



# **Camp Shriver: An Inclusive Summer Day Camp for Children With and Without Intellectual Disabilities**

**Center for Social Development and Education  
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For two very special summers, Camp Shriver has touched the lives of campers with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), as well as the counselors, coaches, and volunteers whose dedication made its success a reality. Camp Shriver's unique commitment to totally inclusive programming, where all children are treated as equal-status participants, sets it apart from other summer recreational opportunities for children with ID. Moreover, the camp's evaluation component, which ensures the documentation of its success through empirical research, also sets it apart from similar summer recreational opportunities. The following report provides the outcome data from the camp's second year of evaluation and places it in the context of the following mission:

- To provide sports; and other recreational and enrichment activities for all participants.
- To use sports as a vehicle for improving not only campers' sports skills and overall motor development, but also their self-esteem, social skills, and confidence in building relationships with peers.
- To create an atmosphere of understanding, learning, and sharing so that campers from diverse backgrounds with and without disabilities can engage in positive peer relationships and develop new friendships.

## **I. BACKGROUND OF CAMP SHRIVER**

Camp Shriver is a *totally inclusive camp*, meaning that children with and without intellectual disabilities engage in the same camp activities alongside one another. Every child is considered an equal-status camper, regardless of whether or not they have a disability. By choosing not to label children, the process by which those labels cause children with disabilities to be pre-judged by others (according to pre-conceived notions of what that label signifies) can be avoided. Moreover, at Camp Shriver children with ID don't receive any special or preferential treatment that would indicate to their peers that they are different in any way.

The inclusive camp model overall has been shown to produce a wide range of benefits for participating children and staff. Past research has found that children with disabilities attending inclusive camps show improvements in self-esteem, self-reliance, communication skills, and social skills (Brannan, Arick, Fullerton, & Harris, 2000; Mulvihill, Cotton, Gyaben, 2004). The inclusive camp experience also benefits children and staff without disabilities by giving them an opportunity to develop a more realistic understanding of what it means to have an intellectual disability.

The benefits to campers with disabilities are especially important, however, in light of the oft-cited finding that children with disabilities, particularly intellectual disabilities, are often socially rejected or isolated by their peers in classroom settings (e.g. Heiman, 2000; Sale & Carey, 1995; Siperstein, Brady, Freeman, & Parker, 2006). Several explanations may account for this. First, research has shown that children who perform at low academic levels are more likely to experience rejection or isolation (Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993.) Because the school setting is structured around academic skills (i.e. cognitive reasoning, conceptual functioning) that

children with ID struggle with simply by the nature of their disability, they are invariably at a disadvantage in this setting. Second, inclusive classrooms place children with ID in a setting where they are in the minority. Many inclusive classrooms only include 1 to 3 students with ID, which may result in a feeling of being singled out. This is particularly true given that children with disabilities attending schools that practice inclusion are often treated in ways that distinguish them from their non-disabled peers, such as by taking a separate bus to school, receiving personalized assistance from an aide, or only being present in the classroom for a portion of the day.

Inclusive camps are able to transcend all of these obstacles. Such camps embrace programming that does not directly emphasize academic ability, offers children with ID the opportunity to be in a setting where they are not in the minority, and does not differentiate these children from their peers by providing them with different transportation or individualized support services. In addition, inclusive camps bring together children from a diverse array of backgrounds, neighborhoods, and schools; thus giving children with ID who may experience rejection in their current social surroundings a “fresh start” in a new setting.

Even though Massachusetts has been a leader in inclusion in our public schools since the passage of Chapter 766 in 1972, inclusive camp experiences for children with disabilities are relatively non-existent throughout the state. While the American Camp Association of New England lists 54 residential camps and 75 day camps for children in the Commonwealth, many of which are specifically designed for children with disabilities or long-term illnesses, a thorough review of the programming at these camps reveals that none of them provide children with the totally inclusive experience of Camp Shriver. In addition, it should also be noted that Camp Shriver is committed to recruiting children from low-income urban neighborhoods as well as ensuring a diverse racial/ethnic makeup of campers. This is especially important given that the high costs of many summer programs exclude children from low-income backgrounds from participating in them. To alleviate this, campers attended Camp Shriver for free, with the exception of a \$25 registration fee.

