

**An Exploration of Decision-Making Factors Regarding
Jewish Overnight Camping Among Families in Greater Cleveland**
Conducted by the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland
in partnership with the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland (JECC)
June 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this study was to gather data to assess the likelihood that financial incentives for non-denominational Jewish overnight camps could increase the overall number of children participating in these camps, thereby broadening and deepening active participation in the Jewish community. The specific objectives of the research were to identify (a) children's summer activities, (b) variables that are correlated with participation in Jewish overnight camp, (c) factors involved in parents' decision-making regarding their children's summer activities, (d) financial and other barriers to participation in Jewish overnight camp, and (e) the perceived value of Jewish overnight camp. An online survey was disseminated to parents of 3rd through 8th graders enrolled in Greater Cleveland day and supplementary schools during the 2007-2008 school year.

The research found that four times as many children enrolled in day and supplementary schools attend Jewish overnight camps as compared with secular overnight camps (including all-around and specialty secular overnight camps). Aside from family vacations, Jewish overnight camps are the most popular summer activity for 5th through 8th graders, while Jewish day camps are more popular among 3rd and 4th graders. Day camps—Jewish and secular—are a bigger “competitor” to Jewish overnight camps than are secular overnight camps. As children get older, they are more likely to attend Jewish overnight camps, but they also increasingly participate in secular specialty overnight and day camps. There is a positive correlation between children's Jewish overnight camp participation and day school enrollment, affiliation with the more “traditional” movements of Judaism, their parents' participation in Jewish overnight camps, and their parents' perceived value of Jewish overnight camp. In addition, with regard to day school and supplementary school families, those who are synagogue members are far more likely (61.7%) than non-members (10.5%) to send their children to Jewish overnight camps.

The majority (68.6%) of parents who have not made the commitment to send their children to Jewish overnight camps think that these camps cost too much. Plus, a higher percentage of these parents (23.6%), compared with those who have sent their children to Jewish overnight camp (9.6%), report that finances are the most important factor in their decision-making about whether or not to enroll their children in Jewish overnight camp. Unlike their counterparts with children participating in Jewish overnight camp, they do not see enough value in Jewish overnight camp to overcome the financial obstacles. Furthermore, nearly half of these parents indicate that non-denominational Jewish camps would interest them. Therefore, this report recommends that the current incentive program expand to include non-profit Jewish overnight camps that are not affiliated with the major movements of Judaism. This report additionally recommends that the incentive program provide access to funding for Jewish overnight camps to families who do not belong to synagogues, given their significantly lower participation rates in these camps.

INTRODUCTION

Research¹ has established that Jewish overnight camp is an immersive experience which has a deep and lasting impact on Jewish identity. Attending Jewish overnight camps increases not only the campers' participation in Jewish life, but also their family members' involvement. The Jewish Community Federation's Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is committed to broadening and deepening participation in the Jewish community, and views the reduction of financial barriers to living Jewishly as one vehicle for achieving this goal. The SPC requested that research be conducted to assess the likelihood that financial incentives for non-denominational Jewish overnight camps could increase the total number of children participating in Jewish overnight camps, thereby augmenting overall community involvement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

It is not possible, without a pilot project, to directly test the hypothesis that financial incentives for non-denominational Jewish overnight camps increase the overall number of children participating in these camps. For this reason, the research was designed to test the hypothesis that financial barriers hinder participation in Jewish overnight camps. The research objectives included:

- Determining how many children are and are not attending Jewish overnight camps, and learning how those who are not at Jewish overnight camp are spending their summers.
- Learning how synagogue membership, denominational affiliation, type of formal Jewish education, and parents' own camp experiences relate to children's participation in Jewish overnight camps.
- Understanding the factors, including but not limited to financial factors, involved in parents' decision-making about their children's summer activities.
- Identifying financial and other barriers to participation in Jewish overnight camp.
- Gaining insight into the perceived value of Jewish overnight camp.

