now the campers need to apply this helpfulness and understanding to their peers who do not have labels. With the concern about the rising number of campers who are in the "gray area" needing supports, this helpful attitude of compassion is desirable.

At Camp Harlam, the IC observed a counselor spontaneously accommodating a camper so that he could participate with his bunkmates in a game of Newcomb. The camper loved sports, but frequently just watched the other kids play due to his disability. His CIT explained the rules of Newcomb to him. Then, the counselor positioned himself beside the camper to catch the ball when it came to the camper's (weakened) right side. The counselor then handed the ball to the camper so that he could throw it with his left hand. The IC didn't have to tell the staff what to do. As she stated, "They just did it!" One camp included a conversation between bunkmates and a camper's parent about her son's disability, as the camper was unable to verbalize his needs. This was an example of campers being receptive to learning about such differences.

Rather than holding fast to scheduled activities that may not allow for cooperative participation, simply because "that's how we've always done it," camps are rethinking schedules, programs, and activities, as an "organizational accommodation." For example, we know that common interests often foster friendships. At B'nai B'rith, the opportunity to choose activities based on interests allowed campers with and without disabilities a chance to find something in common. Indeed, some campers with a disability showed how they excel in an area, garnering respect from their peers. Establishing respect allows for reciprocity in a relationship. In order for campers with disabilities to establish true friendships, their relationships should be reciprocal.

In 2017, Camp Chi campers participated in an InFocus® program as a cooperative activity to foster greater understanding of camp values, differences, and reciprocal friendships. Four cabins, representing a total of 48 campers with varying abilities were selected by the IC to participate in this program. Over the course of two weeks, campers worked together to produce their "inclusion story" through photography and dialogue. The results were shared with the camp community and beyond, as interest in the inclusive work of this camp has grown (see Appendix).

With support and role-modeling by staff, campers have increasingly provided natural supports and befriended their peers who have varied abilities. With encouragement from staff, two 9-year-olds supported their friend with Down syndrome so that she could participate in a drama production at Camp Judaea. An 8<sup>th</sup> grade male camper with autism spectrum disorder organized a camp-wide poker tournament at B'nai B'rith, garnering praise from his peers for his knowledge and organizational leadership skills. A 5<sup>th</sup> grade camper, also on the autism spectrum at CYJ Texas, broke into song in the music room. Rather than correct him and potentially make it an awkward moment, his counselor joined him in song. In the end, his peers were applauding and impressed by the camper's musical talent.

In addition to peers looking out for their friends during programs and activities at camp, some have extended their friendships to their home communities during the off-season. One such camper, a high

school sophomore with a disability attending Camp Chi, was invited to maintain contact with her friends via social media and join their reunion in Chicago following camp. The IC attributed some of the successful social inclusion to campers listening to staff who “encourage the kids to take ownership of inclusion and be part of the success.”

Families and campers alike appreciated rich stories of social inclusion. Family members have begun important conversations about camp inclusion and Jewish values before and after the summer camp season. Parents also voiced appreciation for the opportunity of friendship. Camp Harlam received a letter from a parent of a young man with a significant intellectual disability. His peers supported him throughout his time at camp. This mother sent a letter to camp expressing her appreciation for her son's inclusion. The IC read an excerpt from the letter to the staff:

*“At Harlam he is part of the group. He is on the inside and that makes the hearts of all who love him explode with happiness... Thank you so much for giving him a chance. We are so grateful to you and all of his amazingly wonderful counselors. Harlam is really the most magical of places.”*

In the above scenario, staff gave credit to the campers, as they enjoyed and valued having their peer at camp. The counselor readily provided accommodations during activities so that this camper could participate with his friends. Next summer, this camper will return for a full 3 ½-week session.

The following items help summarize the progress that the camp cohort made along the continuum of inclusion.

- Sociograms for the most part demonstrated that campers with disabilities maintained the same number of friends they had from the beginning to the end of camp. In a sociogram, each circle represents a camper. Arrows pointing away from a circle represent who that camper selected as a friend at the time of measurement. Arrows pointing toward a circle represent other campers choosing that camper as a friend. Blue lines with arrows pointing in both directions represent two campers mutually selecting one another. Several campers with developmental disabilities gained friendships. For example, Camper 1, who was on the autism spectrum, went from being isolated (no campers chose Camper 1 as a friend, Figure 1), to having three friends by the end of camp (labeled 1-3 in Figure 2).

Figure 1: Camper 1 (autism) at the beginning of the camp session

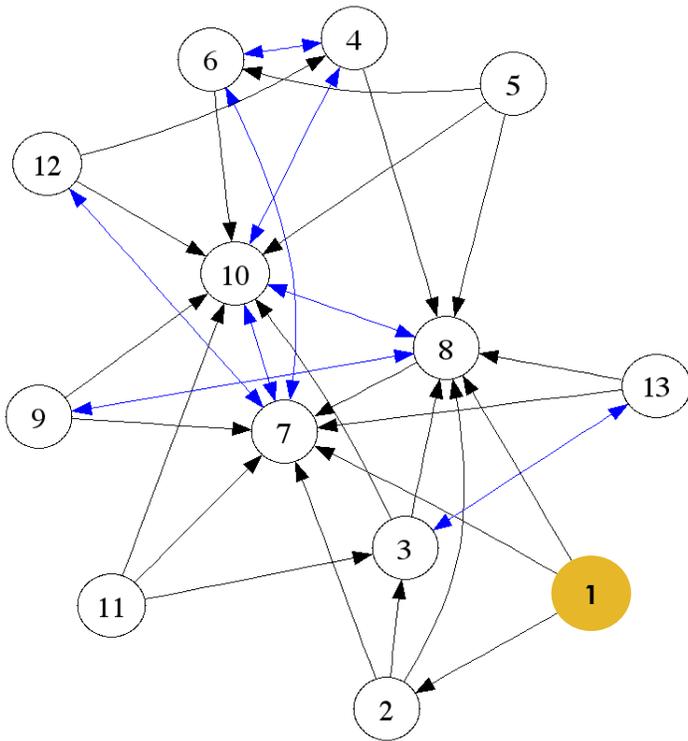
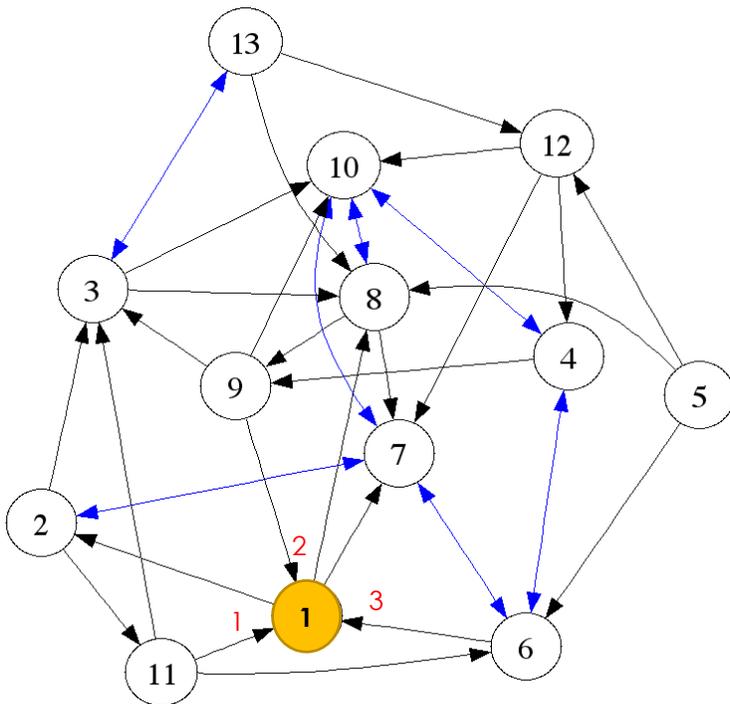
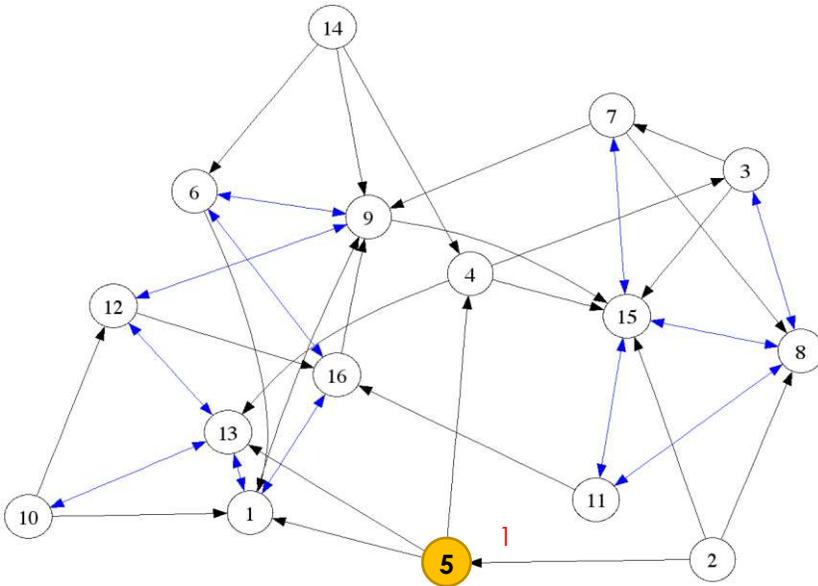


Figure 2: Camper 1 (autism) at the end of the camp session

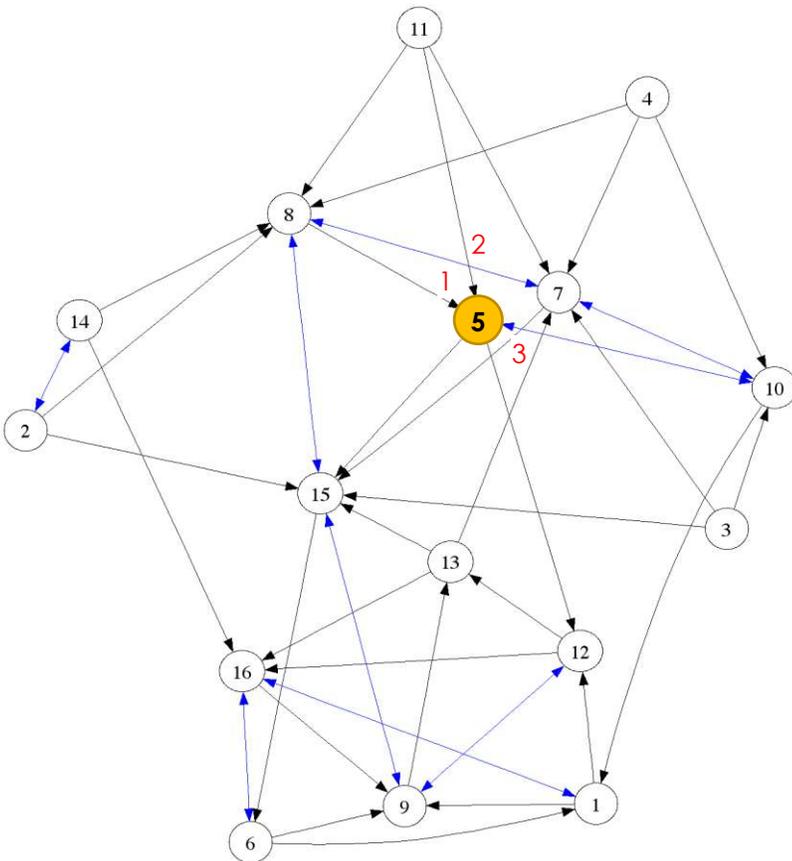


Similarly, in Figure 3, Camper 5, with Down syndrome, went from having 1 social connection (i.e., one other camper selected Camper 5), to having 3 friends by the end of camp (Figure 4).

**Figure 3: Camper 5 (Down syndrome) at the beginning of the camp session**

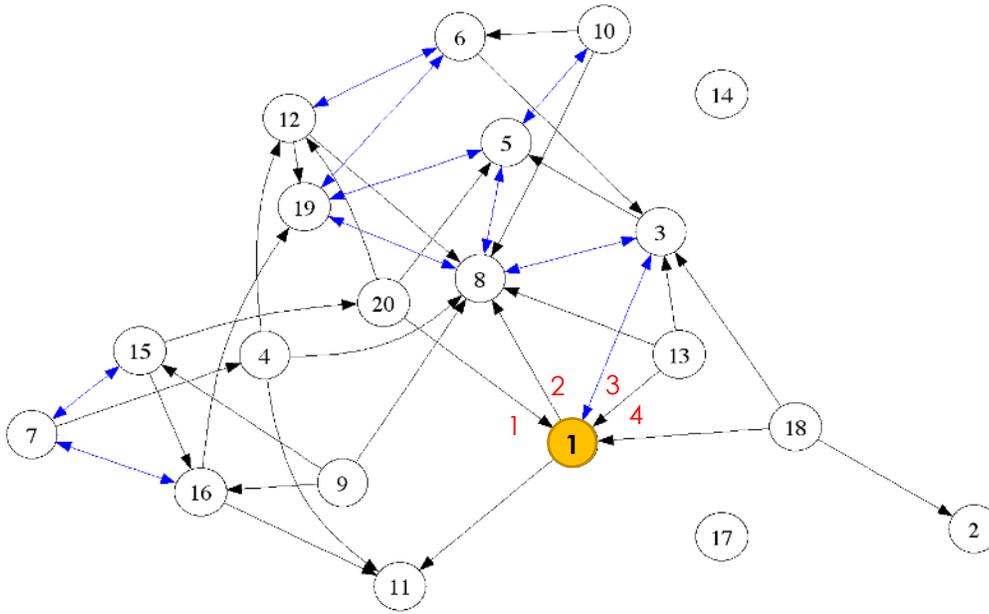


**Figure 4: Camper 5 (Down syndrome) at the end of the camp session**

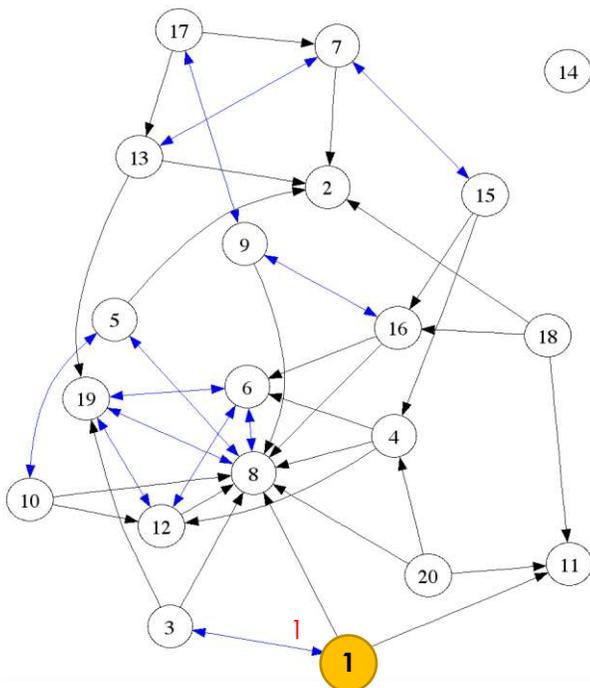


On the other hand, most campers with ADHD lost friends over the course of the camp session. For example, Camper 1 with ADHD had four campers that selected him as a friend at the beginning of camp (Figure 5), but only one camper chose him as a friend by the end of the camp session (Figure 6).

**Figure 5: Camper 1 (ADHD) at the beginning of the camp session**



**Figure 6: Camper 1 (ADHD) at the end of the camp session**



- Increased social networks for campers with disabilities were related to how camp staff provided examples of how campers with disabilities were included by campers without disabilities. There were numerous examples cited regarding how campers without disabilities provided natural supports to their peers with disabilities and enthusiastically encouraged them during difficult activities. Most impressive was the number of comments made concerning camper acceptance and friendship.

*"I had a camper 1<sup>st</sup> session and she was super-included in the group and every inside joke we had was from her, because she was so funny." (Counselor, Camp Chi)*

*"Camper with disability became part of our cabin. It was 'us' not 'us' and 'her'." (Counselor, Camp Chi)*

*"I saw daily support to a camper with autism by the rest of his bunkmates. They were helpful and gentle when he needed it. Laughed with him when intended to be funny or entertaining and included him in everything they did." (Camper Care Team, CYJ Texas)*

*"[camper name]'s bunk loved him. They all enjoyed spending time with him, some said he was their best friend and they were all sad to see him leave early due to a family trip." (Camper Care Team, CYJ Texas)*

*"One child on the aerial course helped his friend all the way around and the other boys cheered him on." (Activity Specialist, Camp Chi)*

*"I watched a camper stay back from the cove to play in the sand with a camper that was scared of the water." (Camper Care Team, Camp Chi)*

*"I see this all day long. I love seeing our non-support needing campers teach their supported cabinmates sports or how to make a friendship bracelet... They are essential to who we are." (Senior/Administration, Camp Chi)*

*"One camper saw another be excluded, so she picked a new card game to play and invited her over to play/taught her how to play." (Counselor, Camp Harlam)*

*"Campers without disabilities created a dance crew with a camper with a disability as the star." (Counselor, Camp Harlam)*

*"I saw campers stop playing hard in gaga so a camper with disabilities could win" (Staff in Training, Camp Harlam)*

Even more surprising were the number of examples that staff gave of a typical camper advocating for a camper with a disability. Here is a sampling of such comments:

*"Kids made an I-team camper who was thinking about not coming back want to come back next year." (Staff in Training, Camp Judaea)*

*"One of my campers asked everyone to stay silent because he noticed that it was too loud." (Unit Head, B'nai B'rith).*

*"I've seen a camper tell his friend that everyone needs help with something every now and then, to defend an inclusion camper that was struggling." (Senior/Administration, JCA Shalom)*

*"One time his friends stood up to these boys making him feel uncomfortable." (Staff in Training, Camp Judaea)*

*"One camper explained to bullies the nature of another camper's disability, sticking up for him." (Counselor, Camp Harlam)*

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**Recommendation #5:** *Continue to review organizational practices and procedures to support socially inclusive camp.* Camp history is rich in tradition. With a desire to further the inclusive nature of the camp experience, some changes may be necessary. For example, the need to fill every bed at camp, with campers attending for an entire camp session, may preclude some children from pursuing the myriad benefits of a summer camp experience. This and other organizational decisions may require continuous review, with the benefit of an IC as part of the leadership team.

