

## **Camp Australia: Children's wellbeing priority for parents as they report a spike in screen time**

New research reveals 2020 saw a significant decrease in physical and mental wellbeing in children aged 6-12

**Wednesday, 10 February 2020 - Melbourne, Victoria** - Camp Australia, the nation's largest provider of Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), has revealed disruption to school children aged 6-12 during the COVID-19 pandemic had significant impacts on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Three-quarters of parents (69%) and almost all principals surveyed (90%) reported a decrease in physical wellbeing, paired with feelings of being disconnected that accompanied the transition to remote learning and restrictions from the onset of the pandemic.

The research, completed by Camp Australia in December 2020, surveyed 1,138 Australian parents and 124 principals from Camp Australia's partner schools.

Brett Comer, Chief Operating Officer for Camp Australia said: "We already knew 2020 was stressful for children but we wanted to identify from parents and principals how we could better support children's growth as we headed into 2021.

"The data indicated how parents and principals viewed what were the significant impacts they saw on children's physical and mental wellbeing.

"There was a big drop in wellbeing from a loss of connection with friendship groups and family and decreased participation in physical activities as children's screen consumption habits increased.

"Knowing this impact will help parents and educators to work together to address this when children go back to school.

"Children have shown incredible resilience throughout last year, as the research also showed, however screen time habits will be hard to break. The challenge this year will be supporting children transition into the new COVID Normal world we all hope includes more time for children to be active and interact socially again.

"Camp Australia will be playing our part in helping children to get moving and participating in fun physical activity with one another by hosting the biggest ever, national handball championship for OSHC children in Term 1 2021." said Mr Comer.

The research revealed over two-thirds of parents (69%) and almost all principals (97%) reported anxiety in children due to the fear and uncertainty caused by COVID-19, however, two thirds (66%) of parents reported no difficulty in their kids re-adjusting to face-to-face school.

Encouragingly, children's resilience and independence increased across the board in 2020 according to parents (74%) and principals (94%).

As part of the research over 1,200 children from 170 schools were asked to choose one word to describe 2020, the top three words included: fun, good and happy.

When asked, 'What's the one thing you are most excited about next year?', the key themes were: cooking, meeting new friends, teachers, family, holidays, birthdays, and getting involved in new activities.



**Other key findings from the research include:**

- 80% of parents and 93% of principals reported children felt disconnected from friends and family due to remote learning and restrictions.
- 91% of principals and 59% of parents indicated 2020 had some sort of negative impact on learning and progress for children generally.
- Almost all principals (96%) indicated an increase in appreciation from children of the wider community (e.g., health care workers) and those impacted by the pandemic.

**About Camp Australia**

Camp Australia (CA) is Australia's leading provider of Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and has a mission of Guiding Children's Growth through their services. This includes before and after school care, as well as holiday care during term breaks for children aged 6-12.

Camp Australia works alongside its 570+ partner schools, employing the best educators to deliver enriching experiences to help children learn and grow.

**Link to the full report can be found here:**

<https://senateshj.digitalpigeon.com/shr/OVhMoWmPEeu78QbIWq2rQQ/qmgq14LRz-PAZfZgVAZbnQ>

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