

RECRUITING JEWISH CAMPERS

A STUDY OF THE MIDWESTERN MARKET

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FOUNDATION FOR
JEWISH
CAMP

Community by the Cabinful



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P R E F A C E

Jewish summer camps have experienced tremendous growth and support over the last decade. More than 150 such nonprofit overnight camps serve the Jewish community across North America, providing unparalleled summer camp fun suffused with Jewish values and experiences. While we celebrate these successes, national research indicates that enormous opportunity exists to engage a much larger number of Jewish children and teens. Particularly important is the opportunity to engage the children of mixed married families, whose current participation rate is reportedly lower than five percent.

In order to understand how Jewish parents—camps’ “consumers”—make their decisions about how their children will spend their summer days, the Foundation for Jewish Camp has adopted a data-driven focus, conducting a series of market research studies. The first two reports, Southern California in 2006, and the Greater Toronto Area in 2008, offered perspectives on the behaviors and choices of Jewish parents in these large metropolitan areas.

In the fall of 2008, the Foundation for Jewish Camp began to partner with the Jack & Goldie Wolfe Miller Fund to create ‘a multi-dimensional approach to raise awareness and increase enrollment at Jewish camps in the Midwest. The CMART Approach (pronounced “smart,” the acronym stands for Camp Marketing Assessment Research and Training) was developed to provide a combination of strategies needed to significantly increase the number of children in Jewish summer camps. The goal of this initiative was to provide camps with the market research, marketing consultation, and training tools to enable them to reach new families.

This report provides the field of Jewish camp with a deeper understanding of Jewish families and their connection to the Jewish community, and explores families in which both parents are Jewish and those with one Jewish parent.

We are grateful to Alicia Oberman and Suzanne Knoll at the Jack & Goldie Wolfe Miller Fund for their generosity and guidance.

We thank Professor Steven M. Cohen and Dr. Judith Veinstein for their formulation and implementation of this research, and for their interpretation of the data.

It is our hope that this study will continue to help shape the way Jewish summer camps analyze consumer information, empowering them to develop appropriate strategies to more effectively market to their audience, as well as expand their reach to new and underserved Jewish populations.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

We wish to acknowledge the efforts of the people without whom this project could not have succeeded.

The quantitative phase of the research and its analysis drew upon valuable insights gleaned from qualitative interviews conducted by Carol Dorf at Egg Strategy, Inc. The questionnaire created was informed by input and critical feedback provided by Carol Dorf of Egg Strategy, as well as Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, Paul Golin and Eva Stern of the the Jewish Outreach Institute, and the professionals at the Foundation for Jewish Camp: Rina Goldberg, Rabbi Eve Rudin, and Rebecca Shimshak. We also thank Maggie Bar-Tura and Joelle Asaro Berman whose careful reading and editing contributed greatly to moving this study forward.

Additionally, we are grateful to the Jewish summer camps serving the Midwest who participated in the CMART Approach initiative: B’nai B’rith Beber Camp, JCC Camp Chi, Camp Interlaken JCC, Camp Livingston, Camp Moshava Wild Rose, Camp Nageela Midwest, Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI), Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, Camp Sabra, Habonim Dror Camp Tavor, Camp Wise and Camp Young Judaea Midwest for their collegiality and cooperation in completing this study.



EXTENDING THE REACH OF JEWISH CAMP

How can we expand the enrollment of Jewish children and adolescents in overnight Jewish camps in the Midwest? And, more specifically, are there special challenges in recruiting children of mixed married families and of the “unaffiliated,” those with relatively low levels of engagement in Jewish life? For a Jewish community concerned about providing a vital and meaningful Jewish existence for all its children, and not just the most connected and engaged, this policy question is both compelling and urgent.

The focus on expanding numbers of Jewish campers is justified and appropriate since we know from numerous studies that overnight Jewish summer camps for children demonstrate lasting, long-term influences upon adult Jewish identity. Social scientific research over the years testifies to the educational effectiveness of Jewish camps (Cohen, 2000; Cohen and Kotler-Berkowitz, 2004; Keysar and Kosmin, 2001, 2005). (By “Jewish camps,” we refer not to those with many Jewish campers or those for-profit camps owned by Jewish proprietors. Rather, “Jewish camps” signify those nonprofit overnight camps independent or sponsored by JCCs, federations, religious denominations, Zionist movements, individual synagogues, and other Jewish agencies, with an explicit Jewish educational mission.)

One reason why Jewish camps are effective as instruments of Jewish education and socialization is that they engender very positive feelings about being Jewish, and do so in a context of friends, leisure, adventure, and a total immersive environment. Former campers remember their experiences with great fondness, linking pleasurable childhood memories with Jewish educational growth (Fox, 1997; Sales and Saxe, 2003). While enhancing the Jewish educational quality remains an ongoing objective, expanding camp enrollment presents a greater challenge and an even greater opportunity—especially with respect to those from relatively unengaged Jewish backgrounds. The current levels of enrollment, although significantly higher now than some years ago, still leave room for further growth. In particular, the traditional market for Jewish camp has been concentrated heavily among the highly and moderately engaged in Jewish life—at least until now.

A key policy challenge in the camp arena is to expand the market for Jewish summer camp beyond those already most interested in Jewish educational growth experiences for their children. It will mean appealing, in particular, to the large and growing number of families who are headed by mixed married couples and those in-married couples who are relatively unengaged in Jewish life, such as those who are unaffiliated with congregations.

This research, then, seeks to provide policy-relevant information for meeting this challenge. It addresses these critical questions, as they apply to Jews in the Midwest:

- **To appreciate the current positioning of Jewish camp in the Jewish market, we ask: Which sorts of Jewish families and which sorts of Jewish children currently patronize Jewish camps? Are they in fact, as we think, the most heavily engaged in Jewish life?**
- **Why are some more likely to send children to Jewish camp than others? What are the incentives and the obstacles to attendance at a Jewish camp? Do Jewish educational motivations drive many current camp families to Jewish camp? What obstacles are posed by lack of awareness, lack of appreciation for camps’ effectiveness, lack of welcoming, cost, and limited scholarship aid?**
- **How can Jewish camps reach out to Jewishly unengaged families and those mixed married who are raising their children as Jews in some way? How should their messaging and communication change for the same purpose?**



METHODS: THE SURVEY AND THE SAMPLE

To address these issues, we conducted a web-based survey of parents of Jewish youngsters, ages 5–16, living in the Midwest region. Data collection took place between June 1, 2009 and June 26, 2009.