**Recommendation #6:** *Continue to design and implement best practices in support of inclusive camp.* Camps are growing in their ability to adapt and provide an equitable camp experience for campers with varying abilities, while paying attention to the social benefits for all campers. From promoting an inclusive camp culture in marketing materials, to making cabin assignments that match counselors with individual camper support needs, there is decision-making that is intentional in supporting inclusive camp. Programmatic best practices include a schedule that is available for everyone to follow, and staff's identification and use of accommodations to support a camper's participation in any activity. Accommodations require ongoing assessments and a toolkit of options to be used by all levels of staff. Additionally, a review of traditional camp programming may reveal a need to provide more options for campers, as discovered by several camps in 2017. These choices could be based on common interests and abilities of campers with and without a disability. Such options have been shown to promote friendships and overall success at camp.

**Recommendation #7:** *Incorporate all campers in problem-solving to accommodate others.* Continue to encourage campers to support their peers of varying abilities. This will not only serve to expand the decentralized model of supports, but has the potential to promote social inclusion, as campers grow in their appreciation of similarities while contributing to the accommodations needed for different abilities.

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## Key Finding #3: Staffing

*“There was a change and a trend toward a more inclusive philosophy. Staff wanted to make things work for all kids.”*

As in years past, camps were staffed primarily by young adults, most of whom were former campers. Many of these staff have had exposure to the inclusive work of camps over the past several years, bringing a knowledge of accommodation strategies and comfort level in working with campers of varying abilities during the 2017 camp season. Staff recruitment within the cohort has been both a domestic and international endeavor. As such, it was acknowledged that cultural differences interface with inclusive practices at camp. Depending on their prior experiences with individuals with a disability, international staff could either enhance or interfere with the support of campers. Also, some staff identified as having a disability themselves, and there is an expectation among camp leadership that this scenario will grow as the number of campers with a disability become part of the camp culture and rise in the ranks of staff roles. Camp leaders are just beginning to set an intention on the hiring of these former campers with a disability; the natural next step in contributing to camps' inclusive culture.

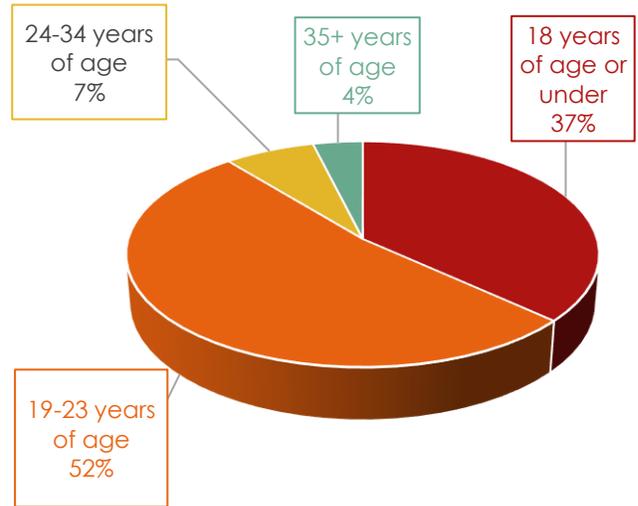
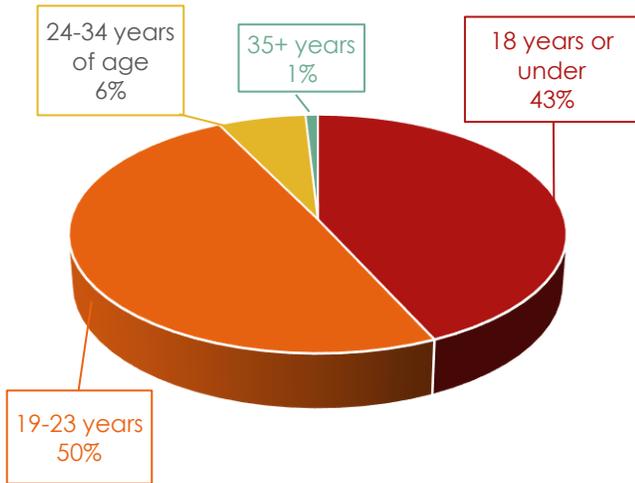
As a cohort, the camps reported refinement of staff training as it applies to accommodations, those leading the training, staff being trained, and the amount of time devoted to preparing staff for an inclusive camp experience. ICs realized the staff's need for additional pre-camp training on inclusion and camper supports, as well as the benefit of ongoing training opportunities as particular situations surfaced during camp sessions. While some ICs were comfortable with the amount of time allotted for staff preparation prior to and during camp, still others identified a need for additional time.

The following items highlight cohort camps' hiring needs and progress made in staff training and support.

- The age of camp staff became younger this year in comparison to 2016. In 2017, the percentage of camp staff age 23 or younger increased to 93% (Figure 7). In 2016, 89% of the camp staff were 23 years of age or younger (Figure 8).

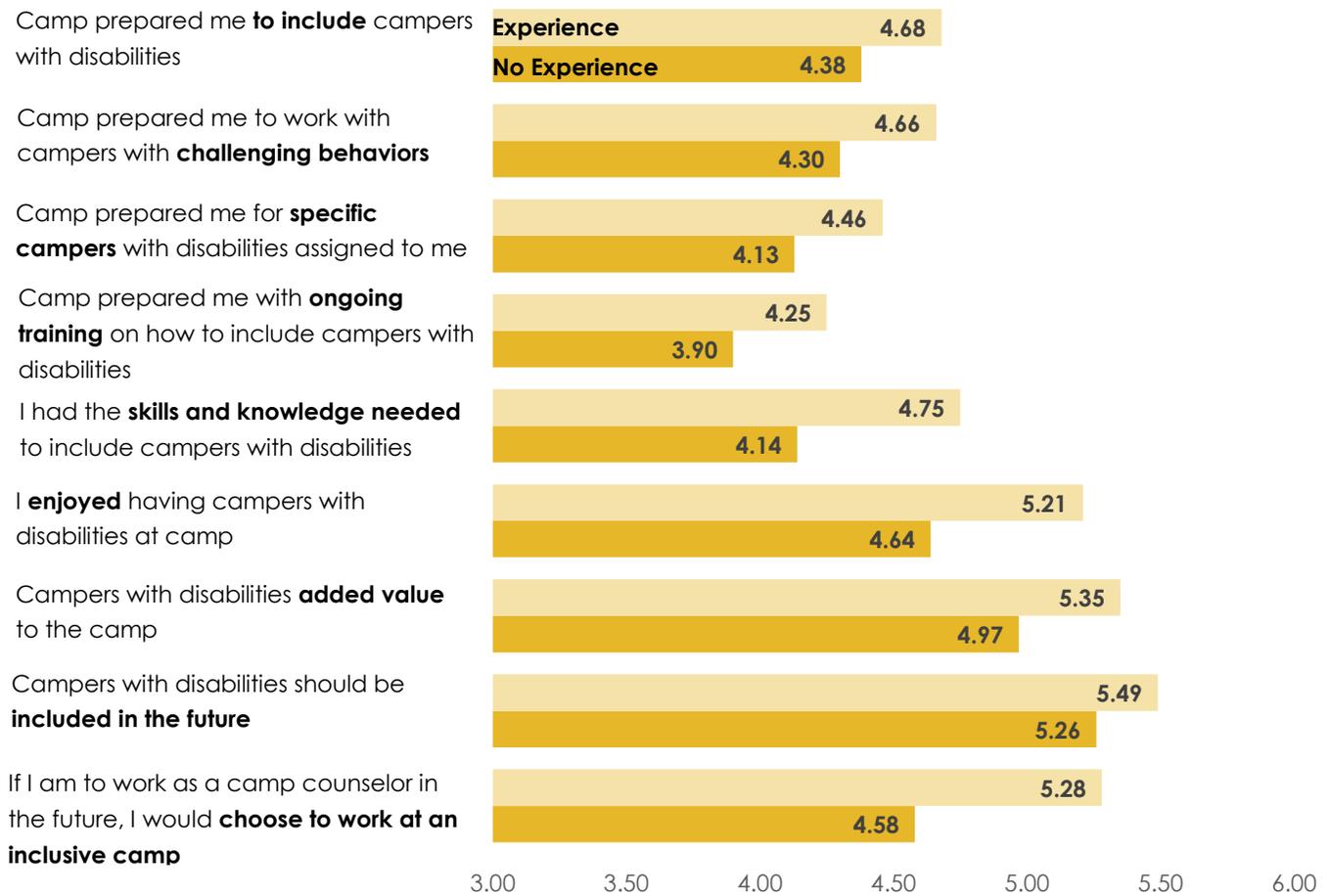
Figure 7. Age of Camp Staff Survey Respondents in 2017

Figure 8. Age of Respondents in 2016



- A fact that has remained consistent across the three years of the evaluation is that those camp staff with prior experience with people with disabilities have a (statistically significant) better perception about the training on inclusion that they received (Figure 9). Staff with prior disability experience are also more confident (also at a statistically significant level) that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to include campers with disabilities. Staff with this experience also perceive their inclusive camp experience more positively (statistically significant). These positive perspectives include enjoying having campers with disabilities at camp, believing that campers with disabilities add value to camp, and believe that campers with disabilities should be included at camp in the future. Most notable of these statistically significant differences is that those having prior experience with people with disabilities were more likely to desire to continue to work in an inclusive camp.

**Figure 9. Staff with Experience with People with Disabilities vs. Staff with No Experience with People with Disabilities** <sup>11</sup>

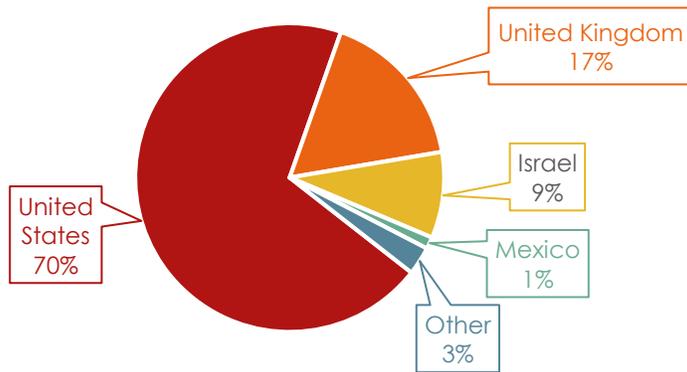


- Individuals from outside of the U.S. made up approximately 30% of the camp staff (Figure 10). International staff were less likely to have prior experience with people with disabilities as compared to staff from the U.S. (Figure 11). This is potentially problematic given that Figure 3 demonstrated that those with experience were more likely to have a positive perception of training and the overall inclusion initiative. However, this may be balanced out by the fact that international staff were slightly older (i.e., more likely to indicate that they were 19-23 on the survey than 18 or under, as compared to U.S. staff who were more likely to indicate that they were 18 or under), and perhaps more mature than staff from the U.S. (Figure 12). The added expense to recruit international staff should be taken into consideration, since the camp staff survey revealed that international staff were statistically less likely to want to work at an inclusive camp in the future (Figure 13). <sup>12</sup> Retention of staff across summers reduces the cost of staff recruitment and the amount of training required to perform successfully in an inclusive camp environment.

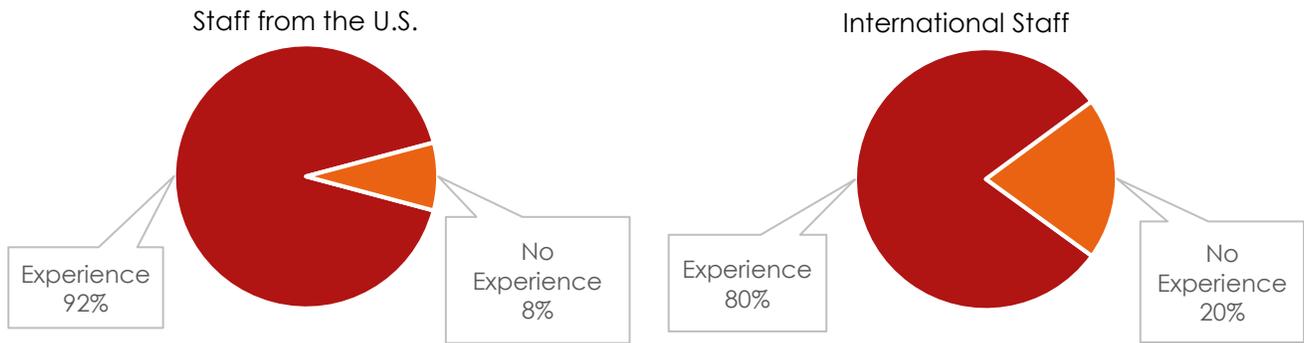
<sup>11</sup> Differences are statistically significant for all items

<sup>12</sup> International staff (M=5.01, SD=1.29) versus U.S. Staff (M=5.29, SD=1.03);  $t(598)=2.92, p=.004$

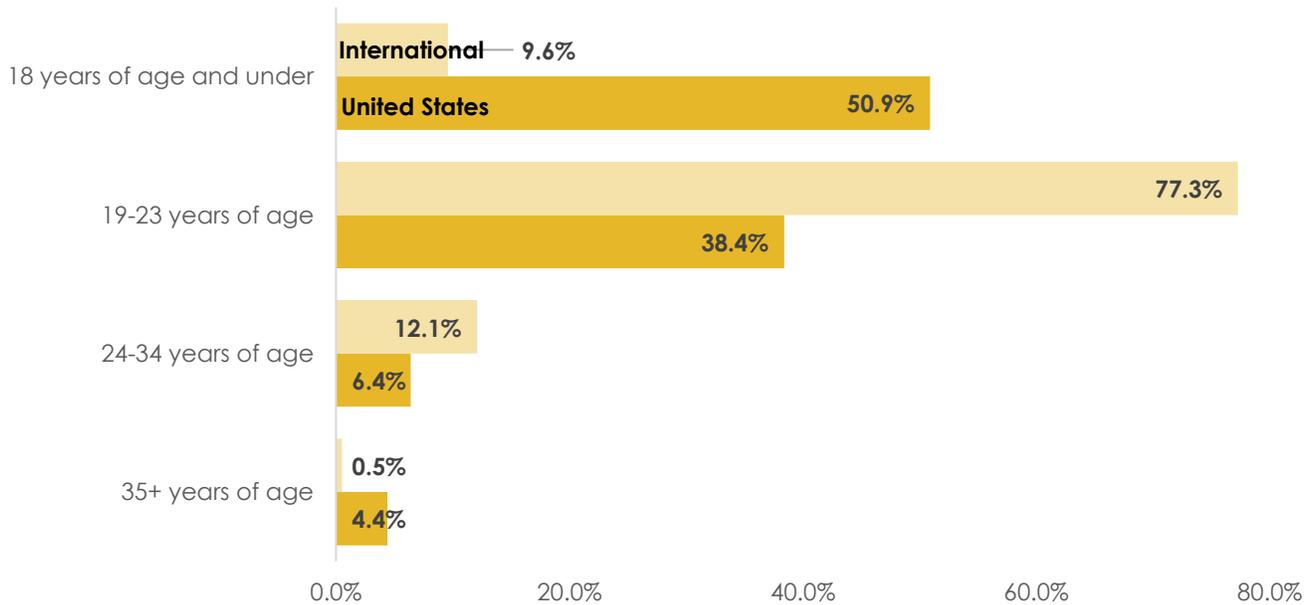
**Figure 10. Nationality of Respondents to 2017 Camp Staff Survey**



**Figure 11. Comparison of Staff from the U.S. vs International Staff on Experience with People with Disabilities**



**Figure 12. Comparison of Ages of International vs U.S. Staff**



**Figure 13. Comparison of Desire to Work at an Inclusive Camp in the Future: International vs U.S. Staff**



If I am to work as a camp counselor in the future, I would **choose to work at an inclusive camp**

- In 2017, there weren't any camps that identified a need for training that was diagnosis-specific. This was strikingly different from the approach they took in 2015, where the focus was on the necessity of a thorough intake so that staff could be educated regarding diagnostic labels. This shift in thinking was also noted in the Camp Staff Survey. Three years ago, the most common training complaint was that staff had not received sufficient training on specific diagnoses. These complaints were virtually nonexistent in 2017. The few staff members that did refer to camper diagnoses were interested in best ways to serve campers with autism spectrum disorder.

Staff training is currently geared toward camper support needs, rather than children's labels. Interestingly, many of these camper support needs have been reported concerning campers *without* any known disability. In fact, the most prevalent struggle in 2017 related to those campers arriving with limited intake information and without any diagnosis, yet requiring supports. Training directed at providing support and universal design approaches has served the cohort well, as each camp reported serving an increasing number of campers described as being in the "gray area" of disability-related needs. Staff repeatedly voiced difficulties about how to include campers falling in this "gray area" without any labels. One activity specialist stated:

*"How to help campers who don't have support but are struggling with different things/activities."  
(Activity Specialist, Camp Chi)*

- In 2016, the evaluation team recommended that camps increase and enhance their use of role-play in order to appeal to a young staff that responds to experiential learning strategies. Camps reported further design and successful implementation of this training format in 2017. CYJ Texas used "open door scenarios" to engage staff in particular situations at various stations during their training. In addition to role-playing specific challenging scenarios, the IC at B'nai B'rith Camp organized a simulated "day in the life of a camper" activity for counselors to experience camper perspectives prior to the start of camp. Counselors, specialists, and unit heads followed the daily structure of camp as if they had particular physical, intellectual, or sensory challenges, so that all may anticipate accommodations and begin to problem-solve together for issues that may arise. Among the cohort, several ICs used real-time scenarios to teach staff and model interventions. This was followed by re-creating scenarios for additional role-play and resolution by staff. Village leaders at Camp Chi led hands-on activities to prepare staff. Being able to anticipate behaviors, respond appropriately, and seek support from other staff or the IC, were deemed successful. For example, Camp Harlam counselors were prepared for particular behavior scenarios, not surprised when they occurred, and responded appropriately following their training protocol. The IC

described this as having more of a partnership with her staff. The Camp Staff Survey revealed that this experiential training approach was effective and appreciated by many staff members.