## **II. CAMP SHRIVER 2006**

Camp Shriver at UMass Boston began in the summer of 2006 as a two-week inclusive day camp. The camp enrolled 24 children with ID and 28 children without ID, all of whom participated in integrated sports skill instruction, enrichment activities, and field trips. Campers ranged in age from 8 to 13. All campers rode the bus to camp together from their respective neighborhoods every morning. Upon arriving at camp, campers received instruction in swimming, basketball, and soccer, while their skills were monitored and assessed by trained coaches who were experts in their particular sport. In the afternoon, campers participated in enrichment activities such as arts and crafts.

Camp Shriver at UMass Boston was inspired by a sports camp for children with disabilities that was first held at the home of Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver in the summer of 1962. Camp Shriver, as it came to be known, went on to become an annual event throughout the 1960s and was the impetus for the Special Olympics movement, which now serves over 2.5 million athletes worldwide. The Camp Shriver model was revitalized when six sites across the United States held

camps in the summer of 2006, one of which was hosted by UMass Boston. In hosting the camp, UMass Boston expanded the original program model by creating a fully inclusive camp where children with and without ID learn and play together.

The results from the inaugural Camp Shriver held at UMass Boston in 2006 greatly exceeded expectations. Results from the evaluation showed that both campers with and without ID significantly improved their soccer and basketball skills in two short weeks. In addition, results also showed that campers with and without disabilities were equally accepted by their peers. In fact, 82% of campers without ID indicated that they liked to play with a fellow camper with ID. In addition, the majority of campers, regardless of disability, made multiple new friends while at camp. These results were featured in the recent July/August issue of *The Camping Magazine*, which is published by the American Camping Association and distributed to over 8,000 different camps nationwide. Results are also under review at a major scientific journal and will be presented at the national convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), to be held in Boston in April 2008.

### **III. CAMP SHRIVER 2007**

Building upon the success of Camp Shriver in 2006, in the summer of 2007 the camp was expanded from two weeks to four weeks, to provide campers with an increased opportunity to get to know one another and build stronger friendships. In addition, a longer camp would give campers more time to learn and improve upon their sports skills. Based on the success of last year's camp, the number of campers enrolled in the camp was increased from 52 to 84. Camp Shriver 2007 was held from July 9th to August 3rd.

#### **A. Selection of Campers**

Campers were recruited from regular and special education classrooms in three local school districts: Boston, Brockton, and Quincy. A total of 317 applications were received from children interested in participating in the camp. Of these 317 applications, 207 were from children receiving services for special education. Of this pool of 207, there were many applications from children who had significant physical or sensorial impairments that could not be accommodated by camp staff, or were from children who had disabilities other than intellectual impairments. In addition, the camp director reviewed the individual education plans (IEP) of the campers with ID to identify any unique challenges that children might have in adjusting to and participating in a sports-based camp. As a result, invitations to attend the camp were sent out to 42 campers, all of whom had intellectual disabilities.

Once each camper with ID was selected, a camper without ID of the same gender, grade, and school district was correspondingly selected from the pool of applicants without ID. This was done to ensure that the profile for campers with ID was similar to those without ID. For example, if a male camper with ID entering fifth grade from one school district was selected, a camper without ID was selected at random from our pool of male applicants entering the fifth grade from that same school district. As a result, 42 children without ID were invited to attend the camp.

## **B. Camp Programming**

To create an inclusive camp environment, campers were grouped into 6 teams of approximately 12 to 14 campers. Teams were grouped to maintain as equal a balance as possible between campers with and without ID, as well as between male and female campers. This structure is considered a best practice of inclusive programming.