The geographic scope of the sample covered the Midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The respondents were supplied by EMI Surveys, a Cincinnati-based corporation that describes itself as “the preferred online sample provider since 1999. We are in the business of providing high quality samples to leading market research companies.” The EMI sample encompassed both those who have sent their children to camp (i.e., “camp families”) as well as those who have not (i.e., “non-camp families”). The survey embraced Jewish families of all levels and types of Jewish involvement.

We also collected a “Jewish camper” sample that drew upon referrals from and lists provided by the following Jewish summer camps in the region: B’nai B’rith Beber Camp, JCC Camp Chi, Camp Interlaken JCC, Camp Livingston, Camp Moshava Wild Rose, Camp Nageela Midwest, Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI), Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, Camp Sabra, Habonim Dror Camp Tavor, Camp Wise and Camp Young Judaea Midwest. In broad terms, the results from the “Jewish camper” sample highly resemble those reported by EMI respondents whose children have attended Jewish summer camps, lending a measure of credibility and validity to the EMI sample.

In constructing the questionnaire, we drew upon prior Foundation for Jewish Camp-sponsored research conducted in Southern California and Greater Toronto (Cohen 2006; Cohen & Veinstein, 2009). In addition, we drew upon valuable insights gleaned from qualitative interviews conducted by Egg Strategy, Inc., a consulting firm that provides new product innovation, qualitative and quantitative consumer research, and brand strategy.

The survey questionnaire explored issues such as:

- **Recent and previous attendance at summer camp, both Jewish and non-sectarian**
- **Reasons for and against attendance at Jewish camps**
- **Issues of cost-sensitivity**
- **Jewish identity characteristics of parents and their camper-age children**
- **Parents’ aspirations for their children’s Jewish identities**
- **Sense of comfort and welcoming in both Jewish and Christian settings**
- **Socio-demographics of both parents and children**
- **Variations between in-married and mixed married.**

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

ELIGIBLE FAMILIES: THOSE WHERE CHILDREN AND AT LEAST ONE ADULT ARE "JEWISH IN ANY WAY"

This analysis draws upon 652 eligible respondents, all of whom are parents of children ages 5–16 and who qualified by way of meeting two criteria:

- they identified themselves or their spouse as “Jewish in any way,” and
- they were raising a child as “Jewish in any way,” including as Jewish and something else, usually Christian.

The initial sample from which this sub-sample was drawn went beyond these two criteria. The sample drawn cast a very wide net so as to include Jews of all levels of engagement, in particular, mixed married families with minimal levels of Jewish engagement. By extending the reach of the survey to include even non-Jews who expressed an interest in exposing their children “to Judaism or Jewish culture,” we felt that mixed married couples with the most minimal engagement in Jewish life would feel welcome and included in the survey. And indeed we succeeded in reaching these families, even those who are not raising their children as “Jewish in any way.”

TABLE 1: RELIGIOUS IDENTITY OF CHILD

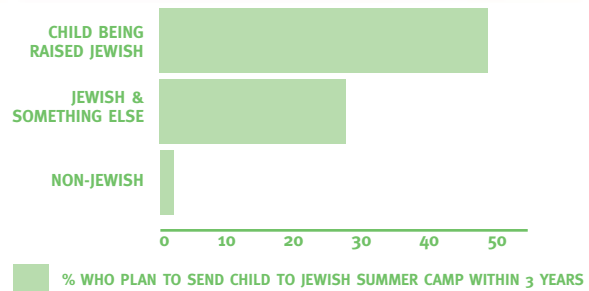
CHILD BEING RAISED		IN-MARRIED OR SINGLE JEWISH PARENT	MIXED MARRIED
		JEWISH	66%
JEWISH & SOMETHING ELSE	26%	52%	
NON-JEWISH	8%	36%	
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	

FAMILIES RAISING CHILDREN AS NON-JEWS SHOW LITTLE INTEREST IN JEWISH CAMP

Among the mixed married families in the original extended sample, 36% were not raising their children as Jewish in any way (Table 1). Accordingly, 64% of mixed married couples were raising their children as Jews in some way, including both Jewish and Christian simultaneously. Having succeeded in attracting the participation in the survey of mixed married families with the lowest levels of Jewish involvement, the preliminary analysis determined that not all mixed married families are policy-relevant for a study seeking ways to expand enrollment in Jewish camp. To be precise, when the child is not at all Jewish, even when one parent or both are Jewish, we see hardly any interest in Jewish camp (Figure 1).

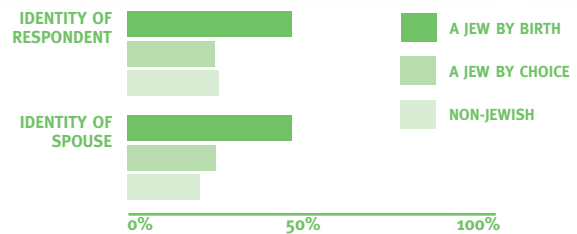
Of parents who are raising their children as exclusively Jewish and in no other religious identity, 47% have plans to send them to a Jewish camp in three years or less. (Figure 1). In contrast, where the children are raised entirely non-Jewish, the comparable number plummets to under 2%. In short, parents who are not choosing to raise their children Jewish in any way are highly distant from the real or potential Jewish camp market. In our view, they are so distant as to suggest little real hope of enticing significant numbers to select Jewish camp. Accordingly, we opted to exclude them from further analysis in this report, lest their responses distort the findings offered by parents whose children are Jewish in some fashion.

FIGURE 1: JEWISH IDENTITY OF CHILD AND CAMP INTEREST



But by including families where children are being raised as Jewish in any way, we still employed a very inclusive and broad definition. By “Jewish in any way,” we mean: those raising their children in the Jewish religion; those raising their children as Jewish but without a specific religion; and those raising their children as “Jewish and something else,” where “something else” generally refers to Christianity.

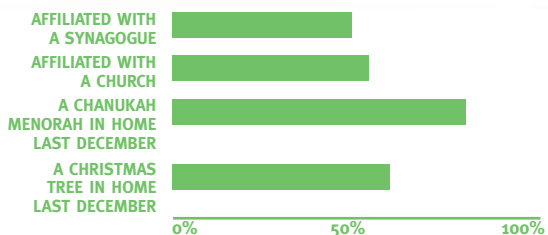
FIGURE 2: JEWISH IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS AND SPOUSES



Respondents and spouses consist of Jews by birth, Jews by choice, and non-Jews.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

FIGURE 3: PATTERNS OF AFFILIATION AND HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE

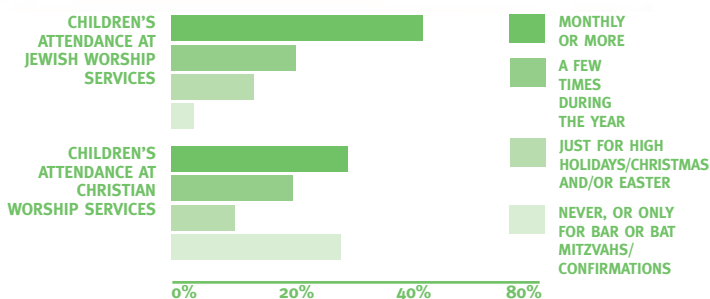


More affiliation with churches than synagogues, but more observance of Chanukah than Christmas.