*"I liked the fact that we were given scenarios and then were able to talk about it as a group in order to see how we might go about these situations." (Counselor, Camp Harlam)*

*"I loved acting out role plays of scenarios because they gave me concrete examples and allowed me to learn through doing." (One-on-one support to a camper with a disability, JCA Shalom)*

*"The re-enactment of a situation with difficult campers and ones who were homesick because it helped me to be able to better deal with situations." (Counselor, Camp Chi)*

- As recommended in the 2016 evaluation report, a variety of staff participated in training modules that incorporated role-playing scenarios. Through these, the ICs were able to empower other staff to problem-solve and accommodate campers independently. At JCA Shalom, the IC led an all-staff training entitled, "We are all inclusion specialists," emphasizing that camp inclusion is everyone's responsibility. At some camps, training all staff meant all staff, including kitchen and maintenance staff. This involvement of support staff provided another resource for campers seeking particular skills and interests, in addition to contributing to the overall culture of inclusion at camp (e.g., B'nai B'rith maintenance crew teaching woodworking to campers). Increasingly, there were reports of staff confidently and competently addressing situations independent of the IC. This was particularly evident at camps with ICs who tended to be less "hands-on," and more likely to empower others to accommodate campers in support of inclusion. These ICs presented themselves to staff as more of a resource than the expert having to provide direct interventions. This resulted in assertive unit head comments (e.g., "I've got this!") at JCA Shalom and elsewhere.
- Several camps described blogs, emails, website additions, and brochure features that highlighted the inclusive nature of camp. Rather than draw attention to this aspect of the camp experience, it is simply "who we are." These resources were not specifically directed at staff, but did provide an image of what to expect at camp. This was beneficial for staff, campers, and camper families.
- Camp staff were especially appreciative of the training they received to address challenging behavior and mental health issues. Camp Harlam respondents to the Camp Staff Survey were especially complementary of the ALGEE, mental health first aid training they received.
- While camps increased the amount of training they provided on inclusion, staff desired more, especially as ongoing training during the camp session. More specifically, they desired ongoing training that empowered them to handle situations on their own in real-time.

*"Helped us when we asked for help, not made a decision for us. Help us come up with answers together." (Counselor, Camp Harlam).*

*"Just teach me to deal with those kids so I don't need as much help." (Staff in training, Camp Judaea)*

*"Ongoing throughout the year based on select camper behavior I observe." (Unit Head, B'nai B'rith)*

*"I wish there was more training interspersed throughout the season. (Counselor, Camp Harlam)*

- Staff found the opportunity to learn from other staff that had previously worked at camp quite helpful. This was particularly true if staff had worked with specific campers that were returning. Counselors opined what was most helpful about training:

*"Talking with counselors that had a particular child in past years." (Counselor, CYJ Texas)*

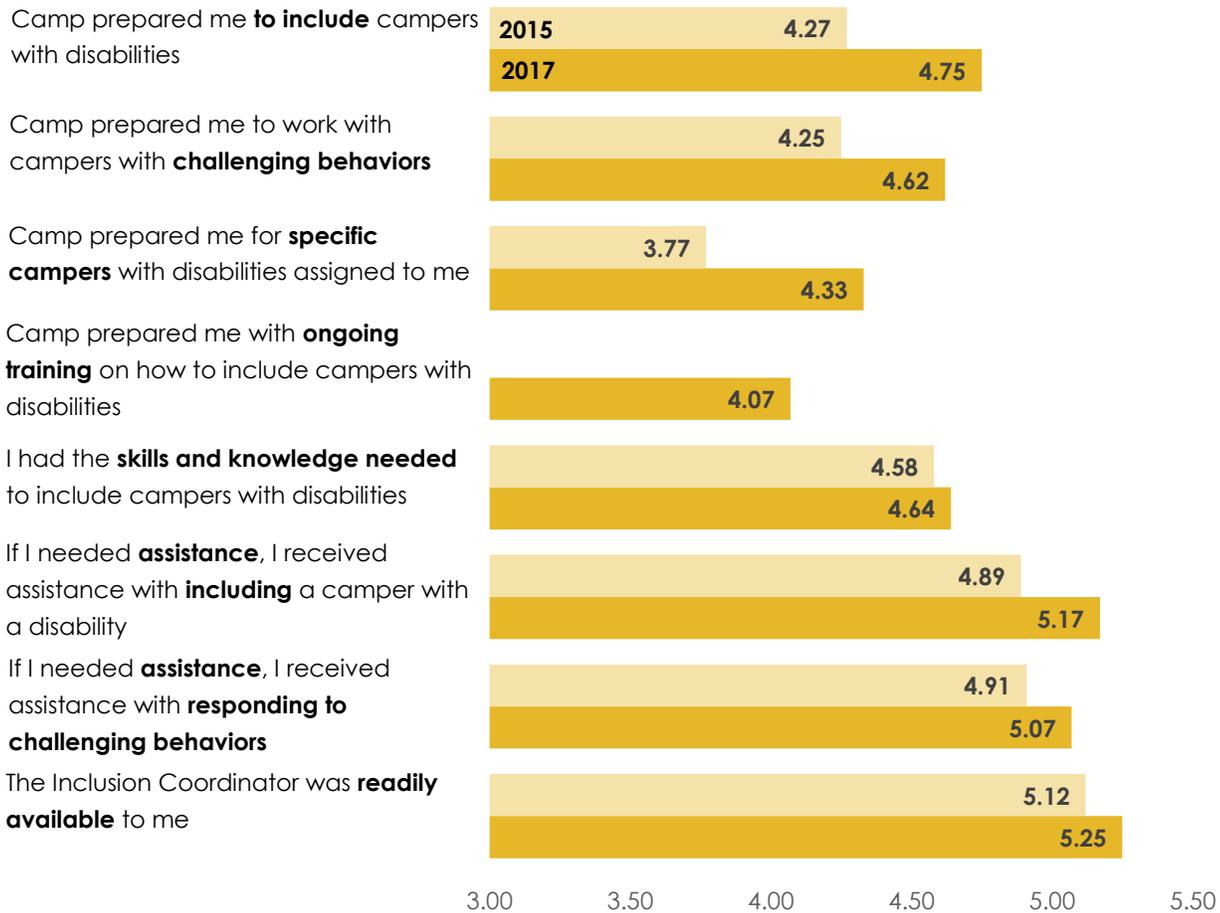
*"Simulations, to talk with professional (second year +) about camp." (Counselor, B'nai B'rith)*

There was also support for the notion of passing on information from counselors regarding specific campers from year to year:

*"I think it would be great if counselors could write notes for future counselors on how to deal with difficult kids... Maybe provide specific tips about the campers from previous counselors to know how to handle certain campers." (Counselor, Camp Judaea)*

- In 2015, activity specialists clearly communicated a need for more training and support. In 2016, they began to receive such training. These improvements continued in 2017 (Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Activity Specialists' Perceptions of Training and Support in 2015 vs. 2017**



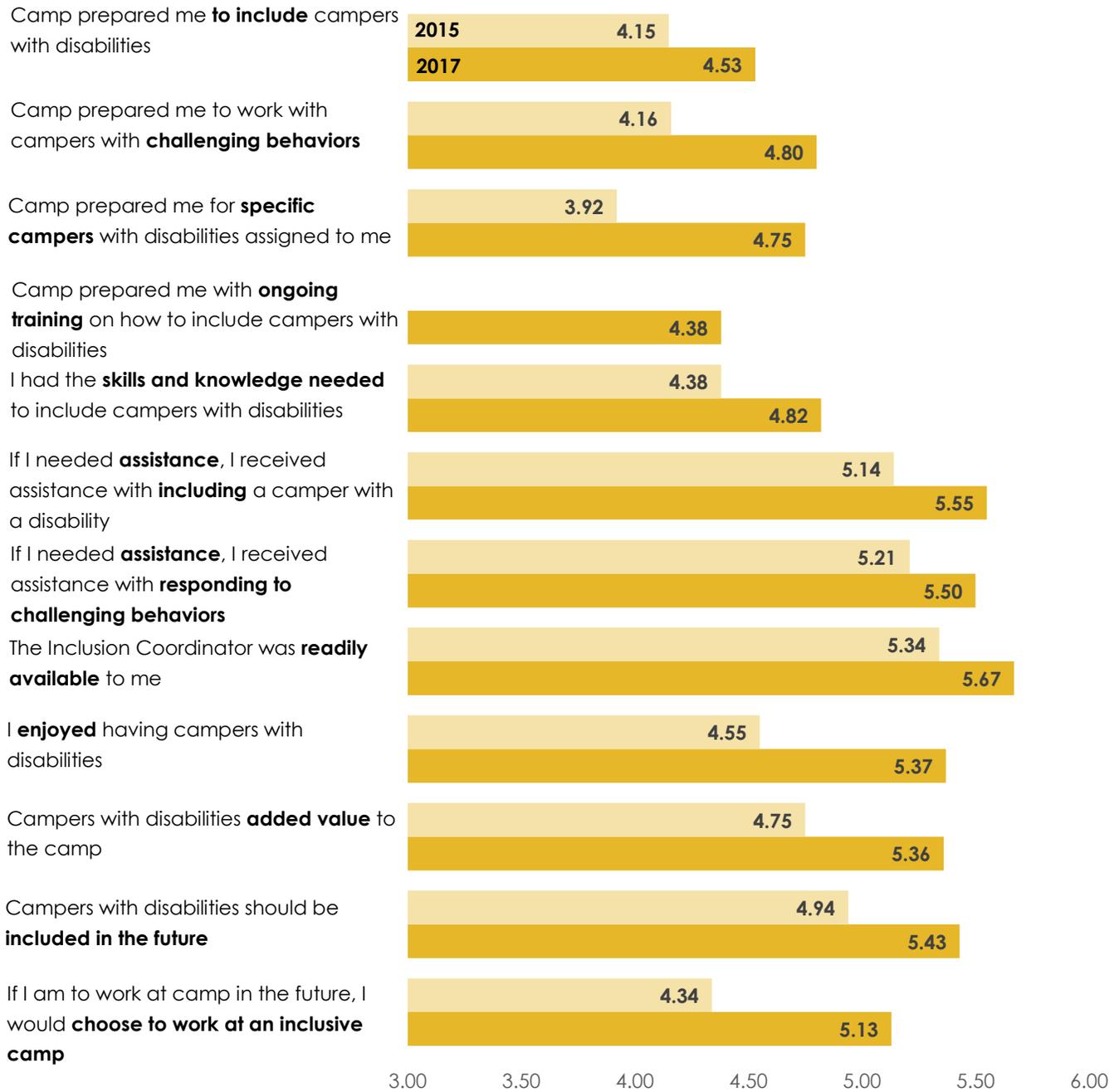
Despite having received additional training on inclusion, activity specialists still desired to receive more assistance and training that would help them in their particular specialty. Specialists made comments such as:

*"More specific to my specialty or specific challenges of campers to be informed about."* (Activity Specialist, JCA Shalom)

*"More training and inclusion for people with disabilities to come water-skiing."* (Activity Specialist, Camp Chi).

- When comparing 2015 to 2017, one camp in particular improved across all camp staff survey variables; that is, CYJ Texas (Figure 15). Congratulations to CYJ Texas!

**Figure 15. CYJ Texas Responses to Camp Staff Survey Questions Comparing 2015 to 2017**



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**Recommendation #8:** *Hire experienced staff to take leadership roles in a*

*decentralized model of inclusion.* As camp staff progress through the ranks of leadership roles, they are accumulating knowledge and skills related to inclusive camp. As such, it behooves camps to hire staff who have this cultural indoctrination. Key Finding #4 further defines a decentralized model of camp.

**Recommendation #9:** *Continue to assess inclusion training needs of all staff members.*

The ICs' familiarity with staff abilities and training needs is a dynamic process. Consequently, ongoing role modeling and team-based problem-solving with a young staff will instill confidence and competence. This should further the decentralized efforts toward successful camp inclusion. When training is provided for as many staff as possible, both pre-camp and during camp, staff efforts to accommodate campers of varying abilities will be widespread. This decentralization increases the potential for successful camp inclusion.

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## Key Finding #4: Roles of the Inclusion Coordinator

*"I am no longer called on to put out every fire at camp."*

The role of an IC has evolved at each of the camps in the cohort over the past three years. From the beginning, these individuals have been highly skilled professionals; educated in the assessment of support needs related to having a disability, and quite capable of providing direct support to campers. Over time, the role of the IC has changed to better serve these campers and the camp as a whole, as a member of the leadership team. Understandably, it was necessary for the IC to glean a "lay of the land" during the first camp season of the inclusion initiative in 2015. This required a physical and cultural environmental assessment, gauging the abilities and backgrounds of young staff, while developing trusting relationships with staff, campers, and camp families, and ultimately empowering others to provide supports. With assistance from the Camper Care Team, the IC is now better able to coordinate and lead staff within a decentralized model. By having a year-round role at camp, the IC can nurture ongoing relationships with camp families and staff, and anticipate needs from one camp season to the next. This level of familiarity and availability contributes to a successful camp season, with all reaping the benefits of the Jewish camp experience. Progress in the areas of decentralization and leadership has been substantial, enabling the IC in many instances to focus on social inclusion.

The following items illustrate the crucial roles that ICs play in ensuring an inclusive camp experience.

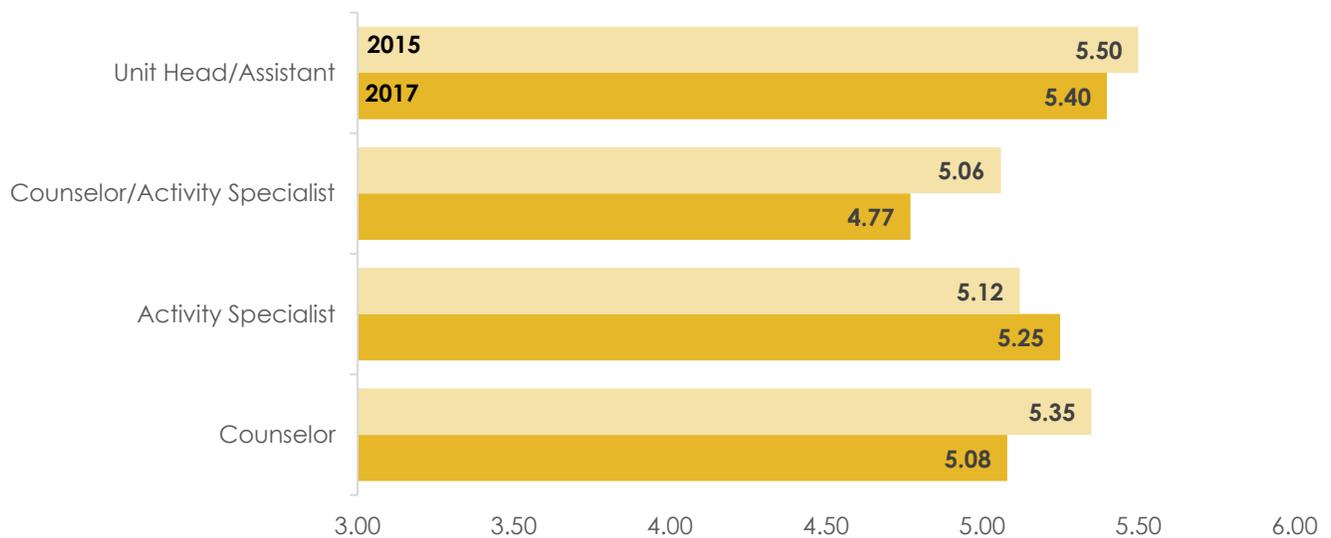
- The 2015 interviews revealed several concerns regarding the late hiring of an IC, due in part to the inclusion initiative just getting underway. This led to some frustration and struggles to quickly identify camper support needs so that accommodations could be anticipated. The newness of this situation demanded thinking outside-of-the-box, which ultimately may have led to a greater focus on and appreciation for universal design. During 2016, camps revealed increased

confidence in their ability to meet various needs, due in large part to their camp involvement during the off-season. This was particularly true among those ICs who were on board since January. Being proactive in identifying camper needs creates an environment conducive to success when camp begins.

The value of a year-round position for the IC was further realized in 2017. At B'nai B'rith, where the role of IC was filled by a new staff member in January, leadership recognized the value for all campers to have this position funded year-round. With a desire to grow further along the inclusion continuum, the Associate Director remarked that B'nai B'rith is “head and shoulders above where they were in the past.” Other camps, like JCA Shalom, commented that building relationships with families is a year-round process, contributing to campers' success.

- As part of the decentralized model of inclusion supports, camps discovered value in creating or restructuring Camper Care Teams. As recommended in the 2016 evaluation, the IC served as a coordinator, in that she coordinated the efforts of all staff to support the care of campers. As such, the IC played an integral role as part of the leadership team, resulting in a closer collaboration with camp leaders regarding the needs of all campers. For example, the IC at Camp Chi held weekly meetings with the Executive Director to discuss camper care. At Camp Harlam, the Camper Care Team grew as an extension of the IC, allowing real-time intervention as needed to model training for staff. Structuring this approach allowed the IC and her team to have a “seat at the table” in making decisions related to all campers' needs. At CYJ Texas, the Camper Care Team evolved to include the IC and provide support for all camper needs, regardless of disability.
- In other camps, the IC was seen as a leader in this third year of the inclusion initiative by virtue of having returning, trained staff. JCA Shalom reported that several inclusion specialists from 2015 and 2016 returned as unit heads in 2017. In this way, the IC had an opportunity to work with staff who were prepared to serve campers with and without disability labels to provide supports as needed. These staff also served as role models for new, younger staff.
- As camps continue to discern the most efficient and inclusive model for camper care, ICs are valuable team members in the decision-making process.
- As the broader staff developed competence and confidence in addressing accommodations and support needs of the campers, the IC was less likely to be called upon for daily individual challenges. Unit heads and counselors reported that the IC was more readily available in 2015 than in 2017 (Figure 16). However, activity specialists perceived more availability of the IC in 2017. This could be due in part to the decentralization of supports that has evolved with the improved training of staff, returning competent staff, and the IC's ability to support campers without being hands-on at all times. There was also a concerted effort to further support the activity specialists since 2015, as confidence and competence grew among the counselors. This change in the IC's role allowed for the IC to further assess and facilitate opportunities for social inclusion of campers across camp.