Camp programming focused on providing all campers with a diverse and enriching array of activities throughout the day and the course of the week. A typical day began with large-group free play in one of the multi-purpose rooms as the buses arrived at UMass Boston. Teams then rotated between sports instruction in basketball, soccer, and swimming. Each lesson was 45-minutes long and campers were given breaks for water and/or snacks in between each activity. Sports instruction was directed by coaches who were experts in their particular sports. In addition to receiving sports instruction, campers also participated in a daily enrichment session. Enrichment activities were focused on personal fitness and nutrition, ecology, and teambuilding. To promote health and wellness among the campers, weekly visits to GoKids™ Boston, a state-of-the-art youth fitness and wellness center located on the UMass Boston campus, were programmed. Also, to promote camper's connection to the surrounding community and its history, several field trips were planned. These included museum visits and hikes. Camp programming also included closing ceremonies, and a Visitor's Day followed by an ice cream social.

As in 2006, the 2007 camp was held at the UMass Boston Clark Athletic Center. Facilities included collegiate-quality soccer and softball fields, gymnasium, Olympic-sized pool, and several air-conditioned multi-purpose rooms. In addition, the camp provided all campers and staff with breakfast, lunch, and a snack each day as well as bus transportation to and from camp. Parents of campers were only responsible for getting their children to and from pick-up and drop-off sites at centrally located elementary schools in Boston, Brockton, and Quincy.

One of the key components that ensures the continued success of Camp Shriver is its dedicated staff. This dedication is evidenced by the fact that almost half of all staff members who participated in 2006 returned for the summer of 2007. Camp Shriver 2007 was staffed by a camp director, an assistant director, 4 sport coaches, 12 counselors, 6 junior counselors, and 10 volunteers recruited to assist with various aspect of the camp on a day-to-day basis. Two counselors and 1 junior counselor were responsible for supervising a team of approximately 12 to 14 campers. Camp staff was comprised mainly of licensed teachers (both special and regular educators) and undergraduate and graduate students in fields including education, school psychology, and nursing. All staff members participated in two days of intensive orientation and training where they received behavior management training and lessons on intellectual disabilities. Throughout all orientation activities, an emphasis was placed on team-building and how to best facilitate a supportive inclusive environment.

## **C. Evaluation Component**

Camp Shriver is committed to documenting its successes through program evaluation. CSDE staff developed a number of assessments and surveys designed specifically for use during the

camp. All of the assessments described below were derived from widely used, established measures and modified with the assistance of experts in that particular area of assessment. The evaluation provided detailed quantifiable data on campers' sport skills at the beginning and end of camp, their peer relationships while at camp, and their satisfaction with participating in the camp.

### **1. Assessing Campers' Sport Ability**

To best monitor campers' sports skills, two different sports assessments were used in conjunction with sports instruction at camp. The first assessment, which was diagnostic in nature, gave coaches an indication of campers' sport skills upon entering camp and served as a tool for planning and guiding skill instruction as camp progressed. This assessment was supervised by trained coaches who were experts in that particular sport, and completed by camp staff who assessed each camper individually. This diagnostic assessment has been implemented in numerous other camps and was used at Camp Shriver for both basketball and soccer.

For the basketball assessment, counselors first indicated whether or not campers could perform several types of dribbling (i.e., stationary, walking, running, running with head up) and whether or not they could perform a lay-up. Campers were then timed (in seconds) as they went through a basketball maze. Next, campers were instructed to execute foul shots and jump shots while counselors measured the furthest distance from the basket from which each camper was able to successfully execute a shot. Finally, campers were instructed to execute a chest pass and a bounce pass while counselors measured the distance of each.

For the soccer assessment, counselors first indicated whether or not campers could perform several types of dribbling (i.e., walking, walking with head up, running, running with head up) and whether or not the camper could trap the ball. Campers were then timed as they went through a dribbling maze. Finally, campers were instructed to execute several shots and passes as counselors measured the furthest distance from which each camper could successfully execute each shot or pass.