The sample embraces day school parents (19%), supplementary school parents (67%, and mostly one-day-a-week), and those who will provide their children with no Jewish schooling (14%).

It also includes families whose children attend Jewish services monthly or more (50%) as well as those who attend Christian services monthly or more (32%)—and some who attend services at both synagogues and churches (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN AT WORSHIP SERVICES



Children attended Jewish services, but many also attended Christian services.

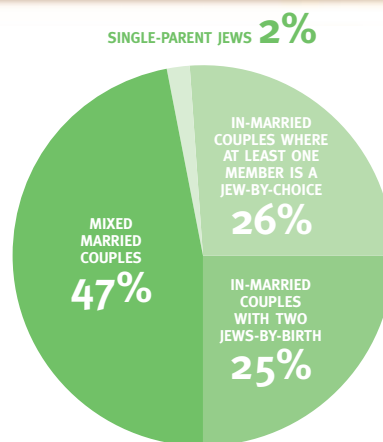
Demographically, more respondents are women than men; the vast majority (76%) are between 30 and 49. The sample includes single parents and in-married parents, as well as those mixed married parents (both Jewish and non-Jewish, split about 50-50 in this sample) who are raising their children as Jewish in some way (even if in combination with Christian identity).

IN-MARRIED, JEWS-BY-CHOICE, SINGLE PARENTS, & MIXED MARRIED

The sample of 652 respondents, then, consists of four types of households:

- 1) In-married couples with two Jews-by-birth (25% of households in this sample) (Figure 5).
- 2) In-married couples where at least one member is a Jew-by-choice (26%). Jews-by-choice include converts to Judaism as well as those who assume identities as Jews without going through a formal conversion ceremony with rabbinic officiation. To be clear, we define “in-marriage” as the marriage of two Jews, irrespective of whether the Jews were born Jewish or chose to become Jewish.
- 3) Single-parent Jews (only 2%).
- 4) Mixed married couples, consisting of one Jew—either by birth or by choice—and one non-Jew (47%).

FIGURE 5: MARITAL STATUS DISTRIBUTION



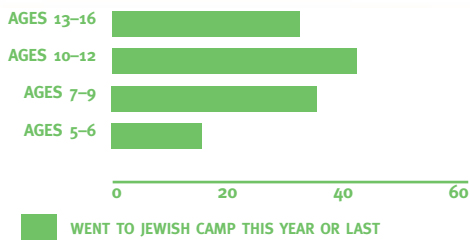
The distribution of these family types resembles patterns observed in other studies of contemporary American Jewry, entirely compatible with those reported in the National Jewish Population Study of 2000-01, and more recently conducted local Jewish population studies. (See the “Comment on Family Patterns” in the Appendix.)

FINDINGS

OF JEWISH CHILDREN, A QUARTER ATTENDED JEWISH CAMP LAST YEAR

Of children ages 5–16 in the Midwest being raised as Jews (in this report, “raised as Jews” means those raised exclusively Jewish as well as those raised Jewish and Christian or Jewish and something else), about 26% (according to our parent-respondents) attended an overnight summer camp that they regarded as Jewish-sponsored in the summer of 2008 (Figure 6). The number rises from about 16% among 6-year-olds to about 46% among those ages 10–12.

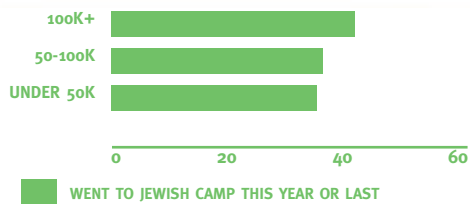
FIGURE 6: CAMP ATTENDANCE BY AGE



Attendance at Jewish camp peaks in the pre-bar/bat mitzvah years.

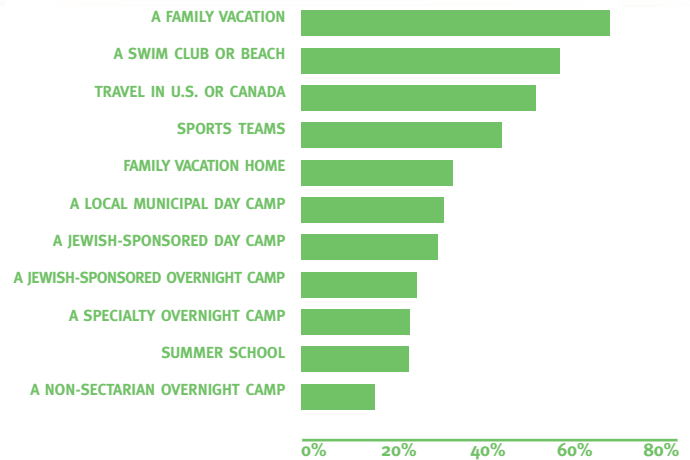
The more affluent are only slightly more likely to send their children to Jewish camps than the less affluent (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7: CAMP ATTENDANCE BY ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME



Not only do these youngsters attend Jewish overnight camp—nearly as many attend non-sectarian overnight camps (Figure 8). They engage in a wide variety of activities over the summer, reflecting the competitive environment in which Jewish camps are situated. Camps face competition not only from non-sectarian camps, but from Jewish day camps, summer school, sports teams, family vacation homes, and a wide variety of options, both structured and informal.

FIGURE 8: CHILDREN’S INVOLVEMENT IN SUMMER ACTIVITIES



Families choose a wide variety of summer activities for their children.