The research instrument incorporated feedback from the SPC as well as staff at the Federation, Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, Camp Wise, Foundation for Jewish Camp, and Combined Jewish Philanthropies. In addition, the final survey was pilot tested by parents who have and have not sent their children to Jewish overnight camp. The survey explained that Jewish overnight camp refers to "overnight camp under the auspices of a non-profit Jewish organization, as opposed to private camp that might cater to a high concentration of Jewish campers."

¹ Cohen, Steven M. November 2006. *A Tale of Two Jewries: The "Inconvenient Truth" for American Jews*. New York: Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation.

Cohen, Steven M. 2007. "Jewish Education and Its Differential Impact on Adult Jewish Identity," in Jack Wertheimer (ed.), *Family Matters: Jewish Education in an Age of Choice*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England.

The survey collected demographic data such as synagogue membership, denominational affiliation, and the age range of children in respondents' families. Parents had the opportunity to answer whether or not they attended Jewish overnight camp when they were young. They also responded to several questions asking about the importance they place on nurturing their children's Jewish identity. One part of the survey asked the same questions in three separate sections for parents of 3rd and 4th graders, 5th and 6th graders, and 7th and 8th graders. These questions solicited responses about day and supplementary school enrollment, participation in a variety of summer activities, and reasons for choosing these summer activities.

The survey asked parents who have sent children to Jewish overnight camp last summer about their methods for paying for camp. Those parents who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp had the opportunity to specify their potential preference for denominational or non-denominational Jewish overnight camps.

All parents replied to questions inquiring about the importance of finances in their decision-making about whether or not to send their children to Jewish overnight camps. One survey item asked whether parents were aware that "community funding is available to synagogue members for some Jewish-sponsored overnight camps affiliated with the Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox movements?" Lastly, parents shared their perceptions about the value of Jewish overnight camp while rating statements advocating for and against sending children to Jewish overnight camp.

Sample

Parents with children enrolled in 3rd through 8th grade classes during the 2007-2008 school year at Jewish day and supplementary schools in Greater Cleveland were sampled in this survey. These parents already have made a commitment to provide their children with formal Jewish education and, therefore, were assumed to be more likely than the general population of the Jewish community to overcome financial obstacles to send their children to Jewish overnight camps. In other words, if the sampled parents who clearly place value on Jewish education identified financial barriers, then it could be concluded that those barriers would seem even greater for those who do not provide their children with formal Jewish education.

Directors of day and supplementary schools in Greater Cleveland were invited to distribute the anonymous and confidential survey to parents via email. Mosdos Ohr Hatorah, which discourages families from using the Internet, was not asked to distribute the survey, and Hebrew Academy of Cleveland did not participate because the school typically communicates with parents via U.S. mail. While more schools may have actually disseminated the survey, the ones who confirmed that they distributed the research instrument include: Agnon School, Fuchs Mizrahi School, Gross Schechter Day School, Akiva High School, Anshe Chesed-Fairmount Temple, Beth Israel-The West Temple, B'nai Jeshurun Congregation, Cleveland Hebrew Schools, Park Synagogue, Solon Chabad Hebrew School, Suburban Temple-Kol Ami, Temple Emanu El, and The Temple-Tifereth Israel.

Survey respondents included parents corresponding with 20.8% of the children enrolled in the day and supplementary schools invited to disseminate the survey². In total, 344 parents responded to the survey. Parents who did not have children enrolled in 3rd through 8th grades were directed out of the survey following the first question. As a result, the following findings reflect data collected from 319 respondents representing their 455 children enrolled in 3rd through 8th grades. Of these 319 respondents, three did not complete the survey.

FINDINGS

Sample characteristics

Table 1. Breakdown of Children³ in Each Grade Range

Grade Range	Percentage of Respondents
3 rd and 4 th Graders	48.7% (152)
5 th and 6 th Graders	48.5% (150)
7 th and 8 th Graders	40.4% (125)

Table 1 illustrates the percentage of respondents with children enrolled in each grade range during the 2007-2008 school year.