In addition to the diagnostic sport assessments, sport skill rating scales (adapted from Special Olympics rating forms) were used to assess each camper individually in basketball, soccer, and swimming over the course of the four-week camp. Whereas the diagnostic skill assessment described above was used primarily to assist coaches with camp programming and to guide instruction, these rating scales were administered once at the beginning, once in the middle, and once at the end of camp to monitor the progress of each individual camper. We felt that the rating scales would better capture the degree to which each camper improved over the course of the camp in the sports skills being taught. In each sport, coaches were given the opportunity to rate campers on 6 or 7 specific skill components, pertinent to each sport, on a scale from 0 to 5 (see Table 1). Basketball was composed of seven skill components: dribbling stationary, dribbling in motion, chest pass, bounce pass, layup, jump shot, and set shot. Soccer was composed of six skill components: passing stationary, passing in motion, shooting stationary, shooting in motion, dribbling, and control/receiving. Swimming was composed of seven skill components: getting in the water, floating, gliding, paddling, freestyle, backstroke, and advanced strokes.

**Table 1.** Sport skill component ratings.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Level of Skill Demonstration</b>
<b>0</b>	No opportunity to perform skill
<b>1</b>	Could not perform skill at all
<b>2</b>	Performed skill with assistance (verbal & demonstration)
<b>3</b>	Performed skill with verbal assistance only
<b>4</b>	Performed skill proficiently, needs practice
<b>5</b>	Mastered skill

In addition to these formal assessments, campers were also asked to reflect on their own improvement during an interview conducted at the end of camp. During the interview, campers were asked whether they felt as though they improved “a lot,” “a little,” or “not at all” in each of the three sports offered at camp. Campers were also asked whether they learned any new sports at camp and which sport offered at the camp was their favorite.

## **2. Assessing Campers’ Social Relationships**

To assess the social relationships of campers, a sociometric interview guide was developed and included as part of the post-camp survey. Campers were asked two questions: “Who at camp do you like to hang out with?” and “Did you make any new friends at camp?” Campers were not limited to the number of names they could provide in response to either question. The two questions, adopted from the literature (Oden & Asher, 1977; Pearl & Donahue, 2004; Siperstein & Bak, 1989), were successfully employed in the evaluation of Camp Shriver 2006.

## **3. Assessing Camper Satisfaction**

Several questions were included in the post-camp survey to document camper satisfaction with their experience at Camp Shriver. Campers were first asked whether they liked playing sports, being with other campers, and the counselors on their team “a lot,” “a little,” or “not at all.” In addition, campers were asked to talk about what they liked best about Camp Shriver and if there was anything we could do to make the camp even better. Finally, campers were asked whether they had “a lot,” “a little,” or “no” fun at camp and if they would like to come back to camp next summer.

## **D. Results**

Of the 84 campers that were admitted to the camp, half had intellectual disabilities and half did not. Eight of the campers did not show up during the first week of camp and were consequently removed from the roster. Of the remaining 76 campers, six left in the middle of the camp either at the request of the camp director or for family reasons. This resulted in a final sample of 71 campers<sup>1</sup>. Teams were adjusted during the first two days of camp to ensure the most equal balance possible between campers with and without ID on each team. Of these 71 campers, 34%

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<sup>1</sup> Two campers were not present during the last two days of the camp, when the post-camp surveys were given. Therefore, any findings (i.e. camper satisfaction, social relationships) that incorporate data from these surveys do not include these two campers.

attended the camp in 2006. The racial background of campers was 59% African American, 27% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, and 3% Asian American. Similar to the 2006 camp, all campers ranged in age from 8 to 13. It is interesting to note that 34% of campers were returning campers from the summer of 2006.

### 1. Sports Skills

In evaluating campers' sport skills, we first focused on the results of campers' diagnostic assessment. In both basketball and soccer, a majority of the campers were able to perform the basic skills on the diagnostic assessment with proficiency (see Table 2). These results show that the majority of campers possessed the basic skills needed to play soccer and basketball upon entering camp. The one exception to this was the foul and jump shots in basketball. Because campers ranged in age from 8 to 13, they also ranged considerably in terms of size (i.e., height) and corresponding motor skills. The diagnostic assessment required campers to shoot the basketball using a regulation ten-foot basket in order to demonstrate which campers would need a shorter basket to demonstrate proficiency. After finding that most campers did not demonstrate proficiency on a regulation basket, a shorter basket was used for future skill instruction and assessment for these campers.