FINDINGS

WIDE VARIETY OF ATTENDANCE AT-AND INTEREST IN-JEWISH CAMP

Respondents vary considerably with respect to their participation and interest in Jewish camp. At one end of the spectrum are those who have already sent children to such camps. At the other are those with no experience and seemingly no interest in any camps, Jewish or not. Thus, we find four segments with respect to camp participation and interest:

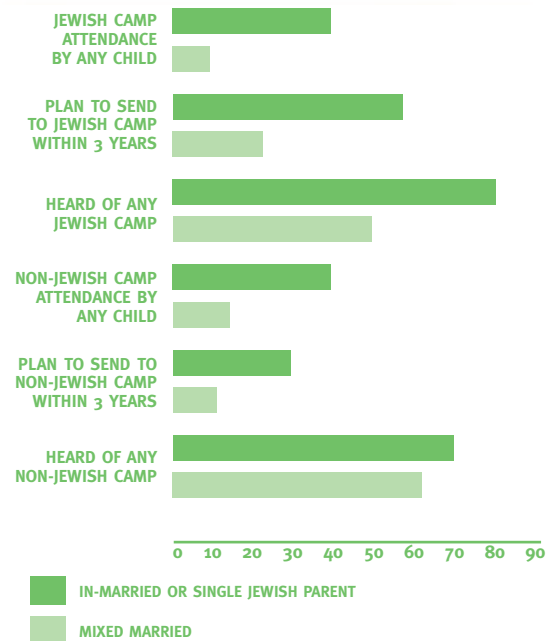
- 1) No camp, no interest: never has sent a child to a camp (Jewish or not) and expresses no interest in doing so in the future (38%).
- 2) Only non-Jewish camp interest: has sent a child to a non-Jewish camp, or interested in doing so, but no interest and no past attendance at a Jewish camp (8%).
- 3) Jewish camp interest: child has never been to a Jewish camp, but parent is interested in Jewish camp for the future (26%).
- 4) Jewish camp participation: has already sent child to Jewish camp (28%).

We measured interest in Jewish camp by whether the parent expressed an interest in their child attending any of the 14 nonprofit Jewish camps in the Midwest with Jewish educational missions (B'nai B'rith Beber Camp, JCC Camp Chi, Emma Kaufman Camp, Camp Henry Horner, Camp Interlaken JCC, Camp Livingston, Camp Moshava Wild Rose, Camp Nageela Midwest, Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI), Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, Camp Sabra, Habonim Dror Camp Tavor, Camp Wise, and Camp Young Judaea Midwest).

HIGHER JEWISH CAMP PARTICIPATION AMONG THE IN-MARRIED

Overall, in-married Jews (be they Jews-by-birth or Jews-by-choice) manifest relatively high participation and interest in Jewish camp (Figure 9). The Jewish children of the mixed married are far less connected to Jewish camp. Among the in-married, 44% have already sent children to Jewish camp, as contrasted with just 10% of the mixed married. The in-married are also far more likely to send their children to Jewish camp in the future, and somewhat more likely to have heard of any of the 14 Jewish camps listed in our survey. That said, as many as 23% of the mixed married say they are indeed planning to send children to a Jewish camp in the near future, and most have at least heard of a Jewish camp.

FIGURE 9: JEWISH CAMP ATTENDANCE BY MARITAL STATUS



In-married are far more engaged both with Jewish and non-Jewish camp than are the mixed married.

FINDINGS

Not only do in-married couples send their children to Jewish camp more than those of the mixed married; their children also attend non-Jewish camps more than the mixed married. The in-married are more than twice as likely as the mixed married to have sent children to non-Jewish camps in the past, as well as to plan on doing so in the near future. For the in-married, previous non-Jewish camp attendance closely approximates Jewish camp attendance, suggesting that for these families, Jewish and non-Jewish camps compete. For the mixed married, non-Jewish camp participation exceeds Jewish camp participation. However, the vast majority of mixed married families report that none of their children have ever attended any sort of overnight summer camp.

Thus, two key policy inferences emerge:

- **For the mixed married: To expand the appeal of Jewish camp, the main challenge is to turn non-camp families into Jewish camp families.**
- **For the in-married: The main challenge is to shift families from non-Jewish camps to Jewish camps.**

AS A GROUP, THE IN-MARRIED ARE MUCH MORE JEWISHLY ENGAGED THAN THE MIXED MARRIED

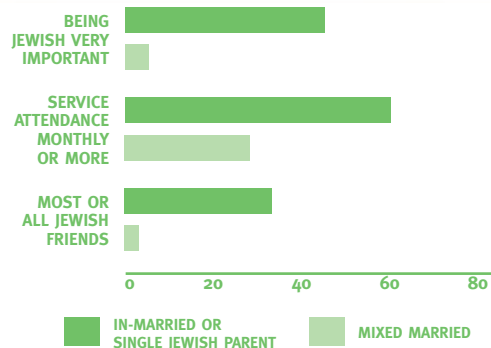
Mixed marriage among Jews—be it in the Midwest today or in numerous other contexts—is associated with lower levels of involvement in Jewish life (Beck (2005), Chertok, et al. (2008), Cohen (2006), Fishman (2004), Kosmin, et al. (1991), Medding, et al. (1992), Phillips and Fishman (2006), Phillips (2005a and 2005b)).

This raises the possibility that the gap in camp participation is a function of a gap in Jewish engagement. All the evidence points—and rather dramatically—to huge differences in Jewish engagement, however measured, between the in-married and the mixed married.

A few key indicators testify to the breadth of the Jewish engagement gap between in-married and mixed married Jews. The in-married lead the mixed married with respect to:

- **Viewing being Jewish as very important (46% vs. 7%) (Figure 10)**
- **Having mostly Jewish friends (35% vs. 5%)**
- **Feeling it is “very important” that their children receive a Jewish education (36% vs. 5%) (Figure 11)**
- **Feeling it is “very important” that their children marry Jews (40% vs. 4%)**
- **Feeling it is “very important” that their children celebrate Jewish holidays as an adult (50% vs. 14%)**
- **Reporting that their children attend Shabbat services monthly or more (64% vs. 35%) (Figure 12)**
- **Raising their children as Jews exclusively, rather than “Jewish and something else” (72% vs. 18%).**

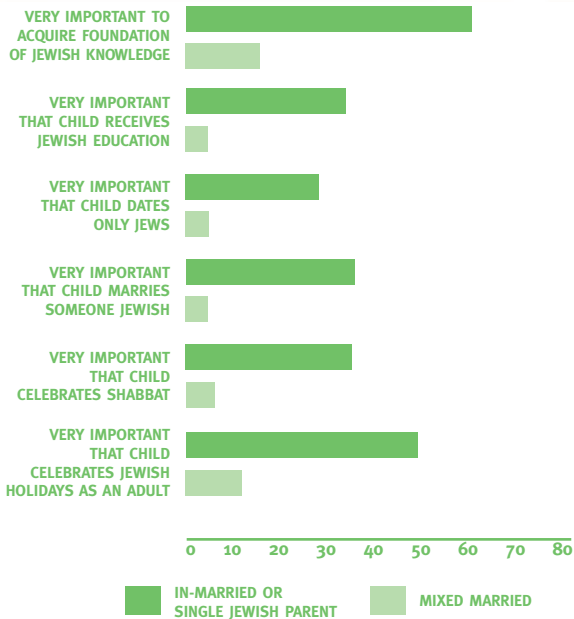
FIGURE 10: JEWISH ENGAGEMENT BY MARITAL STATUS



In-married are more likely engaged in Jewish life than the mixed married.