Table 2. Jewish Day School and Supplementary School Enrollment⁴

Type of Formal Jewish Education	Percentage of Children Enrolled
Day School	34.5% (147) ⁵
Supplementary School	56.1% (239) ⁶
Both Day and Supplementary School	0.9% (4)
Neither Day nor Supplementary School	8.5% (36)

The majority of children represented in this study enrolled in Jewish supplementary schools during the 2007-2008 school year, as shown in Table 2. One third enrolled in Jewish day schools. While disregarding those children who did not attend day or supplementary school, the ratio between children in day school and supplementary school in this study is similar to the overall ratio reported by the JECC⁷ for the 2007-2008 school year.

² During the 2007-2008 school year, a total of 2,183 3rd through 8th graders enrolled in Agnon School, Fuchs Mizrachi School, Gross Schechter Day School and Greater Cleveland supplementary schools.

³ Includes the total of respondents' children enrolled in 3rd through 8th grade, including those in families with more than one child in a given grade range.

⁴ Parents with more than one child in a grade range were asked to report the type of formal Jewish education received by their oldest child in that grade range.

⁵ As a point of reference, during the 2007-2008 school year, a total of 482 3rd through 8th graders enrolled in Agnon School, Fuchs Mizrachi School, and Gross Schechter Day School.

⁶ As a point of reference, during the 2007-2008 school year, a total of 1,701 3rd through 8th graders enrolled in Greater Cleveland supplementary schools.

⁷ In the 2007-2008 school year, the JECC reported that 39% of children enrolled in formal Jewish education programs attended day schools, and 61% attended supplementary schools.

Table 3. Synagogue Membership

Synagogue Membership	Percentage of Respondents
Belong to a Synagogue/Temple	93.3 % (291)
Do Not Belong to a Synagogue/Temple	6.7% (21)

As Table 3 demonstrates, the overwhelming majority of respondents said they are members of a synagogue/temple. Notably, 6.7% of families who enroll children in Jewish day school or supplementary school do not belong to a synagogue.

Table 4. Jewish Religious Affiliation

Jewish Religious Affiliation	Percentage of Respondents
Reform	46.5% (145)
Reconstructionist	1.6% (5)
Conservative	32.1% (100)
Traditional	4.8% (15)
Orthodox	11.2% (35)
Secular Jewish	1.3% (4)
Other Jewish	1.0% (3)
Not Jewish	1.6% (5)

Table 4 displays parents' self-reported Jewish religious affiliations. The percentages of respondents who affiliate with the four major movements of Judaism are similar to those reported in *Jewish Cleveland 2004: A Demographic Profile of Our Community*.

Table 5. Parents' Own Jewish Overnight Camp Participation

Parents' Jewish Overnight Camp Participation	Percentage of Respondents
Attended Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	41.0% (128)
Never Attended Jewish Overnight Camp	59.0% (184)

The majority of respondents never attended Jewish overnight camp when they were children; yet over two-fifths of parents did participate in Jewish overnight camp for at least one summer when they were young, as outlined in Table 5.

Children's Summer Activities

Table 6. Jewish Overnight Camp Participation

Jewish Overnight Camp Participation	Percentage of Respondents
Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	58.6% (181)
Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp	41.4% (128)

While the majority of parents have sent their children to Jewish overnight camp for at least one summer, a substantial number have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp, as presented in Table 6.

Table 7. Children’s Activities Last Summer⁸

Summer Activity	3 rd and 4 th Graders	5 th and 6 th Graders	7 th and 8 th Graders
Jewish Overnight Camp	27.8% (42)	48.0% (72)	52.0% (65)
Jewish Day Camp	53.0% (80)	28.7% (43)	9.6% (12)
Secular All-Around Overnight Camp	4.6% (7)	7.3% (11)	5.6% (7)
Secular Specialty Overnight Camp	2.0% (3)	2.0% (3)	10.4% (13)
Secular All-Around Day Camp	23.2% (35)	18.0% (27)	8.0% (10)
Secular Specialty Day Camp	19.9% (30)	26.7% (40)	27.2% (34)
Family Vacation	55.6% (84)	57.3% (86)	50.4% (63)
Other Activities	8.6% (13)	10.7% (16)	17.6% (22)