**Table 2:** Camper Sport Skills

Soccer Skills	% demonstrating proficiency <sup>2</sup>	Basketball Skills	% demonstrating proficiency <sup>3</sup>
<b>Running Dribble</b>	83%	Running Dribble	86%
<b>Skills Maze</b>	81%	Skills Maze	89%
<b>Shoots at Goal</b>	88%	Foul Shot	43%
<b>Passes Ball</b>	84%	Jump Shot	34%
<b>Traps Ball</b>	84%	Bounce Pass	77%
		Chest Pass	83%
		Lay-up	72%

The sport skill rating scales were used to assess campers sport skills, specifically to track camper improvement in soccer, basketball, and swimming over the course of the camp. Campers' sports skills were assessed in each sport on the 6 or 7 skill components pertinent to that sport, on a scale from 0 to 5 (see Table 1 on previous page). To depict improvement, ability level groupings were calculated based on the average score campers received in each sport (see Table 3). For example, in soccer a camper was assessed on the 6 separate skills that make up the scale (on a scale of 0 to 5) and an average was calculated based on those scores. [Note, if a coach provided a score of "0" (i.e. no opportunity to assess) for any of the sports skills on a particular scale, this score was not included in the average score.] In looking at the scores we found that most of the campers who

<sup>2</sup> For the soccer maze, the cutoff for proficiency was set at 25 seconds or under. For both shots on goal and passes, cutoffs were set at 15 feet or longer.

<sup>3</sup> Cutoff scores were used to indicate proficiency on the measured and timed items. For the basketball maze, the cutoff for proficiency was set at 20 seconds or under. For the foul and jump shots, cutoffs were set at 10 feet or longer. For the bounce and chest passes, cutoffs were also set at 10 feet or longer.

were not able to demonstrate proficiency on the diagnostic skill assessment were classified as “Beginners” on the sports skill rating scale at the onset of camp.

**Table 3.** Ability Level Groupings for the Sport Skill Rating Scales

<i>Ability Levels</i>	<i>Average Score Range</i>
<b>Beginner</b>	1 to 2
<b>Rookie</b>	2 to 3
<b>Winner</b>	3 to 4
<b>Superstar</b>	4 to 5

In soccer, we observed significant improvement among all campers from the beginning to the end of camp. While only 42% of campers were at the “winner” or “superstar” ability levels at the start of camp, by the end of camp this figure increased to 79% of all campers (see Table 4). In addition, 63% of campers improved an entire soccer ability level from the beginning to the end of camp. Most remarkably, all of the campers who entered camp as beginners improved one or more ability levels by the end of camp. This is an encouraging finding because it shows that the soccer instruction at camp is particularly beneficial for those campers who enter camp with the most limited soccer skills.

**Table 4.** Camper Sport Ability Levels in Soccer: Beginning and End of Camp.

<i>Beginning of Camp</i>		<i>End of Camp</i>	
<i>Ability Levels</i>	<i>% of campers at each level</i>	<i>Ability Levels</i>	<i>% of campers at each level</i>
<b>Beginner</b>	12%	Beginner	0%
<b>Rookie</b>	46%	Rookie	20%
<b>Winner</b>	36%	Winner	59%
<b>Superstar</b>	6%	Superstar	20%

When we looked at camper ability levels in basketball we found that they remained constant from the beginning to the end of camp (see Table 5). This may be due to the fact that a relatively large percentage of campers entered camp at either the “winner” or “superstar” ability levels, as opposed to soccer and swimming where the majority of campers entered at the “beginner” or “rookie” ability levels. Therefore, there was not much room to measure improvement in these children’s sports skills using the present rating scales. In addition, many of the children who entered camp at the “beginner” level also had significantly lower levels of motor behavior, as confirmed by our diagnostic assessment. While these children improved slightly throughout the course of the camp, this improvement was not great enough to place them in at a higher ability level.