**Figure 16. Comparison of Staff Roles Response to “The Inclusion Coordinator was Readily Available to Me” in 2015 to 2017**



- Camp leaders also recognized that while they gained philosophical support for an IC, financial support needs to follow. Camps have seen great benefit from a full-time IC, but will now need to sustain this good work with additional funding. Recognizing the value of an IC for all campers, and not just those with a disability label, is a starting point. Additionally, as noted by CYJ Texas, camps may need to find a “champion of the cause” in order to secure funding for this important and necessary work. These ideas are addressed further in Key Finding #6: Sustainability and Scalability.

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**Recommendation #10:** *Hire a year-round IC that is part of the leadership circle, contributing to camp-wide decisions.* The pursuit of funding for a year-round IC is justified in the reported benefit of the IC to both the administration and Camper Care Teams, as well as the perceived benefit to all campers. Additionally, families of children who do not have a disability remarked on the benefit of inclusive camp.

**Recommendation #11:** *Hire an IC that has supervisory experience and skills to coordinate the training and support of staff within a decentralized model.* While ICs typically have a background in direct service to children with disabilities, not all have or desire a supervisory role in service delivery. The role of a coordinator necessarily includes delegation of tasks to other staff. The ability of the IC to train and empower others to accommodate and include campers will contribute to the success of a decentralized model.

**Recommendation #12:** *Establish Camper Care Teams to serve all campers, with the IC leading the team.* The IC leading a Camper Care Team is in a position to develop an efficient plan for communication regarding each camper's needs. This communication plan will allow pertinent information to flow from the team to other staff members in a systematic manner, so that all involved may benefit from the knowledge and skills of other team members. Regular team meetings and camper care plans have been successfully utilized to promote efficient communication of goals.

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## Key Finding #5: Inclusion Practices

*"Of course we will make it work!"*

Under the leadership of highly trained ICs, myriad programmatic practices have been designed and implemented throughout these inclusive camps. Early on in the initiative, camp administration and staff were merely concerned about accommodating campers with disabilities during camp session. In the third and final year of the initiative, camp leadership (currently including the IC and a larger Camper Care Team) moved well beyond an accommodation goal; working toward the effective social inclusion of campers in their respective camp communities. This inclusion has had a reach far beyond campers with labels or diagnoses. Many campers of varying abilities who do not currently have a label benefitted through the programming efforts of the broader camp staff.

Camp leaders continued to report the need to address challenging behaviors emitted by campers who either have or have not been diagnosed with a disability; and these rates of challenging behaviors exhibited by campers with and without disabilities continue to increase. But with this phenomenon as a high priority at every camp in the cohort, and within the decentralized model where a significantly larger number of staff have been prepared to serve campers of varying abilities, the management of challenging behaviors is being addressed successfully. Rather than relying solely on the IC as the point

person to deal with camper behavioral challenges, camp staff have taken on this responsibility with an arsenal of best practices and supports. These approaches have included being more proactive toward the prevention of challenging behaviors before they become problems (e.g., recognizing triggers of inappropriate behavior in individual campers). In addition to preventing behaviors through a better understanding of campers via comprehensive intake work prior to the summer, camp leaders have been paying particular attention to the overall camp environment. Based on needs assessments through camper intake methods, camp leadership practices have included careful placements of campers into particular cabins where the overall camper make-up of the cabin, including fellow campers and camper-counselor matches, have been effective. Also, universal design strategies have been embraced across camps, consequently facilitating pro-social behaviors and reducing behavior challenges. Campers have been able to participate in activities in more flexible and equitable ways, rather than forcing participation in identical activities at all times (i.e., "equitable vs. identical" participation). Also, the use of "chill zones" has been effective for many campers with and without disabilities to help manage campers who are in need of a break from a stimulating activity or during a stressful day.

As camps become more diverse and inclusive in the years ahead, serving a larger number of campers of varying abilities, it appears to be understood that camp staff will have to work effectively with increasing rates of challenging behaviors emitted by campers of all ability levels. The commitment of camp leadership, including IC's, to work closely with unit heads, counselors, specialists, and family members - - within a decentralized model - - should go a long way in support of inclusive camp.

The following items help summarize the issues surrounding inclusion practices being implemented to increase the success of campers across the cohort in 2017.

- An increase in challenging behaviors has been reported across camps. But this is expected due to the larger number of campers being served within the inclusion initiative. It has been recognized that many of the challenges presented by campers have been emitted by campers who do not have diagnoses or labels (i.e., campers in the "gray area").
- Staff need training prior to the camp season, along with ongoing training and support throughout the summer. ICs are working effectively in the provision of staff training, now that they are employed year-round, have additional support from a Camper Care Team, and are providing leadership and coordination throughout camp within a decentralized model. Since they are no longer the ones called on to "put out every fire," staff are expected and have become empowered to take on added responsibilities in facilitating a safe and inclusive environment. A decentralized approach has taken hold.
- Many universal design strategies are being implemented across camps that are increasing the success of campers with and without disabilities. For example, the development of "chill zones" has supported campers with and without labels by providing time away from overly-stimulating camp activities and the rigorous sensory-laden schedule at camp. Pictorial schedules posted in cabins and around camp have provided support to many campers. These inclusive practices are perceived as benefitting the entire camp community, and that has become an important part of their rationale in support of inclusive camp.

- Several accommodations originally intended for those campers with a disability, in addition to “chill zones,” were found to benefit many others. With the intensity of camp, some have initiated conversations about shortening the camp session and pro-rating the cost of camp for those who are unable to attend a full session (e.g., CYJ Texas & JCA Shalom). Leaders have identified that it is more important to have a positive camp experience than to follow the tradition of commitment to a full camp session.
- Staff were creative and willing to accommodate their campers to everyone's benefit. This was well-received by campers who did not need an accommodation. At two camps, a “silent disco” was held during which campers wore headsets to allow for music of their liking and loudness. All were dancing to their own beat and enjoying their time together.
- Staff identified a number of strategies that they used to accommodate campers with disabilities and increase their social inclusion. These strategies included adapting activities, ensuring that campers with disabilities had valued roles, using universal design approaches, facilitating social interactions, working with campers without disabilities to increase understanding and interactions, modeling behaviors, and helping campers with disabilities find their voices. This is in stark contrast to 2015 when staff struggled to identify specific strategies that they had used to include campers with disabilities. Here is a sampling of best practices from 2017.

Adapting activities:

*“Allowed for campers to participate in a way that was comfortable for each camper according to their needs.” (Activity Specialist, B'nai B'rith)*

*“Our cabin agreed to tone-down the intensity of gaga so my camper with Dwarfism could play.” (Counselor, B'nai B'rith)*

*“Instances at ropes all the time where we adapt the zipline or swing so that they can still participate even though they aren't able to do the physical aspect.” (Unit Head, Camp Chi)*

*“Taking time explaining things/activities in ways they'd understand... Explained instructions carefully and slowly. Reiterated instructions and was available to provide further help.” (Counselor, Camp Harlam)*

Ensuring campers with disabilities had valued roles:

*“Had them help me at the ropes course to feel important.” (Counselor, JCA Shalom)*

*“Giving leadership opportunities to a camper with disabilities.” (Activity Specialist, Camp Chi)*

*“Giving jobs/responsibilities to campers appropriate to their abilities.” (Counselor, Camp Judaea)*

Using universal design approaches:

*"Gave alternatives within an activity that made it accessible to all the kids." (Unit Head, Camp Judaea)*

*"Opening a second specialty that helps all beginners." (Activity Specialist, Camp Chi)*

*"Having the cabin give the schedule to entire cabin so that all kids benefit from the structure." (Senior/Administration, B'nai B'rith)*

Facilitating social interactions:

*"Brought them [camper with a disability] over to talk with the group, introduced them to leader campers." (Counselor, JCA Shalom)*

*"Doing icebreaker where everyone got a chance to talk to each other." (Counselor, Camp Chi)*

*"Integrating a camper with severe social anxiety into the group dynamics by initiating conversations with the bunk entailing her interests." (Counselor, Camp Harlam)*

Working with campers without disabilities:

*"Explained to other campers how to react to kids with disabilities with positive words, not using hateful words." (Medical Staff, B'nai B'rith)*

*"[camper name] was sitting by herself and I went to talk to her and brought other campers, They then sat and talked with her." (Counselor, Camp Chi)*

Modeling behavior:

*"Modeled good behavior by approaching campers' non-preferred activities from a different perspective could make it more fun. In other words, offered my personal experience as an example to engage [camper name]." (Camper Care Team, JCA Shalom)*

Helping campers with disabilities find their voices:

*"Our bunk staff did not ostracize [camper name] or [camper name] and made sure they were allowed to be heard." (Counselor, CYJ Texas)*

*"During bunk time our inclusion camper showed pictures of his family and the group listened." (Unit Head, CYJ Texas)*

*"This is not about a person with a disability, but I believe it highlights inclusion. We had a talk one night with all TSOFIM girls about gender and sexuality led by a transgender boy in Eda. Many people left with a new found respect and interest in the LGBTQ+ community, and the boy said he has never been more comfortable and supported in an environment. (Counselor, Camp Judea).*

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**Recommendation #13: Continue to design programmatic strategies that facilitate the social inclusion of campers.** Many strategies have been learned, designed, and shared by IC's that bring camps together in socially inclusive ways. Through cooperative learning activities, providing opportunities for participation in equitable rather than identical ways, and using universal design approaches that maximize success, a large number of camps have internalized the inclusive mission of camp. In this manner, campers have become more accepting and welcoming of differences, kinder rather than simply accepting of others, and naturally supportive and inclusive of other campers without being asked to do so.

**Recommendation #14: Continue to provide/receive training on how to most effectively address expected and unexpected challenging behavior.** As camp serves a greater number of campers who challenge the system, including more campers with disabilities along with campers who fall into the "gray area," challenges to staff will be ever-increasing. This becomes a particularly difficult task when children engage in difficult-to-control behavior that is unexpected (i.e., campers undiagnosed whose parents do not provide necessary information regarding behaviors or special needs). Additional training in positive behavior support and universal design approaches, coupled with a broader intake process, are necessary and will go a long way in addressing behavioral challenges exhibited by campers with and without disability.

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## Key Finding #6: Sustainability and Scalability

*"Kol Yisrael Arevim Zech Bazeh, We are all responsible for one another."*

Within a brief 3 years of the inclusive camp initiative, many impressive qualities are in place within the cohort. A "culture of inclusion," the year-round presence of highly skilled ICs, an emerging decentralized model of supports, and the adoption of universal design approaches all serve as a strong foundation moving forward. Camp staff and campers alike are attracted to the inclusion concept, and many would choose to continue to work in or attend this type of setting. It appears that inclusion is sustainable and that many, if not all, of the practices being used to include campers with disabilities are achievable at other camps. The benefits accrued through this overall inclusive camp movement appear to be far outweighing the necessary efforts and costs associated with making inclusive camp a reality.

Senior staff recognized that comprehensive training and support of an inclusive camp, initially launched by the FJC along with funding from two external foundations, would be for naught unless inclusion efforts continue in summers ahead. Reports of “a changing culture” among campers, staff and leaders alike suggest a momentum in a permanent direction toward inclusive service delivery. This commitment includes a continuation of staffing and programmatic efforts, even if additional funds do not become available. One camp previously described this commitment by identifying itself as a “mission-based vs. financially-based camp.”

Camp leaders are planning to or have already begun to solicit external grant funding to sustain these efforts. It has been identified that additional staffing (e.g., a second IC or IC assistant, floaters, one-on-one supports) could be helpful in support of inclusion, and their leaders will do whatever possible to fund this level of staffing. Nearly all camp leaders are treating the new IC position as a permanent staff position, where the salary for the IC has already been added as a permanent budget line-item.

Including children with disabilities in inclusive camp will require much more than simply limiting the number of segregated camp opportunities (for campers who have a disability only). Substantial efforts by camp leaders and staff, along with board members and funders, will continue to be necessary. Recently, this cohort has reported success in working with their respective boards in support of inclusive camp. They have presented strong rationale for sustaining and continuing to build diverse and inclusive camp communities. One of the key selling points, in addition to “doing the right thing” as generous and caring individuals, has been the fact that a much greater number of campers of every ability has benefitted through inclusive best practices. Nevertheless, funding challenges exist. Some of the camps in the cohort have found their “champion for inclusion.” Others are searching for these advocates and funders. On several occasions, an “endowment of inclusion” was identified as a necessary and long-term strategy in support of inclusive camp. Through current (and future) efforts of this initial cohort of camps, as innovators and early adapters, leaders, trainers, and role models, it is possible that several thousands of children of all abilities will eventually have opportunities to experience and benefit from the magic of Jewish camp.

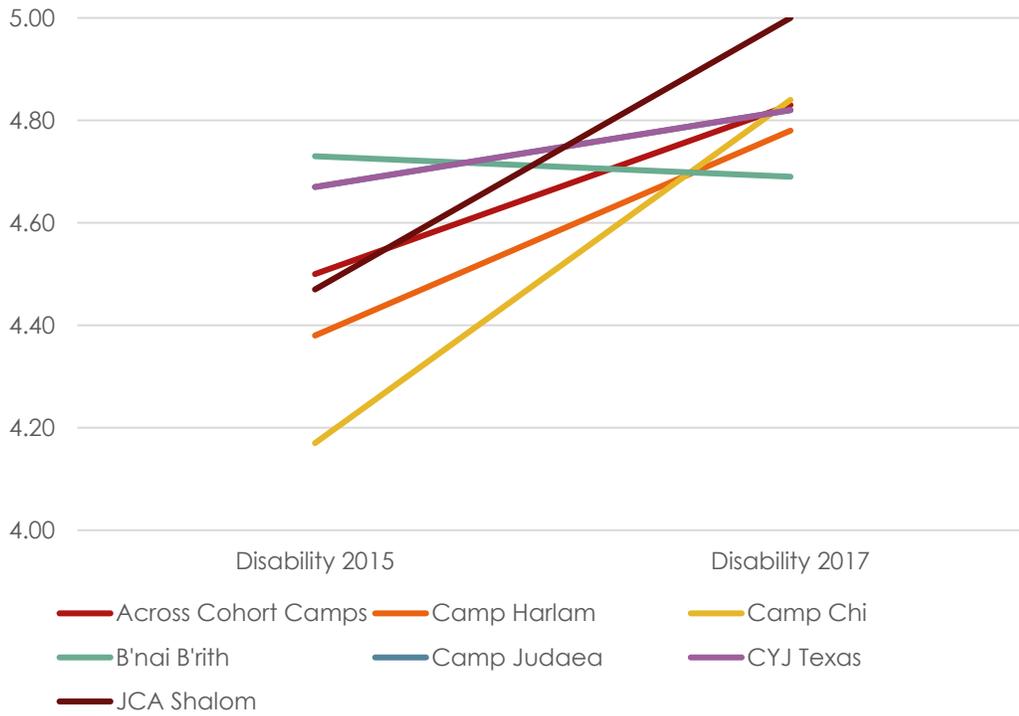
The following items from the summer 2017 help summarize the issues surrounding the sustainability and scalability of inclusive camp, as we contemplate future efforts.

- With a “culture of inclusion” infused throughout camp ranks -- from camp leaders, inclusion coordinators, staff, campers, and family members -- inclusive service delivery now appears to be woven into the fabric of the cohort. Unless substantial shifts occur among board members, camp administration, or we experience a severe economic downturn, inclusive camp appears to be anchored as an integral component of the camp’s mission and will likely not reverse course. There is a general acceptance of participation by campers of varying abilities in all aspects of camp life.
- Through a decentralized model that has taken root, staff members across camp are receiving training on inclusion, and consequently, many individuals have taken responsibility to include all campers into daily activities. Staff training protocols, along with new ways that IC's have

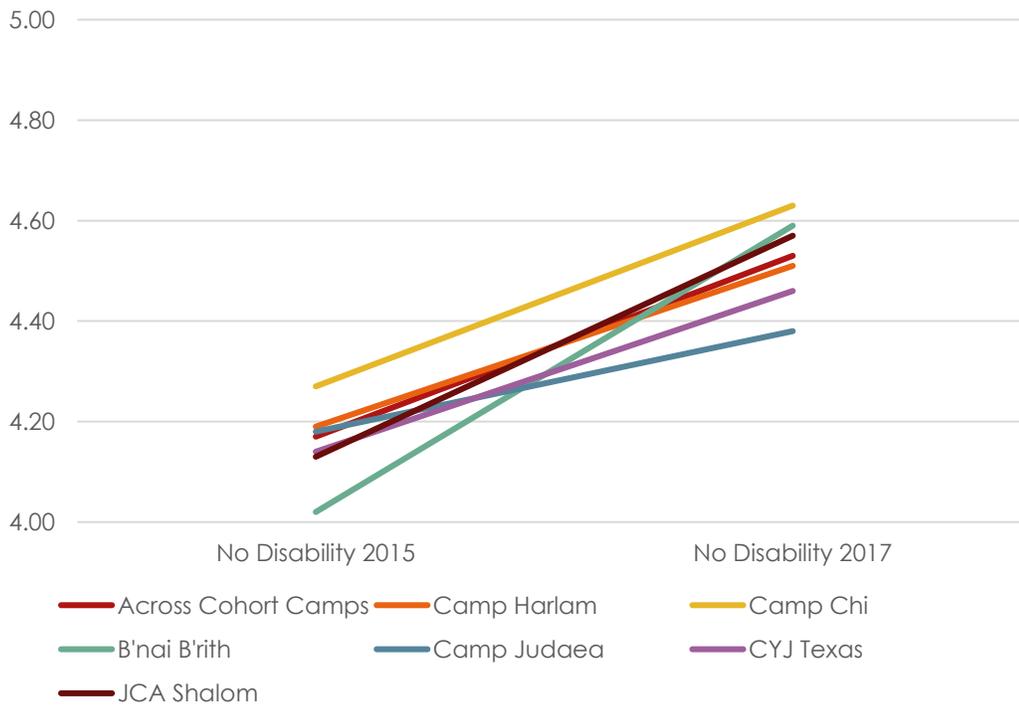
engaged staff and campers through ongoing training and modeling behavior, have become a natural component of support.