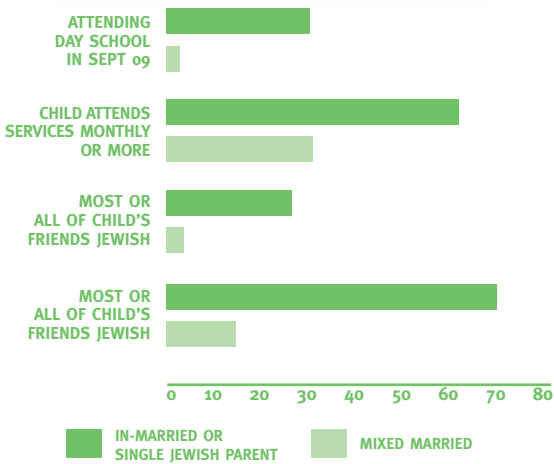
FINDINGS

FIGURE 11: JEWISH IDENTITY ASPIRATIONS OF RESPONDENTS AND MARITAL STATUS



In-married and single Jewish parents have higher aspirations for their children's Jewish identity than do the mixed married.

FIGURE 12: JEWISH ENGAGEMENT OF CHILDREN AND MARITAL STATUS



Children of the in-married are more engaged in Jewish life than the children of mixed married.

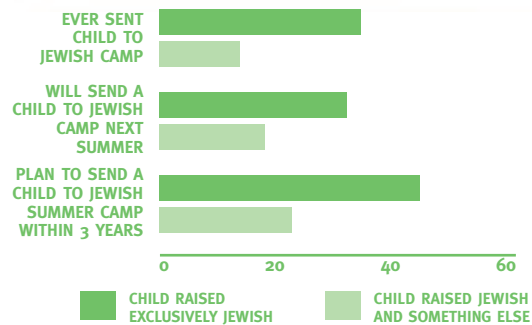
CHILDREN RAISED EXCLUSIVELY JEWISH ARE FAR MORE ENGAGED THAN THOSE RAISED "JEWISH AND SOMETHING ELSE"

If the identity status of the parents as in-married or mixed married matters for Jewish camp participation, so, too, does the identity status of their children—that is, whether they are being raised exclusively Jewish, or as Jewish and something else (usually Christian).

The two categories of children experience very different levels of Jewish engagement in their lives. Those defined by their parents as (exclusively) Jewish grow up with much higher levels of Jewish engagement (as indicated by rituals, Jewish schooling, Jewishly involved parents, Jewish friends, synagogue affiliation, service attendance, etc.) than those who the parents define as "Jewish and something else," be it in those words, or by way of citing both Judaism and Christianity as the religion(s) of their children.

In broad strokes, those parents who are raising their children as exclusively Jewish report about twice the level of participation and interest in Jewish camp as do parents raising their children as Jewish and something else (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13: JEWISH IDENTITY OF CHILDREN AND INTENDED CAMP ATTENDANCE

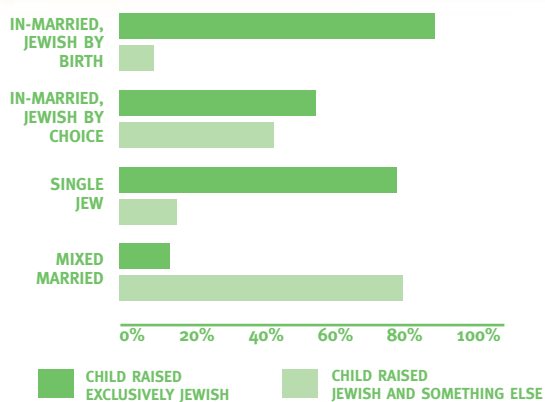


Families raising children as exclusively Jewish are more likely to send children to Jewish camp than those raising children as "Jewish and something else."

FINDINGS

As would be expected, in-married and mixed married couples tend to raise their children as exclusively Jewish or Jewish and something else to varying extents. The in-married with two born-Jewish parents raise an overwhelming majority of their children as exclusively Jewish, i.e., very few of their kids are “Jewish and something else” (92% exclusively Jewish, and just 8% as Jewish and something else) (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14: JEWISH IDENTITY OF CHILDREN AND MARITAL STATUS



Most children of the in-married are raised exclusively Jewish. Most children of the mixed married are raised Jewish and something else.

In contrast, among “conversionary marriages” (in-marriages with a spouse who is a Jew-by-choice) the proportions shift to just 54% exclusively Jewish and 46% raised “Jewish and something else.” Apparently, the presence of a Jew-by-choice parent means that a large minority of their children are exposed to religious or cultural systems other than Judaism. One possible avenue is by way of non-Jewish grandparents and other extended family.

Among the mixed married, only a small number raise their children as exclusively Jews (19%), while the vast majority (81%) raise children as Jewish and something else. (To recall, these distributions apply only to those families who indicated that their children are being raised as Jewish in any way.)

Asked to report on the religion of their children, we find patterns that comport with these variations. In-married couples of two Jews-by-birth are most likely to raise their children only in Judaism. The mixed married are most likely to raise their children in both Judaism and Christianity. The conversionary couples report intermediate distributions.

In light of the wide variations in child-rearing patterns, the findings point to the fluidity of Jewish identity on the part of children being raised both in conversionary and in mixed married homes. As such, it points to the need to fortify the Jewish socialization intentions of parents in such households, be they conversionary or mixed married. Jewish camp is one way to address this policy-relevant need and opportunity.

THE POWER OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT AMONG PARENTS AND CHILDREN

However we measure Jewish engagement, be it terms of the parents or the children, or in terms of behaviors or attitudes, Jewish engagement is strongly related to participation and interest in Jewish life—and by extension, Jewish camp.

To demonstrate this relationship, we constructed three composite measures of Jewish engagement:

- **Jewish engagement of the respondent: the extent to which the parent-respondent is himself/herself involved in Jewish life. Included here are such items as the importance of being Jewish or religious service attendance. (For a complete description of this and other scales, see the Appendix.)**
- **Aspirations for the Jewish engagement of the child: the extent to which the respondent cares for the child to achieve a high level of Jewish engagement, now and as an adult. The items here deal with desires for Jewish education, in-marriage, and Jewish holiday celebration.**
- **Jewish engagement of the child currently, as measured by such items as Jewish schooling (with day school regarded as indicating higher engagement), Jewish friends, or attending services.**

FINDINGS

Each measure independently predicts both use of Jewish camp and interest in Jewish camp. For example, of those with relatively low scores on the index measuring aspirations for the child's Jewish engagement, under 5% have sent a child to Jewish camp. In contrast, of those with relatively high aspirations, 49% are Jewish camp families. We find similar striking relationships with the measures of the Jewish engagement of the parent and of the child.