Table 7 shows that the total of 3rd through 8th graders attending either Jewish day or overnight camp is greater than the total enrolling in either secular day or overnight camp. Furthermore, regardless of grade range, more children attend Jewish overnight camps than secular overnight camps (including all-around and specialty secular overnight camps). (See appendices for participation levels in the secular and Jewish denominational and non-denominational overnight camps which the respondents’ children attend.) Day camps—Jewish and secular—are a bigger “competitor” to Jewish overnight camps than are secular overnight camps.

Parents of 3rd and 4th graders demonstrate a preference for sending their young children to day camp rather than overnight camp. While more 3rd and 4th graders attend Jewish day camps than secular day camps (including all-around and specialty day camps), this trend reverses for the 5th through 8th graders. As children get older, they are less likely to participate in Jewish day camps and secular all-around day camps. They are more likely to attend Jewish overnight camps, secular specialty overnight camps, and secular specialty day camps. Also, at least half of the children in each grade range took a family vacation last summer; although vacations were usually in addition to other activities.

Among 5th and 6th graders, aside from family vacation, Jewish overnight camp is the most popular summer activity, closely followed by secular day camp (including all-around and specialty secular day camps). For this grade range, Jewish day camp is just slightly more popular than secular specialty day camp. The clear favorite summer activity for 7th and 8th graders is Jewish overnight camp. Aside from family vacation, the second most popular activity for this grade range is secular specialty day camp.

⁸ Parents with more than one child in a grade range were asked to report the summer activities of their oldest child in that grade range. Respondents had the opportunity to select more than one response.

Relationship between Children’s Participation in Jewish Overnight Camps and Other Variables

Table 8. Relationship between Type of Formal Jewish Education and Participation in Jewish Overnight Camp⁹

Type of Formal Jewish Education	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Day School Families	73.1% (79)	26.9% (29)
Supplementary School Families	55.1% (97)	44.9% (79)

As Table 8 demonstrates, participation in Jewish overnight camp is more highly correlated with Jewish day school enrollment than enrollment in Jewish supplementary schools.

Table 9. Relationship between Synagogue Membership and Participation in Jewish Overnight Camp

Synagogue Membership	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Belong to a Synagogue/Temple	61.7% (179)	38.3% (111)
Do Not Belong to a Synagogue/Temple ¹⁰	10.5% (2)	89.5% (17)

Synagogue membership is strongly correlated with participation in Jewish overnight camp, as shown in Table 9.

Table 10. Relationship between Jewish Religious Affiliation and Participation in Jewish Overnight Camp

Jewish Religious Affiliation	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Reform	49.7% (179)	50.3% (73)
Conservative	63.6% (63)	36.4% (36)
Orthodox	85.3% (29)	14.7% (5)

The highest percentage of parents who have sent children to Jewish overnight camp for at least one summer identify with the Orthodox movement, followed by the Conservative movement, and then the Reform movement, as illustrated in Table 10.

⁹ Some families may be counted twice, if they sent one child to day school and another to supplementary school during the 2007-2008 school year. This table does not include families who sent at least one child to both day and supplementary school or neither day nor supplementary school.

¹⁰ Surveyed families who do not belong to a synagogue/temple likely send their children to Agnon School, Fuchs Mizrachi School, Gross Schechter Day School, Cleveland Hebrew Schools, or Akiva High School.

Table 11. Relationship between Parents’ Own Jewish Overnight Camp Participation and Their Children’s Participation in Jewish Overnight Camp

Parents’ Participation in Jewish Overnight Camp	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Parents Attended Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	65.6% (84)	34.4% (44)
Parents Never Attended Jewish Overnight Camp	53.6% (97)	46.4% (84)

Parents who attended Jewish overnight camps when they were young are more likely to send their children to Jewish overnight camps, as displayed in Table 11.