- Camp reputations as more diverse and inclusive summer options have increased the positive recognition they receive. Although marketing continues to be primarily through word-of-mouth, overall camper numbers continue to grow with camper retention remaining strong at approximately 70%. It must be noted that camp marketers have dedicated sections of their websites to inclusion. There has been no known loss of typical campers through this initiative. Parents of typical campers are no longer complaining about the presence of campers with disabilities.
- Several camps are approaching natural proportions, as approximately 10-15% of the entire camper population being comprised of campers with diagnoses or labels, and are near capacity. This may limit the number of new campers with disabilities that will be welcomed, if additional resources are not found.
- In recognition of the importance of inclusive camp, camp leaders are working diligently to secure the necessary funds to support these efforts. Funding challenges do exist (e.g., employing a year-round IC, salary and housing for additional staff members). Some camps have found their “champions for inclusion” who will support these necessary expenses. Others are searching for these funds so that the initiative remains sustainable.
- One of the key selling points of inclusive camp is that the best practices necessary to accommodate campers with disabilities (e.g., universal design approaches, “equitable vs. identical” activities, “chill zones”) are also benefiting the larger population of campers. Strategies that promote equal opportunities and a more welcoming camp are contributing to the breaking down of barriers, the fostering of friendships, increased awareness and appreciation of children’s differences, and an overall more positive experience for most campers.
- According to CSI data, the inclusion initiative is popular from the perspective of families of campers with as well as without disabilities. Perceptions of the inclusive camp initiative by families of campers with disabilities has improved between 2015 and 2017 for all camps except at B’nai B’rith (Figure 17). Even more impressive is that the perception of inclusive camp has improved at all camps from the perspective of families of campers without disabilities (Figure 18). Seventy-three percent (73%) of camper families were “very favorable” of the inclusive camp initiative (89% families of campers with disabilities, 71% of families of campers without disabilities). Furthermore, 73% of families of campers with disabilities chose a particular camp specifically because it was inclusive. Interestingly, 43% of families of campers without disabilities stated that it was important for the camp to be inclusive. Finally, 92% of families of campers with disabilities believed their camper had benefited from attending an inclusive camp, and 60% of families of campers without disabilities believed their camper benefitted from inclusion. These data provide strong support for the notion that inclusion benefits all campers.

**Figure 17: Families of Campers with Disabilities Perceptions of Inclusion Initiative, 2015 vs. 2017**



**Figure 18: Families of Campers without Disabilities Perceptions of Inclusion Initiative, 2015 vs. 2017**



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**Recommendation #15: Continue to work with the Board of Directors in support of inclusive camp.**

With the development and collection of numerous success stories and a strong integration of Jewish values and social inclusion, the task of getting board members and the larger community to support the inclusion initiative will become easier. Inclusive mission statements, describing a developed “culture of kindness,” need to be disseminated in myriad ways for broad buy-in and adoption. In addition to heart-warming and exciting stories of campers naturally supporting each other and recognizing one another’s value, the extraordinary work of ICs and Camper Care Teams, as well as universal design that accommodate and benefit all children, need to continuously be marketed through social media, camp websites, and presentations. “Champions” for inclusion must be found to support the sustainability of this initiative.

**Recommendation #16: A comprehensive strategy must be developed by camp leaders and the FJC to effectively communicate the importance and feasibility of inclusive camp.**

Based on what is known about innovators and early adopters within diffusion of innovation theory [as proposed by Malcom Gladwell in *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference* (2000)], the further development and scalability of inclusive camp throughout other FJC camps will depend heavily on the ability and leadership capabilities of these innovators and early adopters to persuade the majority to ride their coattails. This is a critical, but perhaps manageable, advocacy and leadership role for many of the cohort’s leaders. This group has done their duty through intense efforts of advocacy, training, experimentation with implementation of practices, and communication and collaboration for this cultural shift. They are now in the best position - - as change agents and motivators - - to train and model the use of best practices for many other camps who have yet to come on board. It is time for these camp leaders and the FJC to become “champions for inclusion.” There is still much work to be done to build upon this foundation.

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# Recommendations in Review

Recommendation #1: Continue to market inclusive camp to more diverse populations.

Recommendation #2: Continue to be prepared for the growing number of campers in the "gray area."

Recommendation #3: Continue to focus on a quality camp experience and camper retention.

Recommendation #4: Scaling up requires quality before quantity.

Recommendation #5: Continue to review organizational practices and procedures to support socially inclusive camp.

Recommendation #6: Continue to design and implement best practices in support of inclusive camp.

Recommendation #7: Incorporate all campers in problem-solving to accommodate others.

Recommendation #8: Hire experienced staff to take leadership roles in a decentralized model of inclusion.

Recommendation #9: Continue to assess inclusion training needs of all staff members.

Recommendation #10: Hire a year-round IC that is part of the leadership circle, contributing to camp-wide decisions.

Recommendation #11: Hire an IC that has supervisory experience and skills to coordinate the training and support of staff within a decentralized model.

Recommendation #12: Establish Camper Care Teams to serve all campers, with the IC leading the team.

Recommendation #13: Continue to design programmatic strategies that facilitate the social inclusion of campers.

Recommendation #14: Continue to provide/receive training on how to most effectively address expected and unexpected challenging behavior.

Recommendation #15: Continue to work with the Board of Directors in support of inclusive camp.

Recommendation #16: A comprehensive strategy must be developed by camp leaders and the FJC to effectively communicate the importance and feasibility of inclusive camp.

# Appendix

Senior Staff Post-Camp Interview Guide

Inclusion Coordinator Post-Camp Interview Guide

Camp Staff Survey

Figures Reporting Camp Staff Survey Data

*Camper Satisfaction Insights (CSI) Survey Questions*

Figures Reporting CSI Data

*InFocus® and JCC Camp Chi: Growing Beyond Yourself*



## Camp Director Interview Guide - 2017

1. Did you see progress toward being a more inclusive camp this summer, as compared to last? If so, in what way(s)?
2. What barriers interfered with your inclusion initiative, if any?
3. What changes to staffing need to be made to support the needs of all of your campers?
4. Are there specific campers that you perceive being unable to serve in the next few years? If so, what are the barriers?
5. Can you share a specific example of “social inclusion” that occurred at camp this year? What factors contributed to this outcome?
6. How did the marketing of your inclusive camp change in 2017? Do you have plans to enhance your marketing? If so, what are these plans?
7. Did you find that campers (with/without disabilities) and their families were better prepared for an inclusive camp experience this summer? How did you prepare campers and families for inclusion prior to the summer?
8. Did your camp hire staff who had disabilities this summer? If so –
  - What were their roles?
  - How did they come to apply for a staff position (were they former campers)?
  - Do you have specific goals in this hiring practice?
9. How supportive is your Board to continue this camp inclusion initiative?
10. What will it take to make inclusion a sustainable initiative at your camp?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share?



## Inclusion Coordinator Interview Guide - 2017

1. Did you see progress toward being a more inclusive camp this summer, as compared to last? If so, in what way(s)?
2. What, if any, changes in your role as the IC had an impact on inclusive camp this summer?
3. What barriers interfered with your inclusion initiative, if any?
4. How did your staff training change this summer?
  - Did you add new material to staff training?
  - Do you believe that the training material adequately met your staff's training needs this summer?
  - Was there adequate time to provide the planned training?
  - Did others assist with training? If so, who, and how was this received?
  - Were staff members receptive to the expanded training and increased roles and responsibilities?
  - Did responsibility for inclusion become more decentralized throughout camp?
5. Describe a specific example of "social inclusion" that occurred at camp this year. What factors contributed to this outcome?
6. How did the number of campers with identified disabilities, and the level of their support needs, compare to last year? How did this impact the inclusion initiative?
7. Did you find that campers (with/without disabilities) and their families were better prepared for an inclusive camp experience this year, as compared to last year? What efforts do you believe are necessary to better prepare campers and their families for inclusive camp prior to the summer?
8. As an IC, do you have a role in facilitating the inclusion of *staff* with a disability that are working at camp? How did that initiative go? Are there other roles you play, in addition to that of an IC?
9. Going forward, what additional supports do you need to do your job well?
10. What will it take to make inclusion a sustainable initiative at your camp?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share?



## Camp Staff Survey



**Your opinion counts!**

**We realize how important you are to the success of camp.**

We want to better understand your perspectives on including campers with disabilities. Please take approximately 10 minutes to tell us about your experiences so camp staff can be better supported in the future.

**What is/was your role?**

- One-on-one support to a camper with a disability (Inclusion Specialist)
- Counselor
- Activity Specialists (including Directors of activity specialty areas, Specialty Heads, Specialty Staff)
- Counselor/Activity Specialist (Specialty Counselor)
- Unit Head or Assistant Unit Head (Village Leader/Area Leader/Division Head/Assistant Division Head/Merakez)
- Staff in Training or Counselor in Training (SIT/CIT/MIT/Gesher)
- Camper Care Team (including Inclusion Coordinators, Inclusion Interns, Social Workers)
- Medical Staff (including Nurses, Doctors, Wellness Center or Health Care Center staff)
- Senior/Administrative/Professional Staff (including Director, Associate Director, Assistant Director, Programming Director, Year-round Programming Director, Day Camp Director)
- Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

**Training and Preparation:**

Please indicate to what level you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Camp prepared me for my overall role							
Camp prepared me to include campers with disabilities							
Camp prepared me to work with campers with challenging behaviors							
Camp prepared me for specific campers with disabilities assigned to me							
Camp provided me with ongoing training about including campers with disabilities							
I had the skills and knowledge needed to include campers with disabilities							

**What about staff training did you find particularly helpful?**

**What additional training do you wish you had received?**

**Support:**

Please indicate to what level you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
If I needed assistance, I received assistance with including a camper with a disability							
If I needed assistance, I received assistance with responding to challenging behaviors							
The Inclusion Coordinator was readily available to me							

**When/If you needed support in including a camper with a disability, in most cases that support came from (e.g., another counselor, another camper, unit head/assistant unit head, village/area leader, inclusion coordinator):**

Provide one or two examples of support that the Inclusion Coordinator provided you or the overall camp.

What do you wish the camp had done to help you include campers with disabilities?

**Personal Perspectives:**

Please indicate to what level you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed having campers with disabilities at camp						
Campers with disabilities added value to the camp						
Campers with disabilities should be included at this camp in the future						
If I am to work at a camp in the future, I would choose to work at an inclusive camp						

**Facilitating Inclusion:**

Please give one example of how you helped include a camper with a disability.

Please give one example of how campers without disabilities included a camper with a disability.

**Demographics:**

**Age:**

- 18 years of age or under
- 19-23 years of age
- 24-34 years of age
- 35+ years of age

**Did you ever attend this camp as a camper?**

- Yes
- No

If you are a SIT/CIT, do NOT answer this question. Including this year, how many years have you worked at this camp?

- 1<sup>st</sup> year
- 2-3 years
- 4+ years

Experience working with individuals with disabilities **prior to this summer** (check all that apply):

- I have a family member with a disability
- I have a friend with a disability
- Students with disabilities were included in my class(es) in school
- I have volunteered with people with disabilities
- I have worked in a paid position supporting people with disabilities
- I have no experience with people with disabilities

Are you a staff member who was hired from another country outside of the U.S.?

- No
- Yes If yes, identify country: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for taking the time to improve camp for everyone!**

## Figures Reporting Camp Staff Survey Data

The 2017 Camp Staff Survey was completed by 643 staff members (62.9% response rate) across the 6 camps in the cohort. Below is a breakdown of how camps were represented among the respondents.

B'nai B'rith = 68 respondents, 78 staff = 87.2% response rate

Camp Chi = 186 responses, 210 staff = 88.6% response rate

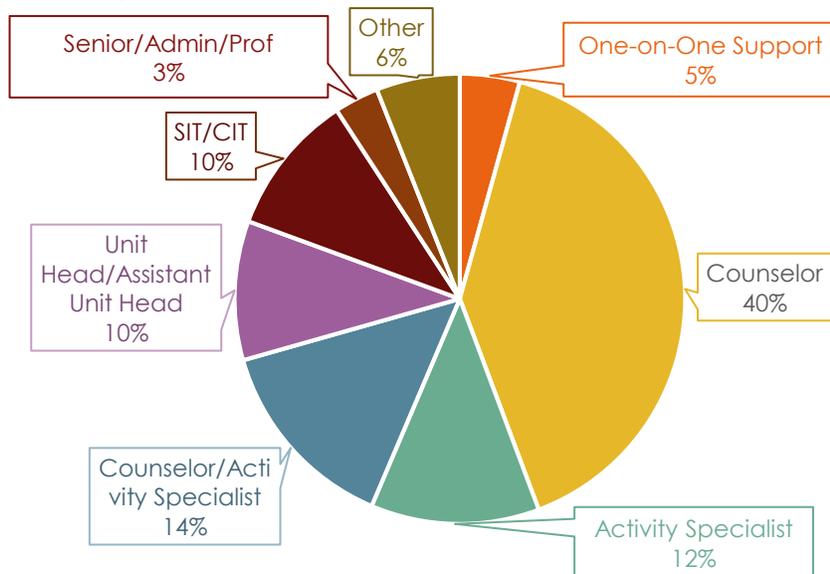
Camp Harlam = 153 respondents, 264 staff = 58.0% response rate

Camp Judaea = 73 respondents, 144 staff = 50.7% response rate

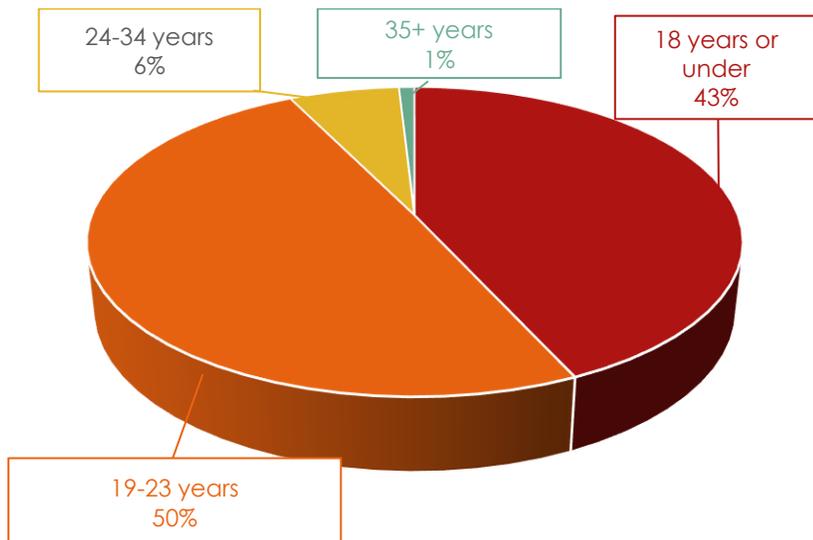
CYJ Texas = 62 respondents, 166 staff = 37.3% response rate

JCA Shalom = 101 respondents, 162 staff = 62.3% response rate

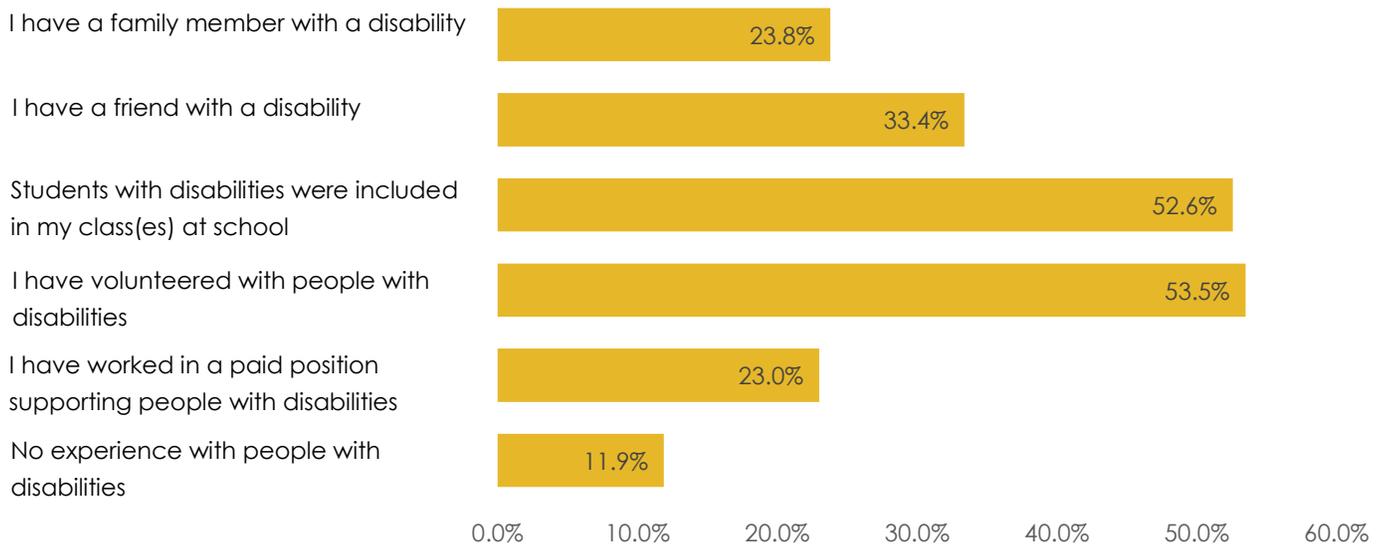
**Appendix Figure 1. Proportion of Respondents Represented by Each Staff Role**