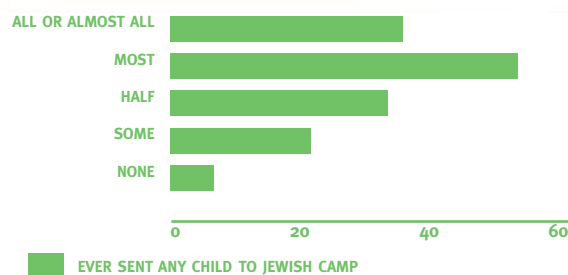
On one level, there's nothing new with this finding. But, it does point strongly to the underlying reality confronting the objective of expanding Jewish camp enrollment: Current Jewish camp families turn to Jewish camp heavily for Jewish identity and Jewish educational reasons. To increase their enrollment, Jewish camps will need to penetrate more deeply into the Jewish market, looking beyond the circle of families who place a high value on Jewish engagement for themselves, and on Jewish continuity for their children.

This inference parallels one we drew in our study of Jewish camp in Southern California (Cohen 2006) where the enrollment patterns bear many similarities with those in the Midwest. At the same time, the results in Greater Toronto (Cohen and Veinstein 2009—where many unaffiliated families enroll children in Jewish camp—point in a different direction. Clearly, policy contexts and challenges vary by region.

Yet one more way to appreciate the power of Jewish engagement to predict current levels of participation in camping is by examining the extent to which the child's friends are Jewish. Indeed we find very sharply mounting levels of participation in line with increasing numbers of Jewish friends. Among those whose children have no closest friends who are Jewish, just 7% reported ever having sent their children to Jewish camp; in contrast, the figure reaches 56% where most of the children's closest friends are Jewish (Figure 15).

Interestingly, among the small number reporting that almost all their children's closest friends are Jewish, the level of camp participation drops slightly to 40%. Other research has demonstrated that the most ethnically ensconced or the most religiously traditional (often the same people) see less of a need to turn to Jewish camp for educational or socialization purposes. That one curious finding aside, one cannot but be struck with the very strong relationship between Jewish ethnic engagement (having many Jewish friends) and Jewish camp engagement.

FIGURE 15: JEWISH FRIENDSHIPS OF CHILDREN AND CAMP ATTENDANCE



Children with more Jewish friends are more likely to attend Jewish camp.

JEWISH ENGAGEMENT LEVELS: THE KEY TO EXPLAINING THE CAMPING GAP BY MARRIAGE TYPE

The gaps in Jewish camp participation levels between in-married and mixed married families can be attributed almost entirely to the differences between these two types of families in their Jewish engagement.

This conclusion emerges from a multiple regression analysis in which we examined the impact of type of marriage upon the chances of sending one's child to Jewish camp the previous summer. The in-married are 26 percent more likely than the mixed married to have sent their child to a Jewish summer camp in 2008.

However, we get very different results when we take into account the three measures of Jewish engagement:

- **Jewish engagement of parents (the respondents)**
- **Aspirations for the children's Jewish identity**
- **Jewish engagement of the child**

When we statistically control for these factors we in effect ask: What would the gap in camp participation be between the in-married and the mixed married if they had equivalent scores on all three measures of Jewish engagement? We find that the original gap reduces from 26 points to only 6, effectively "explaining away" 20 points of the original gap.

FINDINGS

One way of looking at these results is to say: The level of Jewish engagement constitutes over three-quarters of the reason (20/26 = 0.77) why the in-married send their children to Jewish camp so much more than the mixed married. There may be other reasons, but the gaps in Jewish engagement go a long way to explaining the paucity of children of mixed married families in Jewish camps.

In fact, once these three measures of Jewish engagement are taken into account, the impact of marriage becomes statistically insignificant. In other words, if you want to predict whether a family will send their child to a Jewish camp, you're better off knowing about how involved they and their children are in Jewish life. Once you know that, it won't help much, if at all, to learn whether they happen to be an in-married or mixed married family.

IT'S NOT A FEAR OF STIGMA, BUT A COMPETENCE BARRIER

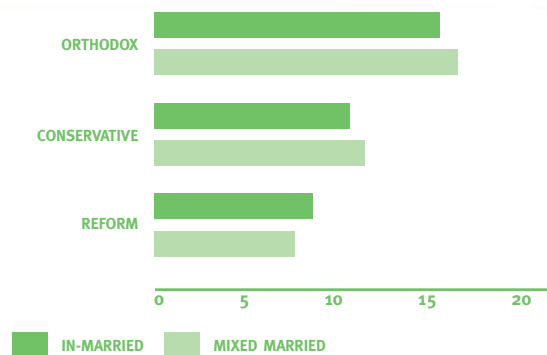
Matters of barriers, comfort levels, and welcoming intentions figure prominently in the approach of many communal professionals and leaders who work closely with mixed married families to engage them more deeply in Jewish life. A major line of thinking with respect to why less engaged Jews, in particular mixed married Jews, fail to participate in Jewish life is that they feel (or are made to feel) uncomfortable in Jewish settings. The social stigma attached to mixed marriage, albeit less powerful and widespread today than years ago, nevertheless continues to pose a real or imagined barrier to entry into conventional Jewish life.

This perspective implies quite strongly that the mixed married should express greater tentativeness about participating in conventional Jewish settings than the in-married. If feeling unwelcome is an obstacle to their participation, they they should indeed say they feel less welcome. Here, we find that they don't.

The survey we fielded directly addressed this implication. We asked respondents whether they would "feel comfortable in" a variety of Jewish and Christian settings, including services of different Jewish denominations and church services.

We found only low levels of discomfort—including among the mixed married—with attending services of various Jewish denominations (Figure 16). The proportions saying that they would "probably not" or "definitely not" feel comfortable at Orthodox services reached just 16% among the in-married and 17% for the mixed married. The comparable figures for Conservative services were 11% and 13%, and for Reform services, 10% and 9%. For our purposes, the point is not only that levels of discomfort are low, but that they hardly differ for the in-married and the mixed married. In each type of Jewish religious services, the mixed married feel no more unwelcome, uncomfortable, or excluded than the in-married.

FIGURE 16: COMFORT LEVELS IN OTHER RELIGIOUS SETTINGS AND MARITAL STATUS



The in-married and mixed married are equally (un)comfortable in Orthodox, Conservative and Reform services.

FINDINGS

But this is not to say that the mixed married are uniformly as comfortable in Jewish life as the in-married. In one area, mixed married Jews do express higher levels of discomfort: “Attending services conducted mostly in Hebrew.” Here the mixed married discomfort levels rise above those of the in-married (28% vs. 15%). While the evidence here is limited, it does parallel considerable qualitative research which attests to feelings of limited cultural competence (as symbolized by the use of Hebrew).