Decision-Making Factors regarding Children’s Summer Activities

Table 12. Main Reasons¹¹ for Choosing Children’s Activities for Last Summer¹²

Reason	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Children’s Interests/Needs	87.9% (232)	86.4% (140)
Reputation/Quality of Activity	73.1% (193)	61.1% (99)
Children Would Be with Their Friends	54.5% (144)	42.6% (69)
Cost of Activity	15.9% (42)	36.4% (59)
Proximity to Parents’ Home/Work	27.7% (73)	46.3% (75)
Opportunity to Strengthen Children’s Jewish Identity	51.1% (135)	17.3% (28)

As Table 12 shows, regardless of whether they ever attended Jewish overnight camp, the vast majority of children represented in this study have parents who identify their children’s needs/interests as the main driver for the selection of their children’s summer activities. The reputation/quality of summer activities is the second most popular decision-making factor for parents who have and have not sent children to Jewish overnight camp. Both sets of parents report that their children’s ability to be with their friends is also of moderate importance. Parents who do send their children to Jewish overnight camp are three times as likely as those who do not to say that the opportunity to strengthen their children’s Jewish identity was a main reason for their decisions regarding their children’s summer activities. Children who have never attended Jewish overnight camp have parents who report that the cost of their children’s summer activities and their proximity to home/work are more central to their decision-making.

¹¹ Respondents had the opportunity to select more than one response.

¹² This table reflects the percent of children, rather than the percent of parents, represented by the responses.

Table 13. Importance of Finances in Parents’ Decision-Making about Their Children’s Participation in Jewish Overnight Camp

Importance of Finances	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
The Most Important Factor	9.6% (17)	23.6% (30)
An Important Factor, but Not the Most Important	60.5% (107)	48.8% (62)
A Minor Factor	20.3% (36)	11.8% (15)
Completely Irrelevant to the Decision	9.6% (17)	8.7% (11)
Parents Have Not Seriously Considered Sending Their Children to Jewish Overnight Camp	0	7.1% (9)

Parents who have and have not enrolled children in Jewish overnight camp both report that finances are an important factor in their decision-making about whether or not to send their children to Jewish overnight camp, as displayed in Table 13. However, parents who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp were more likely to report that finances were the most important factor in their decision-making.

Table 14. Methods Parents Employed to Pay For Children to Attend Jewish Overnight Camp Last Summer¹³

Source of Funding	Percentage of Respondents
Paid for Camp out of Their Own Pockets	93.1% (149)
Another Member of the Family Helped Pay for Camp	9.4% (15)
The Camp Provided Monetary Assistance	13.1% (21)
JECC/Synagogue Denominational Summer Camp Incentive Program	31.3% (50)
Other Synagogue Funds	11.3% (18)
Other	2.8% (5)

As Table 14 illustrates, parents drew on a variety of funding sources to send their children to Jewish overnight camp. While 93.1% of respondents whose children attended Jewish overnight camp last summer reported using some of their own money to send their children to camp, only 58.8% paid for Jewish overnight camp without utilizing an outside form of monetary assistance. More than half (33) of these parents used a combination of two sources of funding, 21 respondents used three sources, four parents used four sources, and two respondents used five sources.

¹³ Respondents had the opportunity to select more than one response.

Of 51 parents who responded to the open-ended question about why they might hesitate to send their children to Jewish overnight camp, 26 respondents said the cost was an obstacle. These respondents include both those who have and have not sent children to Jewish overnight camp. Some parents whose children have participated in Jewish overnight camp praised the JECC/Synagogue Denominational Summer Camp Incentive Program, saying, for example, that “Our only issue is cost. It would be impossible to do without the subsidies we have been fortunate to get.” Another parent cited financial barriers, explaining, for instance that “I can’t afford it, and I have another child who is going to want to go in the next year or two. It costs me more than I can make in a summer just for one of them.”