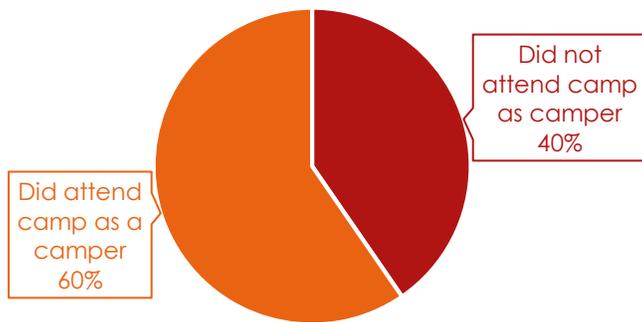
**Appendix Figure 2. Age of Respondents**



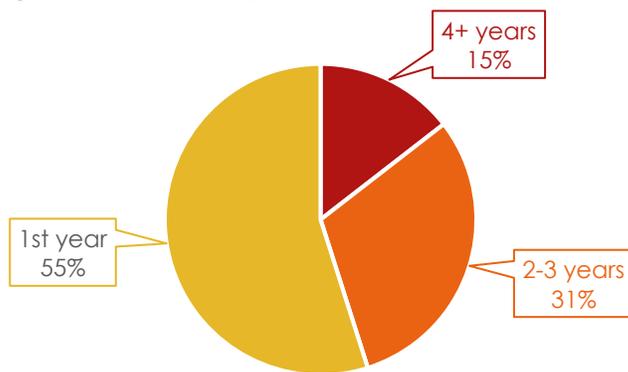
### Appendix Figure 3. Respondents' Experience with People with Disabilities



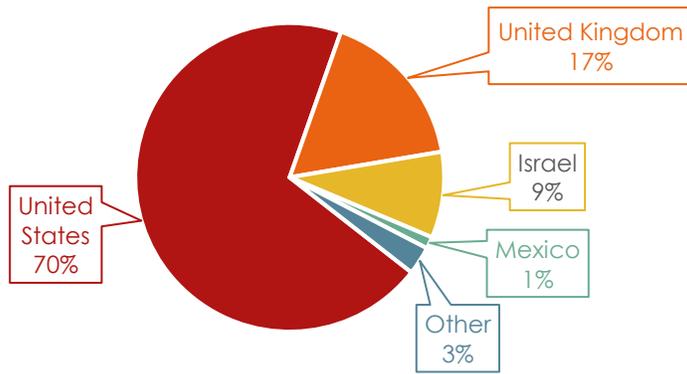
### Appendix Figure 4. Percent of Staff that Were Former Campers of the Same Camp



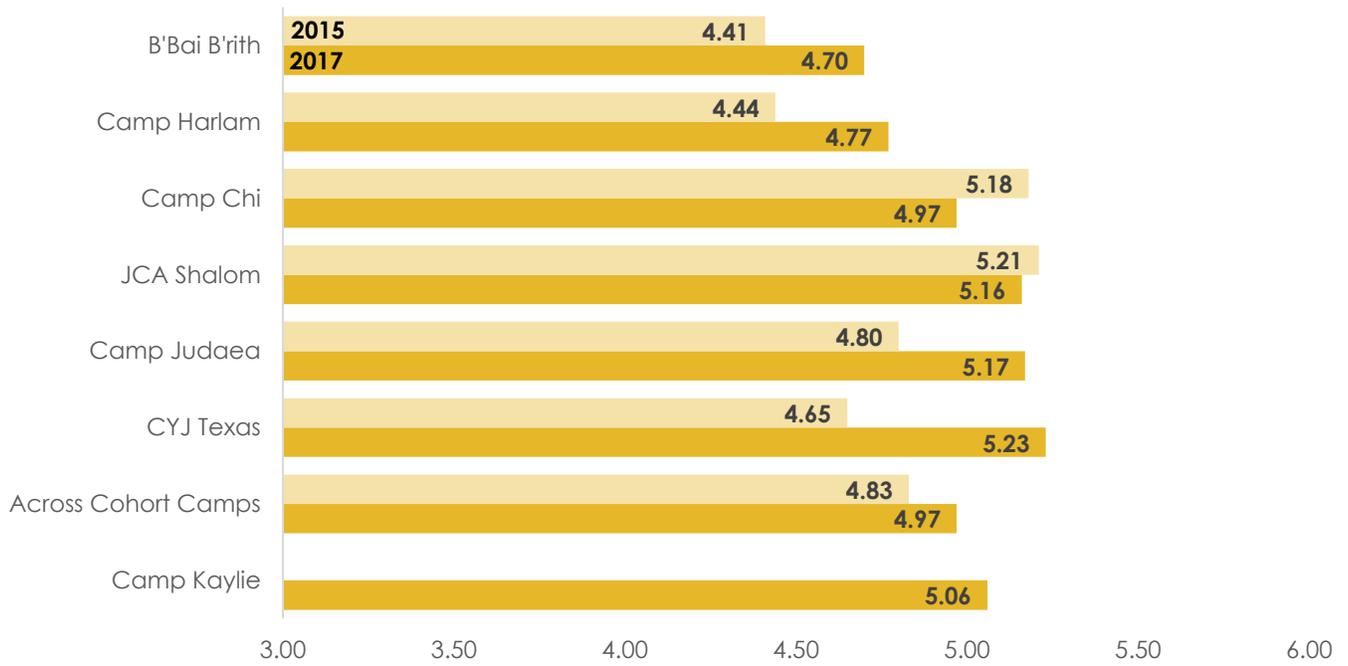
### Appendix Figure 5. Years of Experience as a Staff Member at this Camp



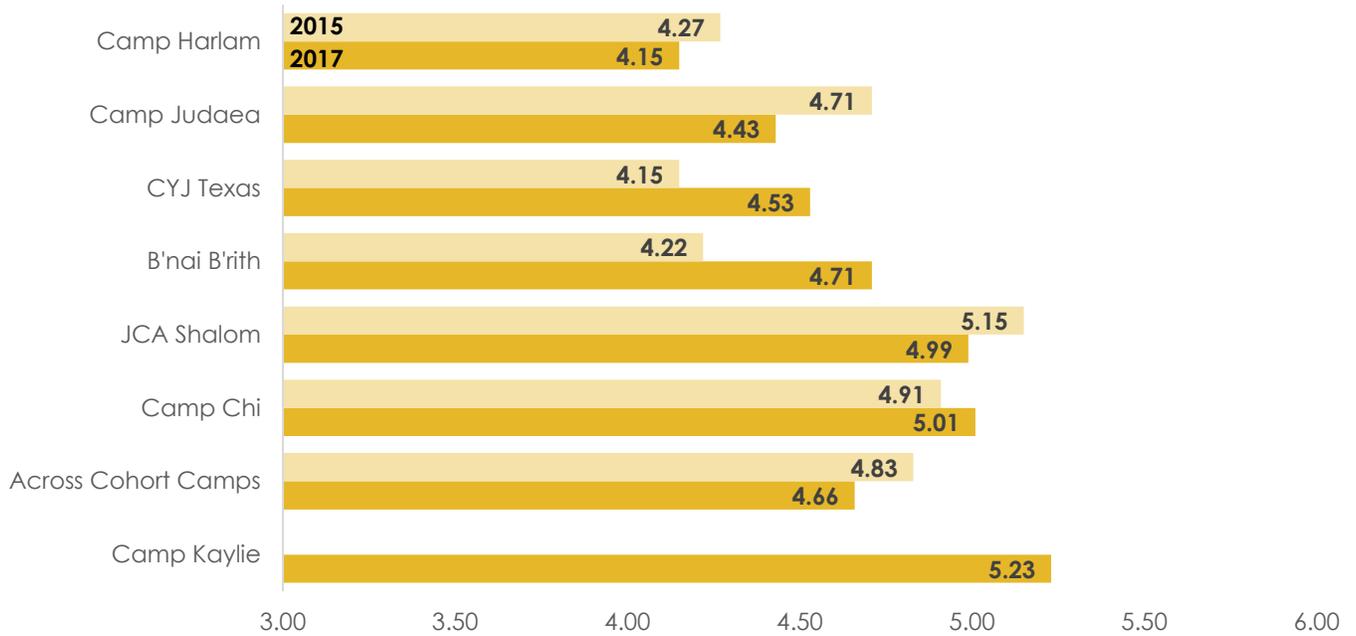
**Appendix Figure 6. Nationality of Respondents**



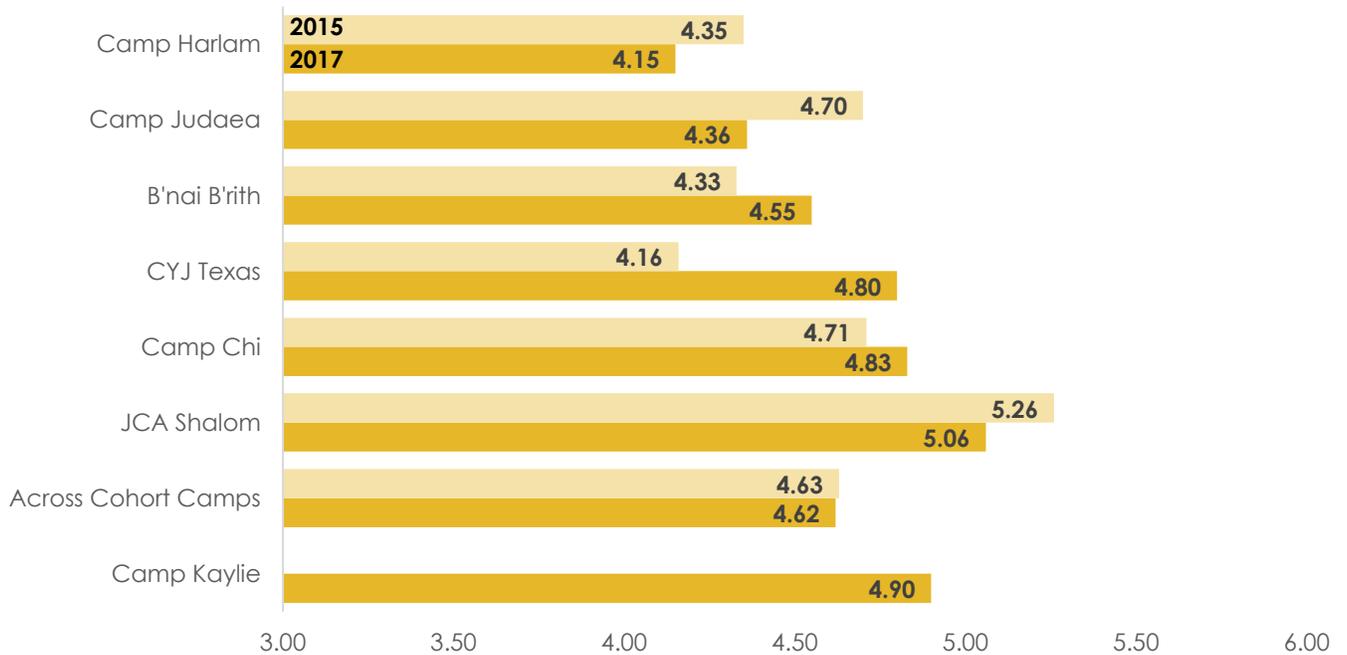
**Appendix Figure 7. Camp Prepared Me for My Role**



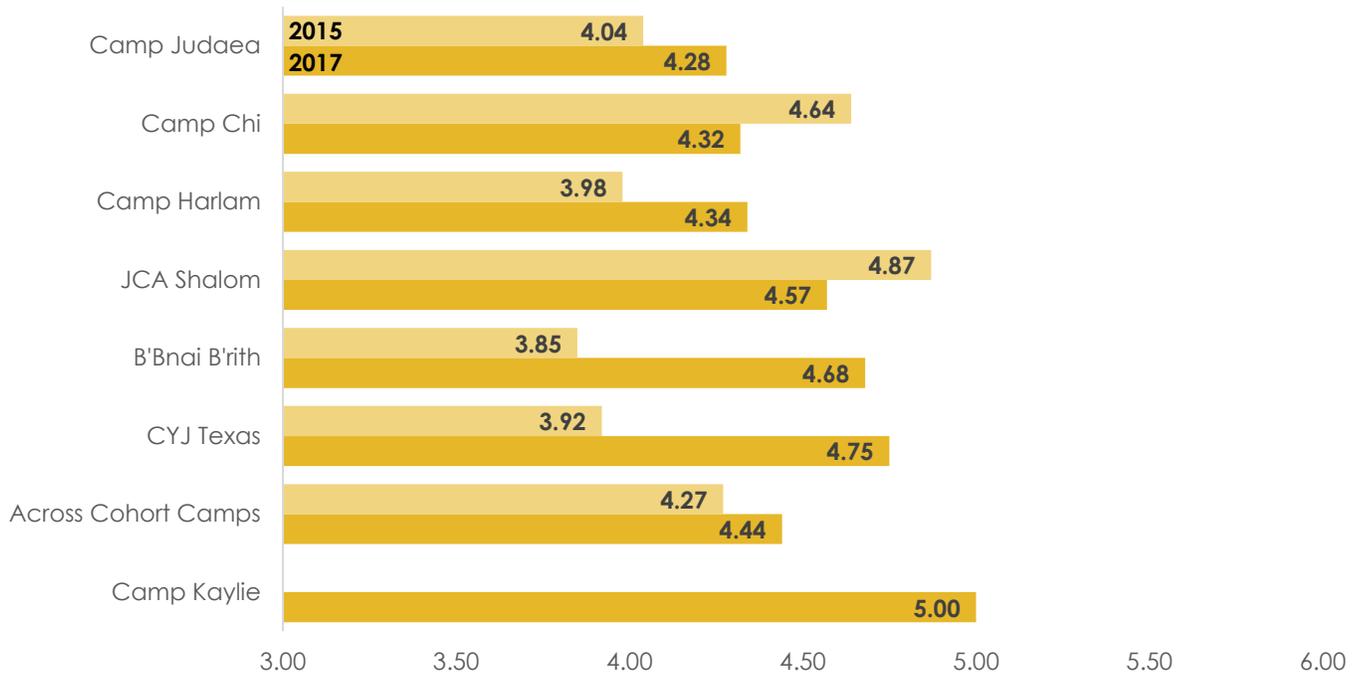
**Appendix Figure 8. Camp Prepared Me to Include Campers with Disabilities**



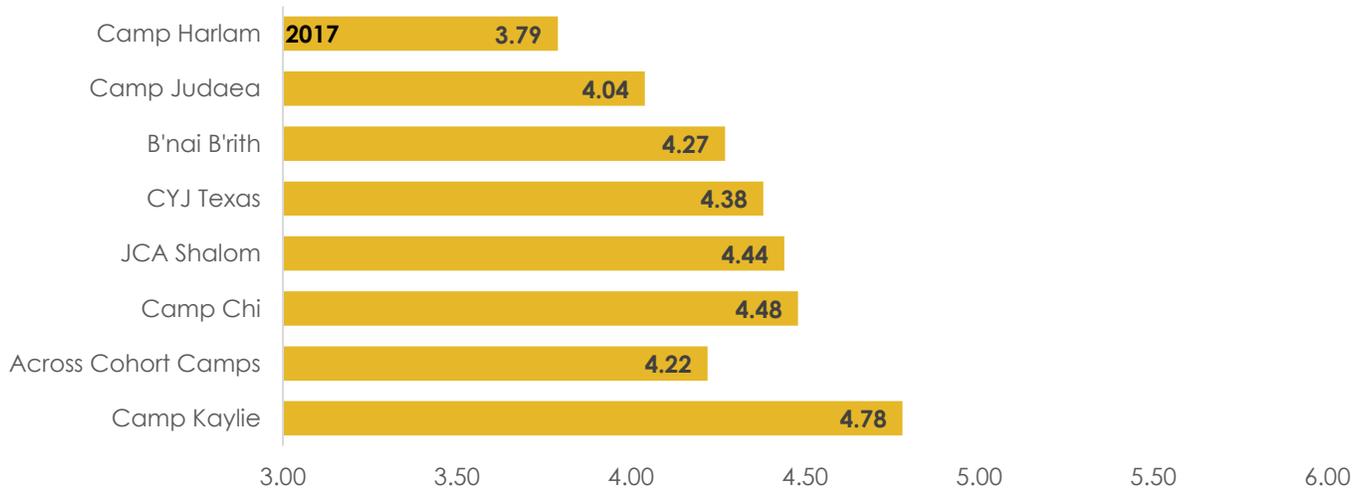
**Appendix Figure 9. Camp Prepared Me to Work with Campers with Challenging Behaviors**



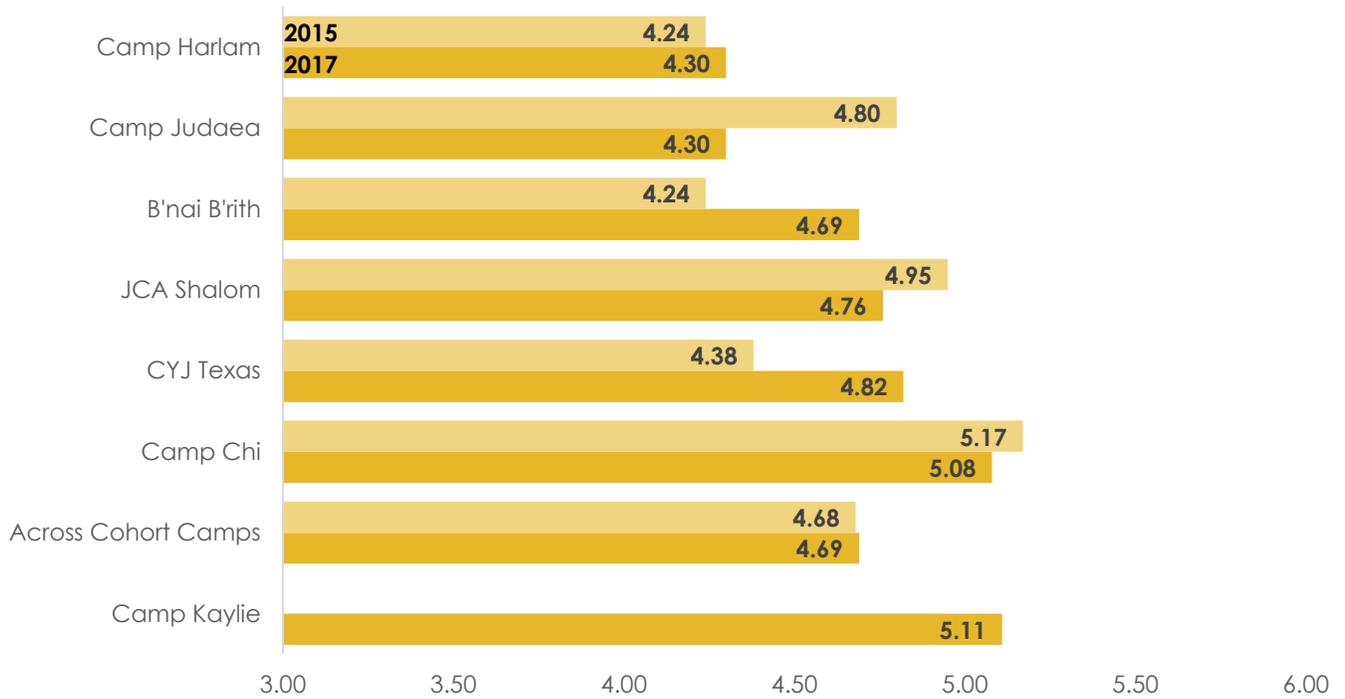
**Appendix Figure 10. Camp Prepared Me for Specific Campers with Disabilities Assigned to Me**



