

## "Summer Camp and Orthodontia"

Long before anyone took summer camps seriously as a growth opportunity for children, my grandmother told one of her friends, "The two best things I ever did for my child were summer camp and orthodontia". The years have proven her a wise woman.

At its best, camps can provide exceptional opportunities for validation, self-confidence, honing social skills, reinforcing moral beliefs, learning physical skills, developing as a leader and living in a community. One lifetime teacher who also works with camps told me simply, "I can do more for a child in 3 weeks of camp than I can in 9 months of school".

Oddly enough, for most of the first century of its history, summer camps saw themselves providing skills training and recreation. Of course, there are exceptions. Some directors have focused on the growth opportunities of camp for decades, but the industry spent little time thinking about this.

Yet ironically, these camps were still delivering the goods. I have seen camps that would insist that they are only about "having fun" and not "all that youth development stuff" change children's lives forever.

What we want to do is come to understand all the different ways we can be "partners in the parenting process" and help your children (our campers) become Champions. Once we understand the opportunities, we intentionally focus ourselves to maximize that opportunity.

We will not always exceed as well as we would like, but we want you to know what we are committed to doing here at camp.

Here's to straight teeth and happy campers!

Steve and Susie Baskin