Of the 25 parents who provided additional feedback at the end of the survey, 15 commented on the cost of Jewish overnight camp being an obstacle. Four of these parents gave unsolicited comments that they wish that financial incentives were available for non-denominational Jewish overnight camps. For example, one respondent proclaimed, “It is very unfortunate that funds are not available for non-affiliated Jewish overnight camps!!”

Notably, in quite a few open-ended responses, parents lamented Jewish overnight camps’ inability to accommodate their children’s special needs.

Perceived Value of Jewish Overnight Camp

Table 15. Comparison between Parents Who Have and Have Not Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp Who Report that it is “Very Important” or “Somewhat Important” to Nurture the Following Elements of their Children’s Identity.

Element of Children’s Identity	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Developing a strong Jewish identity	100% (180)	96.9% (124)
Acquiring a solid foundation of Jewish learning and tradition	99.4% (180)	96.1% (122)
Receiving an intensive Jewish education	88.3% (158)	78.7% (100)
Developing strong friendships with other Jewish children	98.9% (179)	94.5% (121)
Developing strong friendships with non-Jewish children	74.3% (133)	81.2% (104)
Committing to having a Jewish home as adults	99.5% (178)	92.1% (118)

Sending children to Jewish overnight camp is positively correlated with parents' placing importance on nurturing their children's Jewish identity, as outlined in Table 15. Parents who have enrolled children in Jewish overnight camp are more likely to value providing their children with an intensive Jewish education. Parents who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp are more likely to place value on ensuring that their children develop strong friendships with non-Jewish peers. It is noteworthy that the overwhelming majority of parents who have never enrolled children in Jewish overnight camp also clearly find it important to develop their children's Jewish identity. This finding is not surprising, given that the survey respondents all currently send their children to formal Jewish education programs.

Table 16. Comparison between Parents Who Have and Have Not Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp Who “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree” with the Following Statements about the Value of Jewish Overnight Camp

Statement about the Value of Jewish Overnight Camp	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Jewish overnight camps don't really make children any more committed to being Jewish.	5.0% (9)	19.9% (24)
The programming is too religious.	10.3% (18)	24.4% (30)
My child(ren)'s friends don't go to Jewish overnight camp.	14.9% (26)	32.6% (40)
Jewish overnight camp conflicts with other plans.	32.4% (57)	39.4% (48)
Jewish overnight camps make it difficult for children to participate in a high-quality summertime experience.	10.3% (18)	13.2% (16)
Jewish overnight camps cost too much.	67.2% (119)	68.6% (85)
We're just not interested in overnight camp, be it Jewish or secular.	17.4% (30)	39.7% (50)
I don't know much about Jewish overnight camps.	8.1% (14)	31.7% (39)

Unsurprisingly, parents who enroll their children in Jewish overnight camps have a more positive outlook on these camps, as illustrated in Table 16. Parents who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp were more likely to report that these camps do not increase children's commitment to being Jewish, that the camp programming is too religious, and that their children's friends do not attend Jewish overnight camp. Almost a third of these parents admit that they know little about Jewish overnight camps. The majority of parents who have and have not sent children to Jewish overnight camp agree that these camps cost too much. A smaller percentage of both sets of parents are in agreement that Jewish overnight camp conflicts with other plans.

Table 17. Comparison between Parents Who Have and Have Not Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp Who Find the Following Reasons for Sending Children to Jewish Overnight Camp “Very Persuasive” Or “Somewhat Persuasive.”

Reason for Sending Children to Jewish Overnight Camp	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
My child(ren) would learn a lot about being Jewish at Jewish overnight camp.	92.0% (163)	78.1% (100)
Jewish overnight camp would strengthen my child(ren)’s pride in being Jewish.	95.5% (128)	86.0% (110)
Jewish overnight camp would reinforce our family’s values.	91.5% (162)	77.4% (99)
Jewish overnight camp makes being Jewish fun.	96.6% (171)	87.5% (112)
Jewish overnight camp strengthens friendships with other Jewish children.	98.8% (175)	87.5% (112)
Jewish overnight camp puts children in an all-Jewish environment.	88.5% (155)	73.2% (93)
Being away from home with others the same age would help my child(ren) grow and mature.	97.2% (172)	86.7% (111)

As Table 17 makes clear, parents who send children to Jewish overnight camp are more likely to find the abovementioned statements advocating for Jewish overnight camp persuasive. Nevertheless, the vast majority of parents who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp also find these statements persuasive.