The adverse reaction of a sizable minority to the use of Hebrew may have implications for Jewish camps’ marketing materials. While some parents may find the use of Hebrew reassuring, the more tentative market may well find it alienating. And, in all likelihood, feelings about Hebrew undoubtedly extend to other areas that separate the cultural novices (who are often under-engaged Jews or mixed married Jews) from the proficient, those well-versed in Jewish life and culture. Camps need to recognize that messages which testify to their Jewish cultural depth and sophistication probably appeal to parents seeking Jewish educational experiences for their children. At the same time, they probably alienate parents (and children) who feel ill-at-ease or unfamiliar with more intense Jewish cultural environments, such as may be symbolized by use of Hebrew letters and phrases.

While parents’ discomfort levels are low with respect to participating in Jewish settings, the same cannot be said—at least for the in-married—for their comfort levels in Christian settings. These include spending Christmas with a mixed married couple, having a Christmas tree, or attending services in a church.

Here, we find in-married Jews significantly more uncomfortable with Christian settings than the mixed married. For spending Christmas with “interfaith couples ...who celebrate Christmas ...,” 13% of the in-married are uncomfortable as compared with 3% of the mixed married. For “attending services in a church”: 33% vs. 8%.

And for “having a Christmas tree in your home”: 36% vs. 4%. We find similar patterns when we compare current Jewish camp participants with non-participants: the former are less comfortable with Christmas dinners, Christmas trees, and church services than the latter.

Part of the Jewish identity of the in-married (and current camp families), then, is expressed through a sense of unease with Christian experiences, consistent with centuries of social distance separating Jews and Christians in Europe and later in the United States. The mixed married, for their part, have grown to diminish, if not totally dispel, that sense of distance and alienation, if for no reason other than they have established a loving relationship with a Christian spouse and acquired Christian extended family members as well.

Not surprisingly, in-married parents are more uncomfortable with Christian settings than they are with Jewish settings. But the reverse is true for mixed married respondents: They are even more comfortable with Christian settings than with Jewish settings.

Or, to make matters more concrete and vivid: The average inmarried Jew is less comfortable in church than in synagogue. The average mixed married parent is less comfortable in synagogue than in church.

FINDINGS

In other words, a sense of welcoming, inclusion, and cultural comfort do play a role in shaping the response to Jewish camp, but they emerge in ways different than some may anticipate. These concerns are not much of a barrier to the participation of the mixed married. Rather, cross-cultural discomfort is more a matter for in-married Jews feeling uncomfortable in Christian settings than mixed married Jews being uncomfortable in Jewish settings.

Our survey collected further evidence of cultural discomfort when it addressed feelings about one's children growing up Christian. Nearly half (46%) of the in-married would be upset "to a great extent" if their children, as adults, celebrated Christian holidays, but not Jewish holidays; only 10% of the mixed married felt the same. We find a parallel gap with respect to one's child marrying a Christian: 31% of the in-married would be upset to a great extent, vs. only 3% of the mixed married. The in-married, then, are far more upset at the thought that their children might practice Christianity than are mixed married parents.

These results point to an important, possibly subconscious motivation of parents for sending their children to Jewish camps: Jewish camps provide an ethnically enclosed social setting and one with a Jewish educational component. Both can be presumed to diminish the potential for children finding themselves in Christian contexts currently, as well as becoming Christian as adults.

The evidence certainly points to a congruence between discomfort in Christian settings and a preference for Jewish camp for the children. Those who most turn to Jewish camps are also those most averse to participating in Christian religious contexts or seeing their children embrace Christianity.

The policy implication here is not that camps should ignore the need to be open, inviting, welcoming, sensitive, and inclusive. These features are all intrinsic to good customer relations, and are deeply rooted in Jewish tradition that dates back to Abraham and Sarah (credited by the rabbis with establishing the *mitzvah* of welcoming).

Rather, the results here do suggest that a more welcoming and sensitive approach to the mixed married (and all families), admirable as that may be in its own right, will have only marginal impact upon the recruitment and retention of such families. Other policies and practices will be needed to achieve the breakthrough necessary to vastly expand the camp constituency beyond its traditional confines.

MARRIAGE & CONGREGATIONAL AFFILIATION: FOUR DISTINCT GROUPS

For the purposes of marketing Jewish camp, not all in-married families should be lumped together, and neither should we lump together all mixed married families. It turns out that synagogue affiliation serves as a visible and fruitful distinction among these families. Using this indicator, it helps to know not only the marriage status of a family (in- or mixed), but its congregational affiliation status as well.

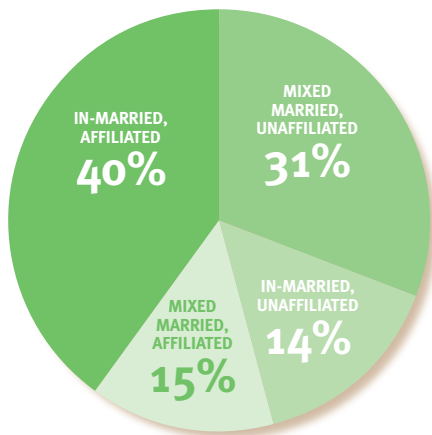
Accordingly, in the following section, we focus upon four groups:

- 1) In-married (be they Jews-by-birth or by-choice) who are synagogue members (40%) (Figure 17)
- 2) Mixed married couples and single parents who are synagogue members (14%)
- 3) In-married couples and single parents who are not synagogue members (16%)
- 4) Mixed married who are not synagogue members (31%)

FINDINGS

Each of these four family segments displays rather distinctive patterns with respect to camp engagement and to Jewish identity features that influence such engagement.

FIGURE 17: DISTRIBUTION BY MARITAL STATUS AND CONGREGATIONAL AFFILIATION

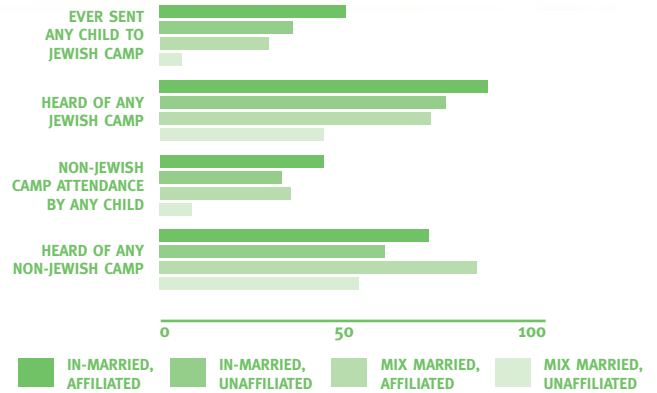


However we measure Jewish camp engagement, the four types of families vary in a fairly systematic and uniform fashion. The in-married affiliated families significantly out-score two other segments: the affiliated mixed married, and those who are in-married but not synagogue-affiliated. Least engaged with Jewish camp, and Jewish life in general, are the mixed married parents with no congregational affiliation.