**Table 5.** Camper Sport Ability Levels in Basketball: Beginning and End of Camp.

<i>Beginning of Camp</i>		<i>End of Camp</i>	
<i>Ability Levels</i>	<i>% of campers at each level</i>	<i>Ability Levels</i>	<i>% of campers at each level</i>
<b>Beginner</b>	12%	Beginner	10%
<b>Rookie</b>	19%	Rookie	22%
<b>Winner</b>	33%	Winner	29%
<b>Superstar</b>	36%	Superstar	39%

In swimming, we observed significant improvement among all campers from the beginning to the end of camp, similar to what was found in soccer. At the start of camp, only 25% of campers were at the “winner” ability level and no campers were at the “superstar” level (see Table 6). However, by the end of camp 50% of campers were at one of these levels. Further, 44% of campers improved an entire swimming ability level by the end of camp. Most notably, of those campers who entered camp as “beginners” half had improved an entire ability level when assessed at the end of camp. It should be noted that most of the campers came from low-income urban neighborhoods where they may not have had access to pools. For many of these campers, simply getting in the water, while not enough to raise their swimming score to a higher ability level, was a major accomplishment.

**Table 6.** Camper Sport Ability Levels in Swimming: Beginning and End of Camp.

<i>Beginning of Camp</i>		<i>End of Camp</i>	
<i>Ability Levels</i>	<i>% of campers at each level</i>	<i>Ability Levels</i>	<i>% of campers at each level</i>
<b>Beginner</b>	33%	Beginner	16%
<b>Rookie</b>	41%	Rookie	34%
<b>Winner</b>	25%	Winner	45%
<b>Superstar</b>	0%	Superstar	5%

When we focused separately on campers with and without ID we observed that even though campers with ID entered camp at lower ability levels, both groups of campers were able to improve their skills in soccer and swimming. In soccer, campers with ID improved their initial skill ability levels to reach the level at which campers without ID entered camp. Moreover, we found a similar trend in the swimming levels of campers with ID. It should be noted that campers without ID improved their soccer and swimming skills at equal rates. More specifically, in soccer just over half of the campers with and without ID (56% and 57% respectively) improved one ability level in soccer. In swimming, approximately 40% of all campers with and without ID improved one ability level (44% for campers with ID and 38% for campers without ID).

One of the concerns we had when developing the inclusive model for Camp Shriver was ensuring that the experience is challenging and exciting for the campers without ID. The finding that campers without ID improved their sport skills while attending camp demonstrates the value and strength of the inclusionary model in improving sports skills for *all* campers. This suggests that an inclusive sports camp can provide opportunities for campers without ID to benefit in

ways similar to campers with ID, as all campers were able to significantly improve their soccer and swimming skills while at camp.

In addition to formal assessments, self-report surveys from the campers’ perspective also indicated that most campers felt that they improved their sports skills while at camp. Results from the post-camp surveys showed that almost all campers (97%) indicated that they got “a lot” better in at least one of the sports offered at camp while most (69%) indicated that they got better in two or more sports. Further, approximately two-thirds of campers (64%) indicated that they learned a new sport while at camp. These findings are noteworthy because they show that the campers themselves were able to perceive improvements in their own sports skills.

## 2. Social Relationships of Campers

To assess campers’ peer acceptance and friendships at the end of camp we summed the number of nominations each camper received from other campers in response to two questions: “Who do you like to hang out with at camp?” and “Who are the new friends that you made at camp?,” respectively.<sup>4</sup> In doing so, we found that most campers were both accepted by and made multiple friends with their peers while they were at camp. When we looked at the social acceptance of all campers (i.e., number of “hang out with” nominations received), we found that 81% of campers received one or more nominations from their peers. Campers’ new friend nominations displayed a similar pattern, as 85% received one or more nominations from their peers. These findings demonstrate the camp’s ability to promote an atmosphere where the vast majority of children could experience social acceptance and make friends.

To more directly compare the peer relationships of campers with and without ID, we next focused on the number of nominations each group received in response to each question. Looking first at campers’ “hang out with” nominations, we found no differences in the number of nominations received by campers with and without disabilities (see Table 7 for means;  $t = 1.12, n.s.$ ). We also found that campers with and without ID received the same number of friendship nominations (see Table 7 for means;  $t = 1.43, n.s.$ ). The finding that campers with and without ID were equally preferred by their peers confirms what we found in the summer of 2006. Taken together the results strongly suggest that the inclusive setting of Camp Shriver was successful, as both children with and without ID were able to build positive social relationships.