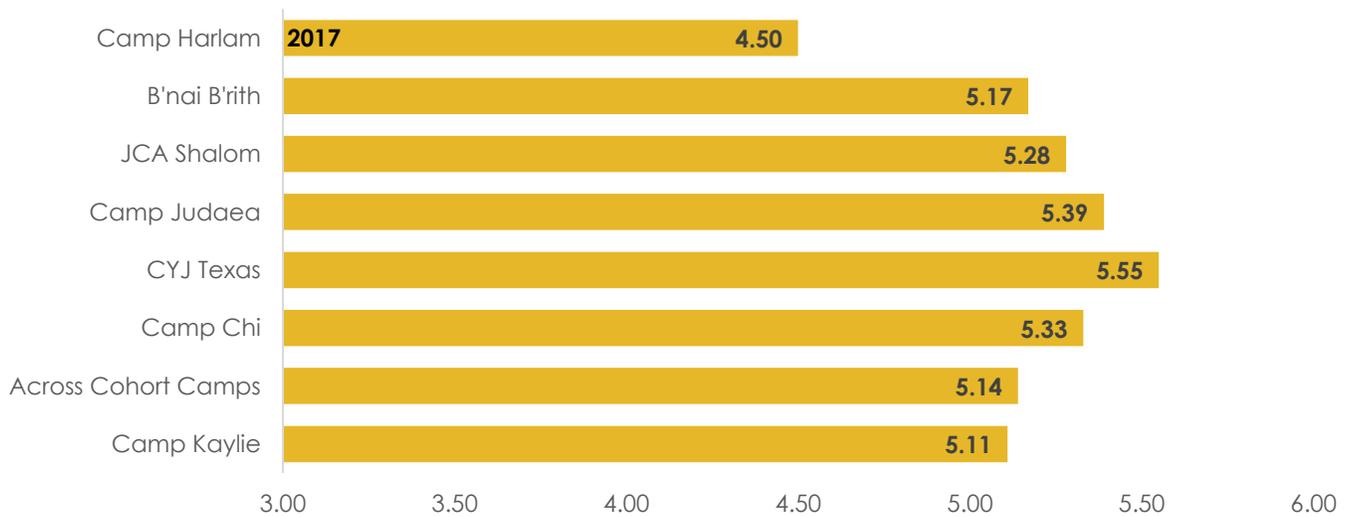
**Appendix Figure 11. Camp Provided Me with Ongoing Training About Including Campers with Disabilities (data not collected on this question in 2015)**



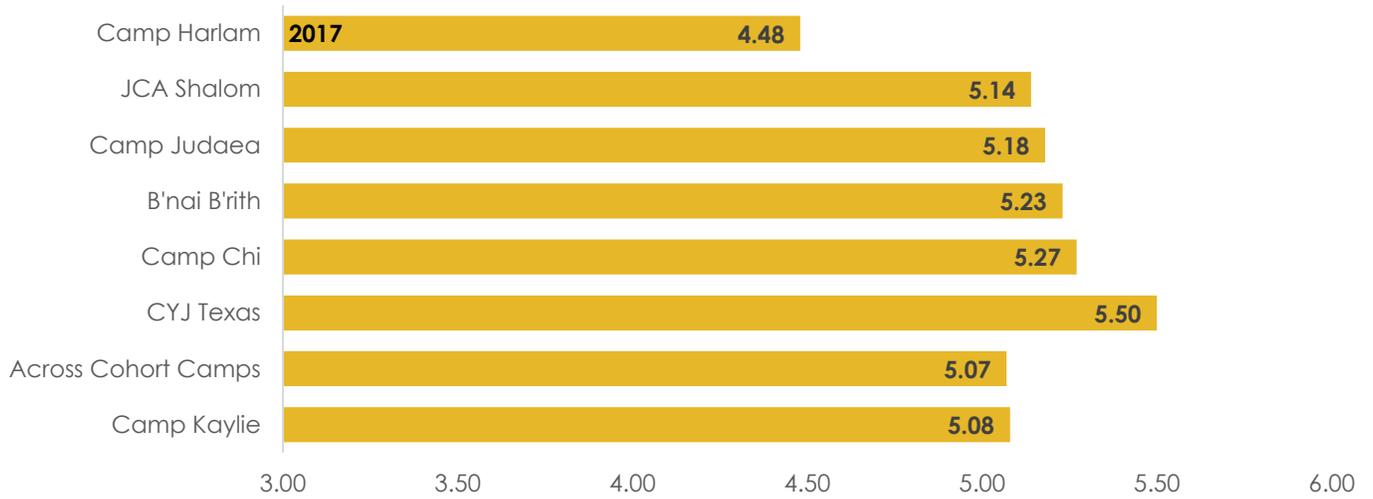
**Appendix Figure 12. I had the Skills and Knowledge Needed to Include Campers with Disabilities**



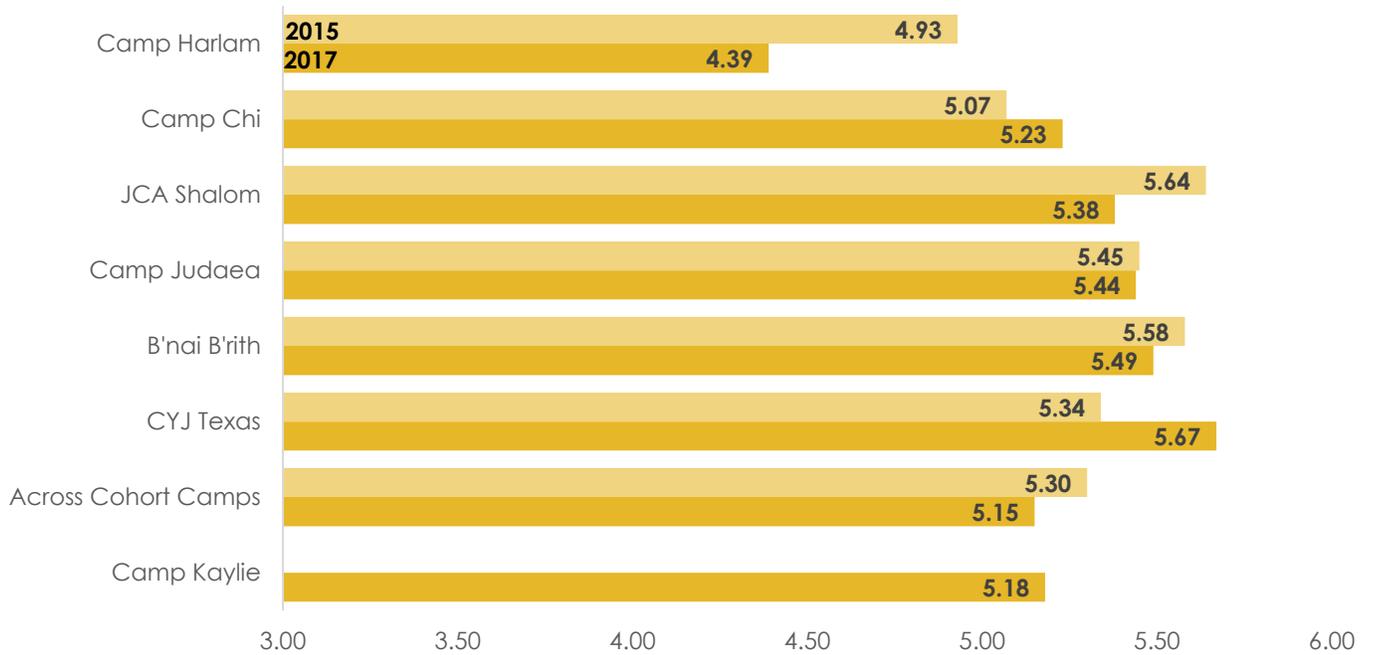
**Appendix Figure 13. If I needed assistance, I received assistance with including a camper with a disability (this question was asked differently in 2015, thus a comparison cannot be made)**



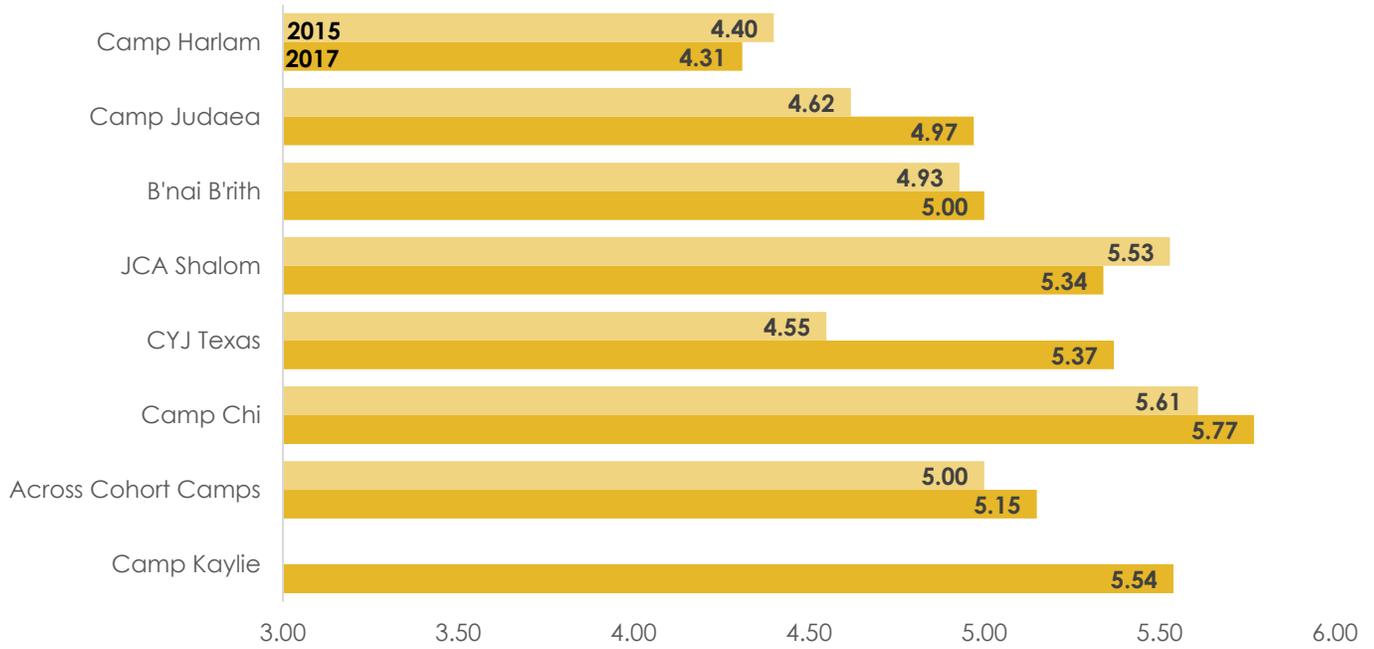
**Appendix Figure 14. If I needed assistance, I received assistance with responding to challenging behaviors (this question was asked differently in 2015, thus a comparison cannot be made)**



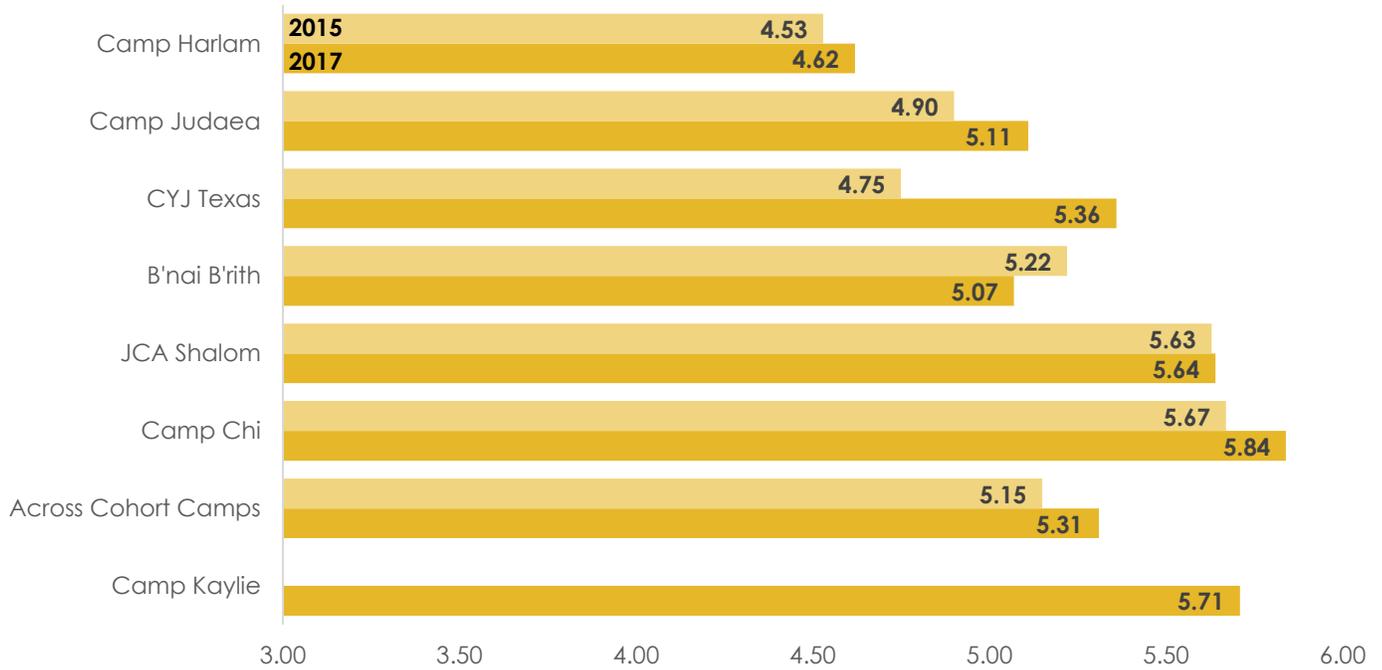
**Appendix Figure 15. The Inclusion Coordinator was Readily Available to Me**



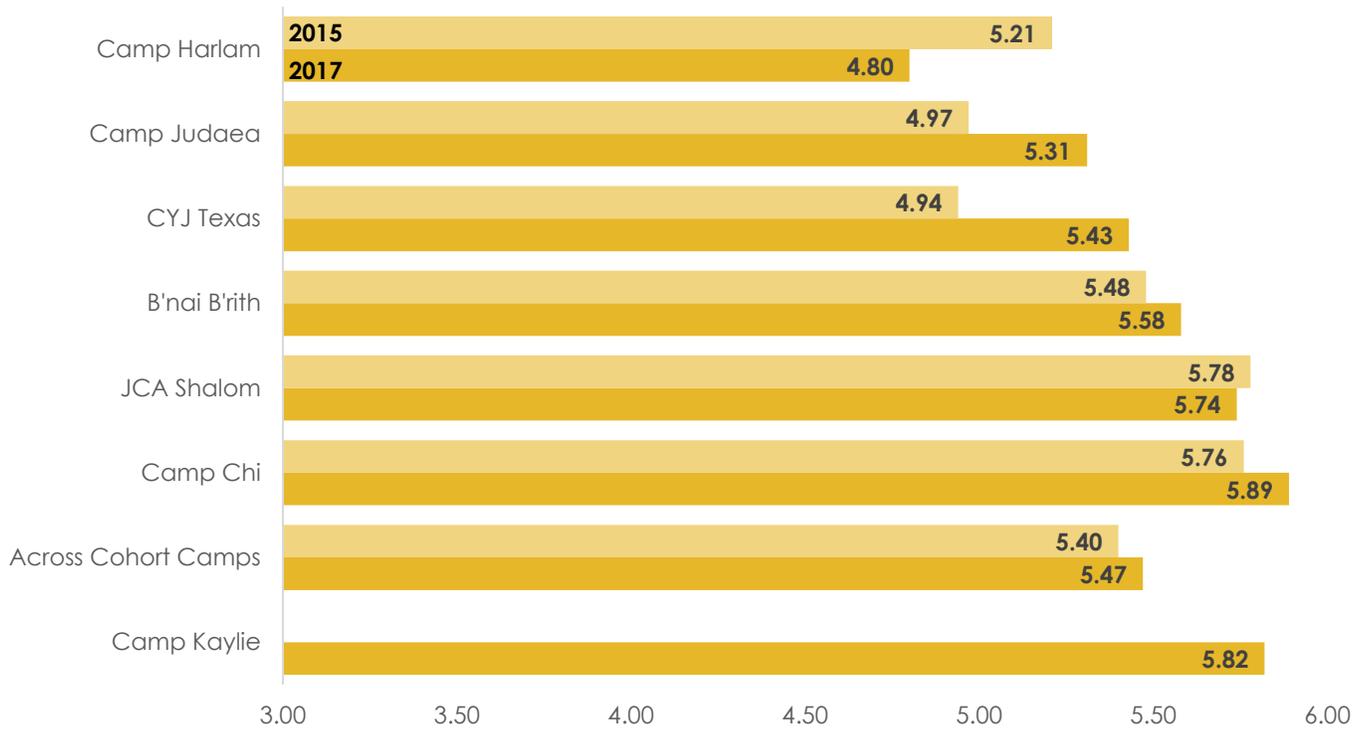
**Appendix Figure 16. I Enjoyed Having Campers with Disabilities at Camp**