Additional Findings

Table 18. Comparison between Parents Who Have and Have Not Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp on their Awareness of the JECC/Synagogue Denominational Summer Camp Incentive Program

Awareness	Have Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp for at least One Summer	Have <u>Never</u> Sent Children to Jewish Overnight Camp
Aware	81.6% (146)	60.9% (78)
Not aware	18.4% (33)	39.1% (50)

The majority of parents who have and have not sent children to Jewish overnight camp are aware that community funding is available to synagogue members for some Jewish overnight camps affiliated with the Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox movements, as demonstrated by Table 18. Yet, a much lower percentage of those who have not sent children to Jewish overnight camp are familiar with the program.

Table 19. Type of Jewish Overnight Camp of Most Interest to Parents Who Have Never Sent their Children to Jewish Overnight Camp

Type of Jewish Overnight Camp	Percentage of Respondents
Denominational Camp	8.6% (11)
Non-Denominational Camp	24.2% (31)
Denominational or Non-Denominational Camp	24.2% (31)
Not Interested in Jewish Overnight Camp	21.9% (28)
Not sure about Type of Camp	21.2% (27)

While a total of 32.8% of respondents who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp find denominational Jewish overnight camps appealing, a total of 48.4% of parents say that non-denominational Jewish camps would interest them, as demonstrated in Table 19. Notably, only 21.9% of respondents who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp report that they are not interested in Jewish overnight camp for their children. In addition, the 21.2% of parents who were not sure about the type of Jewish overnight camp that would interest them may be open to learning more about and seriously considering enrolling their children in Jewish overnight camp.

CONCLUSION

The strong overall response rate and substantial representation from those parents who have not sent their children to Jewish overnight camp suggests that the subject of this research is relevant and important to families in the Greater Cleveland Jewish community.

Regardless of their grade, more children attend Jewish overnight camps than the total of secular all-around and specialty overnight camps. Day camps—Jewish and secular—are a bigger “competitor” to Jewish overnight camps than are secular overnight camps. As children get older, they are more likely to attend Jewish overnight camps, but they also increasingly participate in secular specialty overnight and day camps.

While not a focus of this study, the research identified a need to further explore Jewish overnight camps’ ability to accommodate children with special needs. It is worth noting that the JECC currently provides financial assistance for children with special needs to attend (not necessarily Jewish) camps. Parents of children with special needs need to be made aware of this available funding.

There is a positive correlation between children’s Jewish overnight camp participation and day school enrollment, synagogue membership, affiliation with the more “traditional” movements of Judaism, and their parents’ participation in Jewish overnight camps. It is likely that these variables impact children’s likelihood to attend Jewish overnight camp, but it is also possible that

such an immersive experience also reinforces families' desire to join synagogues and enroll their children in Jewish day schools. In addition, it is probable that some families who do not belong to a synagogue also do not send their children to Jewish overnight camp, because the cost of both of these vehicles for Jewish involvement is an obstacle.

Children's participation in Jewish overnight camp is positively correlated with having parents who place importance on nurturing their children's Jewish identity. Parents who send their children to Jewish overnight camp see greater value in the Jewish content and other aspects of Jewish overnight camp. Yet, those who have never sent children to Jewish overnight camp also find value in the Jewish overnight camping experience and may be receptive to enrolling their children in these camps if they had incentives to do so. Only 21.9% of these parents said that they are not interested in Jewish overnight camp.

The majority of parents who have and have not sent their children to Jewish overnight camps agree that these camps cost too much. Children who have never attended Jewish overnight camp are more likely to have parents who report that the cost of their children's summer activities is central to their decision-making. Of the respondents whose children attended Jewish overnight camp last summer, only 58.8% paid for Jewish overnight camp without utilizing an outside form of monetary assistance; 16.9% used three or more sources of funding to send their children to Jewish overnight camp.