**Table 7.** Campers’ Peer Relationships<sup>5</sup>

<i>Question Given</i>	<i>Campers With ID (N=26)</i>	<i>Campers Without ID (N=33)</i>
<i>“Who at camp do you like to hang out with?”</i>	2.46	3.15
<i>“Who are the new friends you made at camp?”</i>	2.35	3.06

<sup>4</sup> Because we received incomplete data from 1 of the 6 teams, the data on camper’s social relationships only includes the remaining 5 teams, or 59 of the 69 campers that completed post-camp surveys.

<sup>5</sup> Figures represent the mean number of nominations received.

Although most campers were accepted by their peers, we wanted to look more closely at those campers that could be classified as “isolates,” meaning that they received no nominations from their peers. In doing so, we found that only 9% of campers received no nominations in response to *both* of the two questions (see Table 8). Furthermore, when we compared the number of isolates by disability status, we found that both campers with and without ID fell into this category in equal frequencies (8% and 9%, respectively). While it is unfortunate that any child would be isolated by his or her peers, a wealth of studies that have looked at children’s social relationships have found that the presence of “isolates” is inevitable. However, it is encouraging that we did not see a high incidence of isolates among campers with ID, as these children are three times more likely to be rejected or isolated by their peers in school settings (Siperstein et al., 2006).

A similar trend emerged when we looked at campers who were highly accepted by their peers. In doing so, we found that 58% of all campers received four or more nominations from their peers. Interestingly, when we look at campers with and without ID separately, we see that half of the campers with ID (50%) were highly accepted. This is an encouraging finding because it demonstrates that the group of campers that could be characterized as highly accepted included campers both with and without ID in relatively equal frequencies.

**Table 8.** Percentage of Campers With and Without ID Receiving Nominations

<i>All Campers (N=59)</i>		<i>Campers With ID (N=26)</i>		<i>Campers Without ID (N=33)</i>	
<b>Total # of Nominations Received</b>	<b>% of campers</b>	<b>Total # of Nominations Received</b>	<b>% of campers</b>	<b>Total # of Nominations Received</b>	<b>% of campers</b>
<b>Zero</b>	9%	<b>Zero</b>	8%	<b>Zero</b>	9%
<b>One</b>	14%	<b>One</b>	23%	<b>One</b>	6%
<b>Two or Three</b>	20%	<b>Two or Three</b>	19%	<b>Two or Three</b>	21%
<b>Four or More</b>	58%	<b>Four or More</b>	50%	<b>Four or More</b>	64%

While campers with and without ID were accepted by their peers at equal rates, we were also interested in the degree to which campers with ID selected campers without ID and vice versa. Specifically, we found that 94% of children without ID nominated a fellow camper with ID in response to at least one of the two questions (i.e., “hang out with” and “new friend”). Furthermore, 88% of children with ID nominated a fellow camper without ID in response to at least one of these two questions. It is clear from these findings that there were not two distinct groups of campers with and without ID who did not interact with one another, but rather, a social integration of the two groups.

### 3. Camper Satisfaction

In addition to documenting the benefits to campers in terms of improved sports skills and positive peer relationships, we also focused on campers’ satisfaction with their time at the camp. When asked if they liked playing sports at camp “a lot,” “a little,” or “not at all,” 90% of campers indicated that they liked playing sports “a lot.” In addition, 88% of campers indicated that they liked being with the other campers at camp “a lot,” while 95% said they liked the

counselors on their team “a lot.” Furthermore, 93% reported that they had “a lot” of fun while at camp and almost all campers (94%) expressed interest in returning to camp next summer. When we compared the responses received from campers with and without ID, we found that campers with and without responded similarly to each of the questions.