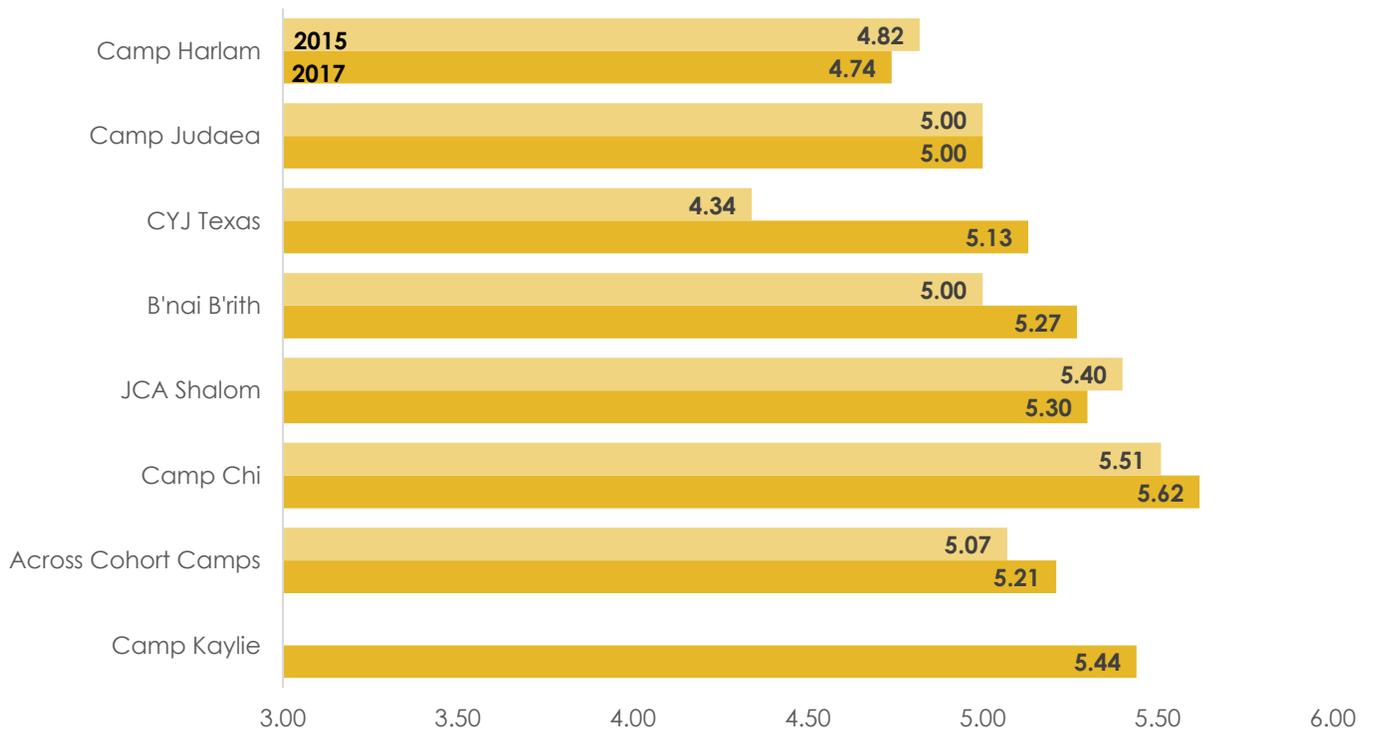
**Appendix Figure 17. Campers with Disabilities Added Value to the Camp**



**Appendix Figure 18. Campers with Disabilities Should be Included at this Camp in the Future**



**Appendix Figure 19. If I am to Work at a Camp in the Future, I Would Choose to Work at an Inclusive Camp**



## **Camper Satisfaction Insights (CSI) Survey Questions**

Does your child have a disability?

Yes

No

As part of the camp's inclusive camp initiative, we have campers with and without disabilities sharing a cabin and participating in all camp activities. How do you feel about this opportunity?

Very favorably

Somewhat favorably

Neutral

Somewhat unfavorably

Very unfavorably

In choosing [camp name] for your child this past summer, how important was it that they were an inclusive camp, serving both campers with and without disabilities?

Extremely important

Very important

Neutral

Not very important

Not at all important

To what degree did your camper benefit from attending a camp that was inclusive of children with disabilities and special needs?

A great deal

Somewhat

Neutral

Very little

Not at all

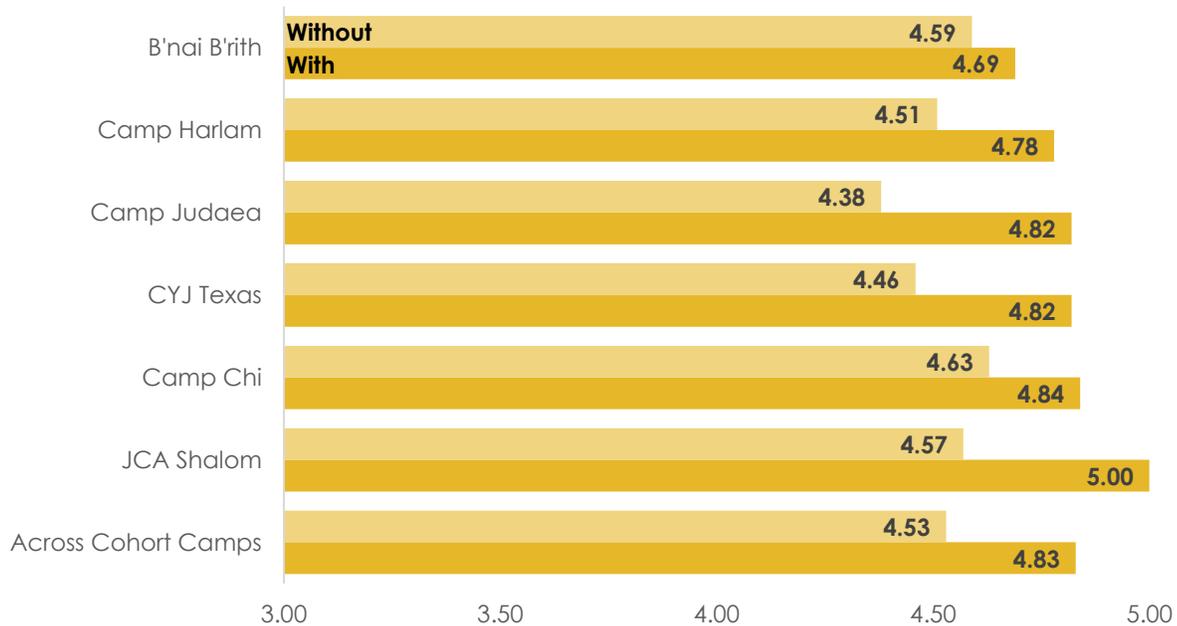
Not sure/Don't know

## Figures Reporting CSI Data

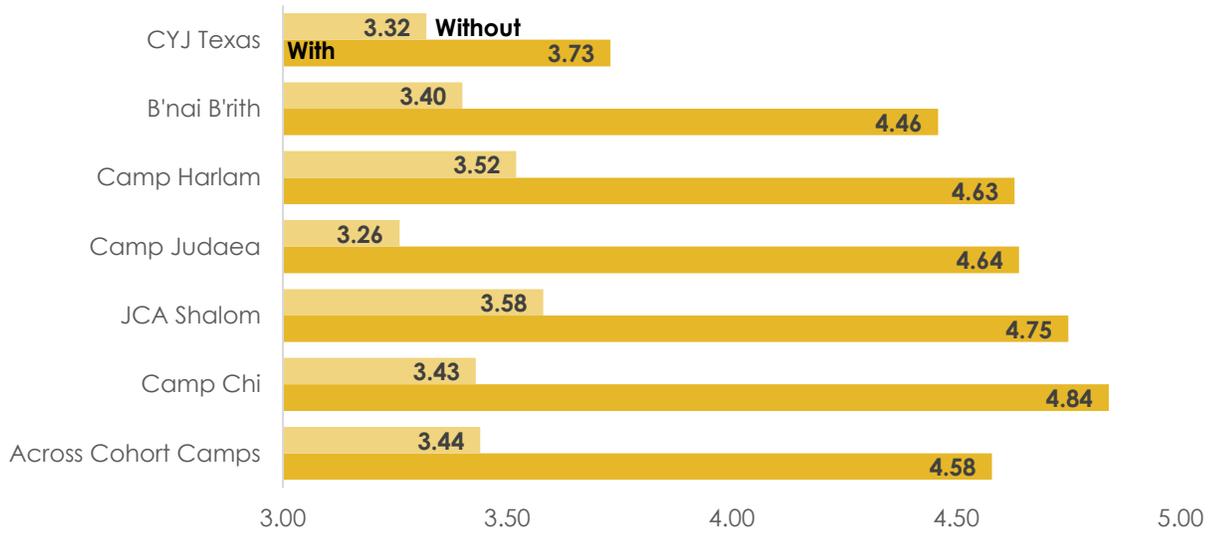
**Appendix Table 1. Does your child have a disability?**

Camp	Yes	No
B'nai B'rith	13	151
Camp Chi	25	204
Camp Harlam	32	294
Camp Judaea	11	152
CYJ Texas	11	114
JCA Shalom	12	210
<b>Across Cohort Camps Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>1125</b>

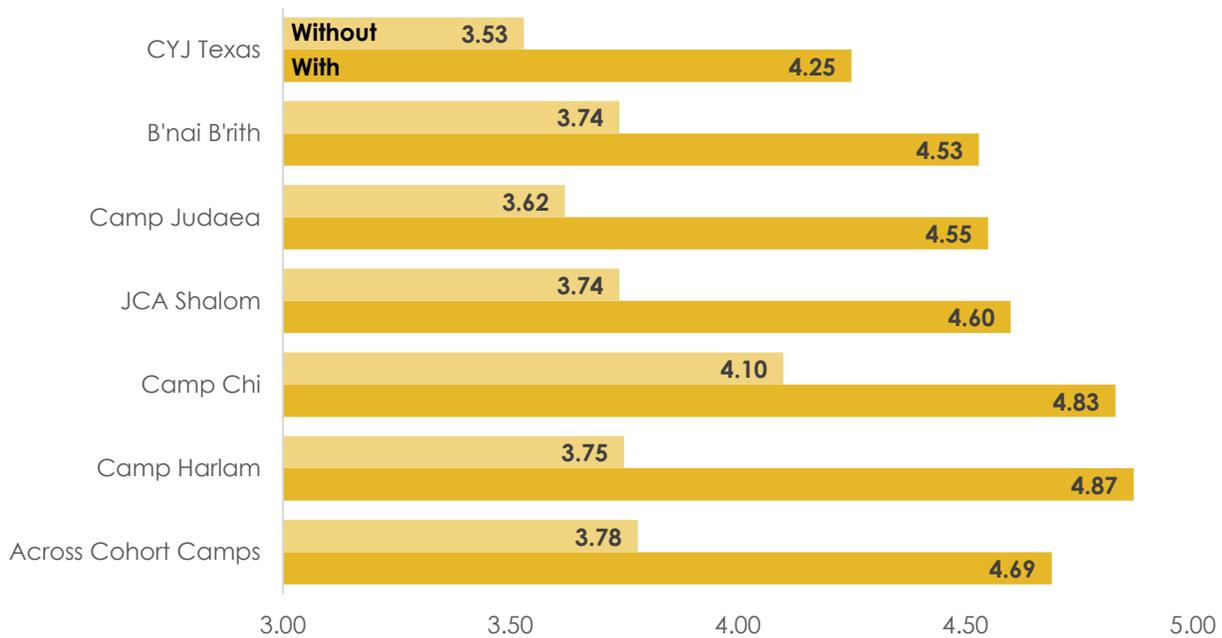
**Appendix Figure 21. As part of the camp's inclusive camp initiative, we have campers with and without disabilities sharing a cabin and participating in all camp activities. How do you feel about this opportunity?**



**Appendix Figure 22. In choosing [camp name] for your child this past summer, how important was it that they were an inclusive camp, serving both campers with and without disabilities?**



**Appendix Figure 23. To what degree did your camper benefit from attending a camp that was inclusive of children with disabilities and special needs?**





*InFocus® and JCC Camp Chi: Growing Beyond Yourselfie  
Summer 2017*

**InFocus®**

Ginger Walton, M.S.N., Executive Director  
Stuart J. Schleien, Ph.D., Executive Director  
Lindsey Oakes, M.S., Program Coordinator

An *InFocus®* program is designed to gather responses to questions related to the inclusion of people with disabilities in our communities, identify themes within those “voices,” and formulate stories to educate broad audiences on the value of social inclusion. This is accomplished through a combination of facilitated photography and group discussion, providing a tool for assessing participants’ thoughts and experiences as they interact with individuals of varying abilities.

During the winter of 2017, with support from Lisa Tobin, Director of Inclusion Initiatives for the Foundation for Jewish Camp, JCC Camp Chi requested that our *InFocus®* team develop a program that would gather and analyze the opinions of campers related to the inclusion of peers with a disability at camp. While camp administrators and staff have shared myriad opinions about the value of inclusive camp opportunities, reflections from the campers had not been documented.

Brad Finkel, JCC Camp Chi Director, and Jen Phillips, JCC Camp Chi Inclusion Coordinator, worked with the *InFocus®* team to develop prompts that would be used to guide photography and discussion at camp. Based on key values identified by JCC Camp Chi (e.g., community, kindness, and respect), the *InFocus®* team proposed the following prompts:

1. Show something about camp that makes you proud to be Jewish.
2. What does kindness, or being kind, look like?
3. Show an action, talent, or achievement that you’ve seen in another camper, and that you respect.
4. What was your number one contribution at camp?

Ms. Ginger Walton, *InFocus®* Co-Director, and Ms. Lindsey Oakes, *InFocus®* Program Coordinator, traveled to JCC Camp Chi on June 14<sup>th</sup> for onsite counselor training. Counselors were actively involved in the program even prior to our arrival, with their own fun, preliminary assignment to engage them in the training and create excitement about the program coming to Camp Chi. Fifteen counselors and other staff received training.

Four cabins, representing a total of 48 campers, were selected by the inclusion coordinator to participate in this program. Each cabin had at least one camper who had identified as having a disability. There were two male cabins and two female cabins. The campers’ ages ranged from 9 to

16 years. Cabins were assigned a specific activity time for the *InFocus*® program, with onsite assistance from Ms. Carly Klein, JCC Camp Chi counselor and *InFocus*® point person. Cabin mates worked together to respond to each prompt with 5 or 6 photo responses per cabin. Under the campers' direction, a teen camper, "Miles," an experienced photographer who also happened to have a disability, made the photos.

All photos were submitted to the *InFocus*® analysis team. \* Each prompt was accompanied by general discussion questions to stimulate group conversation. Utilizing visual thinking strategy, the analysis team developed additional discussion questions, which were then shared with Carly Klein at camp. Ms. Klein led the discussion with campers in each cabin, while note takers documented the dialogue. Follow-up questions were provided by the analysis team, as needed.

Examples of the discussion questions were:

1. What is the difference between being nice and being kind?
2. How does camp encourage kindness and friendship?
3. How do you see Jewish values at camp?

These questions elicited important thoughts about the value of Jewish community at camp, and the value that each camper brings to camp and to the broad community.

The narrative was then shared with the *InFocus*® analysis team. By implementing a design thinking process, this narrative, in conjunction with the images, revealed themes to the analysis team. The team proposed the following themes to the campers:

1. Embracing Jewish values
2. Giving and receiving *Chesed* (loving kindness)
3. Respecting and celebrating diverse abilities at camp
4. Creating our legacy *L'dor Va'dor* (from generation to generation)
5. Living in harmony with nature *Ki Ha'adam etz hasadeh* (because man is a tree in the field)

The analysis team forwarded the proposed themes, along with five photos of the most represented each theme. Campers were asked to validate the themes (or suggest new themes) and to select three of the most representative photos for each, to be shared in a camp-wide exhibition. The themes were validated by the campers, and the *InFocus*® team printed 16 poster boards with the theme and short narrative description found in the documented camper dialogue (see attached).

Finally, campers worked together as cabin mates to document their "Jewish value inclusion story." One cabin composed a *Wordle* based on sentiments about a fellow camper who has a disability. Her peers identified the positive attributes this camper brings to Camp Chi, and to each of them. The more frequently a word appears in their description, the larger the word appears on the *Wordle*.

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, JCC Camp Chi hosted a celebration of the work of these campers. Campers, camp counselors and staff, representatives from JCC Chicago, Keshet, and Lisa Tobin, Director of Inclusion Initiatives for the Foundation for Jewish Camp, attended the opening of this exhibition. *InFocus*® Executive Directors Dr. Stuart J. Schleien and Ms. Ginger Walton, and *InFocus*® Program Coordinator, Ms. Lindsey Oakes, were also in attendance.

Poster boards were on easels for all to admire the selected photos and messages. All photos from the 48 campers were also viewed through a running slide show during the opening event. It was affirming to see numerous youth spend time studying the images and reading the messages that conveyed the importance of camp's role in enhancing Jewish values and the value they saw in each other. Additionally, campers identified with their peers' meaningful messages of tradition and environment connecting them to Judaism. A local news station (WCIU - Chicago) provided coverage, commending the work of JCC Camp Chi and the impact they are having on campers of all ability levels. <http://www.wciu.com/videos/youandme/jcc-chicago-camp-chi>

The impact of this program could be seen in the responses of the campers, as they grew in their understanding about the benefits of inclusion. These responses imply movement on a continuum beyond simply being tolerant. Campers frequently commented on similarities rather than differences, respected talents or skills seen in those with a disability, and the overall value that those with a disability bring to their community. These campers did grow beyond themselves, and now have the opportunity to encourage growth in others at camp and beyond.

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