In conclusion, over forty percent of parents sending children to Jewish overnight camp did so with the benefit of monetary assistance. Those parents who have not made the commitment to send their children to Jewish overnight camps think that these camps cost too much, and are more likely to report that the cost of their children's summer activities is a key factor in their decision-making. Yet, unlike their counterparts with children participating in Jewish overnight camp, they do not see enough value in Jewish overnight camp to overcome the financial obstacles. One solution to increase the numbers of children attending Jewish overnight camps could involve raising further awareness of the JECC/Synagogue Denominational Summer Camp Incentive Program. However, another solution is needed, given that nearly half of parents who have not sent children to Jewish overnight camp explain that non-denominational Jewish camps would interest them.

The current incentive program should be expanded to include non-profit Jewish overnight camps that are not affiliated with the major movements of Judaism. Important program components would include broad-based marketing to parents about Jewish overnight camps and working with Jewish day camps as potential feeders to overnight camps. The program design should also be responsive to the fact that, with regard to day school and supplementary school families, synagogue members are far more likely than non-members to send their children to Jewish overnight camps. The incentive program should, therefore, provide access to funding for Jewish overnight camps to families who do not belong to a synagogue.

Appendix A: Participation in Secular Overnight Camps by Camp and Campers' Grades

Camp	3rd and 4th Graders	5th and 6th Graders	7th and 8th Graders
Birch Trail Camp for Girls (WI)	0	1	0
Boy Scout Camp	0	0	1
Camp Cedar	1	0	1
Camp Christopher	1	0	0
Camp Fitch	0	1	1
Camp Ho Mita Koda	0	1	0
Camp Kawaga	0	1	0
Camp Mataponi	0	0	1
Camp Whitewood	1	1	0
Center for Talent Development at Northwestern	0	0	1
Chincapin	1	0	0
The Country School Farm	1	1	0
Cuyahoga Valley National Park Junior Rangers	1	0	0
Falcon	1	2	2
Grier (Allegheny Camp in Tyrone, PA)	1	0	0
Kamaji	0	0	1
Kent Hockey School	0	0	1
Korean Culture Camp	1	0	0
Miami University Hockey Camp	0	0	1
National Basketball Academy	0	0	1
Ohio State Golf Camp	0	0	1
Orange Soccer	0	0	1
Red Barn	0	1	0
Robinhood	2	1	0
Shaker Fencing	0	0	1
Signature	0	0	1
Summer Institute for the Gifted	0	0	1
Summit Camp	0	1	0
Tripp Lake Camp	0	1	0
White Pine	0	0	1
Woodward	0	1	2
Wooster Lacrosse Camp	0	0	1
Yellow Ball Tennis Camp/Oberlin College	0	1	1

Appendix B: Participation in Denominational Jewish Overnight Camps by Camp and Campers' Grades

Camp	3rd and 4th Graders	5th and 6th Graders	7th and 8th Graders
Camp George	0	2	1
Camp JRF	0	1	3
Camp Ramah Canada	2	8	6
Camp Ramah Darom	1	2	0
Camp Stone	7	13	11
Goldman Union Camp Institute	4	7	12
Moshava Wild Rose	1	0	0
Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute	1	0	1

Appendix C: Participation in Non-Denominational Jewish Overnight Camps by Camp and Campers' Grades

Camp	3rd and 4th Graders	5th and 6th Graders	7th and 8th Graders
B'nai B'rith Beber Camp	2	10	6
Camp Modin ¹⁴	1	0	1
Camp Wise	21	27	26
Camp Young Judaea Midwest	0	1	0
Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake	0	1	0
Emma Kaufmann Camp	2	3	2

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¹⁴ Since Camp Modin is a unique, *privately-owned* Jewish overnight camp, its campers would not qualify for funding from a non-denominational incentive program.