In response to this question, “What did you like most about camp,” many campers mentioned a specific sport, (swimming was the most popular) a field trip, or an enrichment activity that they enjoyed. Many campers also mentioned that it was the general atmosphere of the camp that they liked the best (i.e., “We can play around and have a good time,” “We played fair and had fun together”). When we asked campers what we could do to make camp even better, approximately half of the campers suggested that we add others sports to the camp or felt that the camp should last longer than the allotted four weeks. It is clear from these results that Camp Shriver was a fun and enjoyable summer experience for all campers.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

In summary, the findings from the 2007 camp evaluation both support and expand upon what we found in our evaluation of Camp Shriver 2006. During both summers, we were able to document that children both with and without ID improved their sports skills in multiple sports. In addition, the camp provided all campers with the opportunity to make new friends. It should also be noted that almost all of the campers without ID reported making friends with a fellow camper with ID and vice versa. Most of all, the findings from this evaluation show that not only can children with and without ID improve their sports skills while engaging in the same activities as equal-status participants, they can also build positive social relationships with one another while doing so. This is one of the most important findings of this evaluation: the notion that improving one’s sports skills and making new friends are not mutually exclusive, but in fact go hand-in hand.

Perhaps what is most remarkable about the atmosphere that Camp Shriver fosters is its resemblance to settings that consist solely of children without disabilities. When we look at the varying levels of acceptance that characterized the children at our camp, it seems strikingly similar to what one would see if they observed a group of only children without disabilities. In any setting, there are going to be children who are isolated, rejected, popular, and average. Camp Shriver succeeds in placing children in a setting where having a disability has little to no effect on where they reside in this social hierarchy. Over fifty years of research on inclusion in schools, as well as in after-school and community programming, tell us that these opportunities are few and far between for children with disabilities.

Above all, Camp Shriver is about providing all children with the normative life experience of attending a summer camp where they can learn new skills and build friendships. It is our hope that in September when the teacher asks children what they did over their summer vacation, campers can raise their hand with a smile on their face and say, “I went to Camp Shriver and I made new friends.” We recognize that it is very difficult to capture the excitement and fun that campers experienced while at Camp Shriver in a report. Perhaps the best way to sum up the findings of Camp Shriver 2007, and to gain some insight as to the value of the experience, is to hear from the campers, counselors, and coaches who experienced it firsthand. On the following page are several comments from those who participated in Camp Shriver 2007.

## Camp Shriver Boston 2007 Report

*"I wish camp would never end."*  
---Alonzo, 10 year old camper, Boston

*"My favorite thing about camp was that I made new friends."*  
---Molly, 12 year old camper, Boston

*"We make a lot of friends and we're nice to each other and we share with each other."*  
---Lynndgee, 9 year old camper, Boston  
*"Camp is a better place than school because at school kids call me names."*  
---Wayne, 11 year old camper, Boston

*"My favorite thing about camp was hanging out with my team."*  
---Christina, 10 year old camper, Brockton

*"Me and Danny talked [and] we both agreed that it doesn't matter if you have a disability or not because we are all the same."*  
---Karinelis, 11 year old camper, Brockton

*"It was nice to come to camp today to meet new people and make new friends."*  
---Felton, 11 year old camper, Brockton

*"My favorite thing about camp was basketball. They [the coaches] teach you how to dribble, shoot, and pass."*  
---Davonte, 13 year old camper, Brockton

*"There is no difference amongst those with or without special needs in terms of limitations to what they can and can't do."*  
---Rob, Counselor

*"Every kid, no matter if they have a disability or not, has their own strengths and weaknesses."*  
---Tari, Counselor

*"I learned [through participating in the camp] that you can't always tell who has special needs and who doesn't. Kids don't judge each other if they don't know about the disabilities."*  
---Jessica, Junior Counselor

*"I love it and the kids really changed me for the better."*  
---Ryan, Junior Counselor

*"I learned that there are no limits to what the campers can and can't do"*  
---Elaine, Basketball Coach

*"I did not expect that they (the campers) would learn so quickly. We had campers who could not swim at the start of camp. By the end they were not only swimming in the deep end but going off the high dive."*  
---Bobby, Swimming Coach

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