To illustrate, we may focus on the proportion who have sent a child to a Jewish camp: for in-married synagogue members it's 50%, for in-married non-members it's 27%, for mixed married members, 20%, and for mixed married non-members, just 6% (Figure 18).

Not all congregants behave alike. Within the congregations, the in-married have sent their children to Jewish camp nearly twice as often as the mixed married.

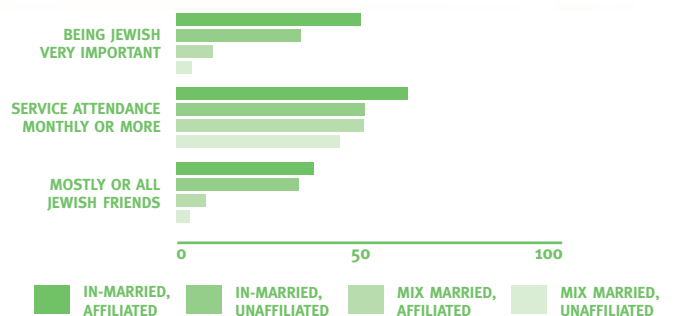
FIGURE 18: MARITAL STATUS, AFFILIATION AND CAMP ATTENDANCE



In-marriage and congregational affiliation are both highly related to attending Jewish camp.

We find a similar ordering with respect to Jewish engagement, be it of the parents or of their children (Figures 19–21). The in-married affiliated score highest, the mixed married unaffiliated score lowest, and the other two groups are in between. The percent who say that being Jewish is very important to them illustrates a pattern that repeats again and again. For the in-married affiliated, 51% say that being Jewish is very important. They are followed by the in-married unaffiliated (31%), the mixed married affiliated (12%) and the mixed married unaffiliated (4%). (This question was asked only of Jewish respondents in mixed married households.)

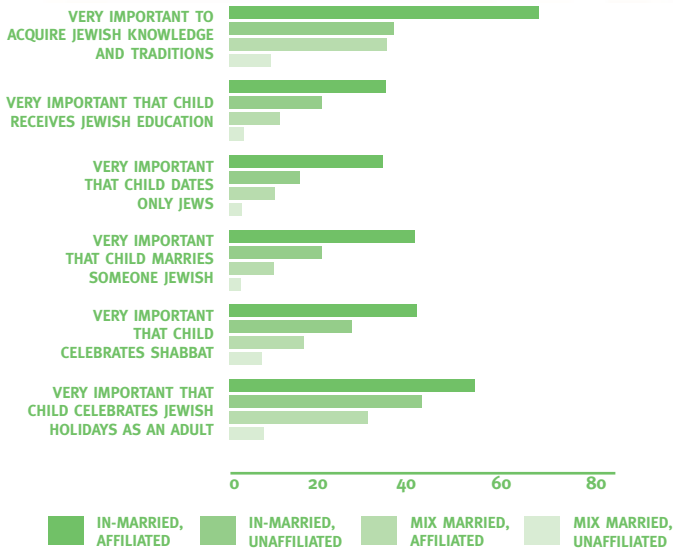
FIGURE 19: JEWISH ENGAGEMENT, AFFILIATION AND MARITAL STATUS



The most engaged families are In-married and congregationally affiliated.

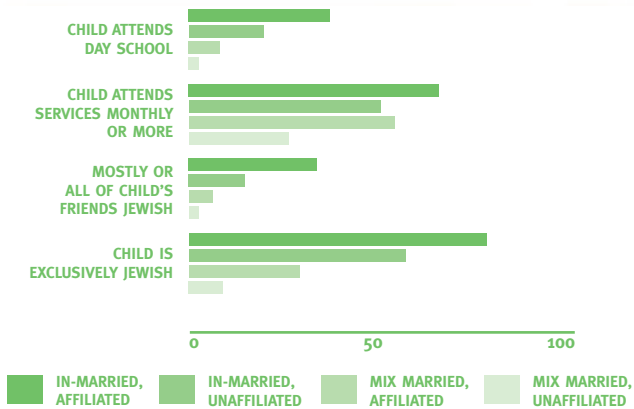
FINDINGS

FIGURE 20: JEWISH IDENTITY ASPIRATIONS, MARITAL STATUS AND AFFILIATION



In-married, affiliated Jewish families most want their children to be Jewishly engaged.

FIGURE 21: JEWISH ENGAGEMENT OF CHILD, MARITAL STATUS AND AFFILIATION



The mixed married congregational members and the in-married non-members both report a significant number who have sent their children to non-Jewish camps. This finding suggests an opportunity: to turn attendees at non-Jewish camps into campers at Jewish camps.

Some might think that the lack of knowledge of Jewish camps may explain low levels of participation by the mixed married. However, we find that awareness of Jewish camps is fairly widespread, albeit with the expected variations by marriage type and congregational affiliation. The congregationally affiliated in-married lead in awareness; they are followed by both the affiliated mixed married and the non-affiliated in-married. Consistent with their low levels of participation in Jewish camp, only a minority of the non-affiliated mixed married have even heard of a single Jewish camp.

THE CONGREGATIONALLY AFFILIATED: A GOOD PLACE TO START

The results point consistently to a central policy inference: Any strategy aimed specifically at attracting the children of the mixed married needs to focus initially (if not well beyond) on the selected subset of the mixed married who are congregationally affiliated. The congregationally affiliated mixed married are so much more engaged in Jewish camps—and so much more aware of them—than their counterparts who are outside congregations. The strategically designed route to all the mixed married, wherever they may be, probably starts with—and goes through—those who belong to Jewish congregations. Jewish camps need not recruit within congregations. Rather, they should recognize that social networks built around congregations offer relatively high potential for camper recruitment, be they of in-married or mixed married families.

FINDINGS

THE IN-MARRIED AND THE AFFILIATED SEEK JEWISH EXPERIENCES AND JEWISH PERSONNEL IN CAMPS

The in-married more than the mixed married, and the affiliated more than the unaffiliated, are seeking Jewish personnel and Jewish educational experiences at camp (Figure 22). For example, 60% of the affiliated in-married prefer camps with mostly Jewish campers, as contrasted with 47% of the non-affiliated in-married, 33% of the affiliated mixed married, and just 8% of the non-affiliated mixed married. We see a similar pattern of results for preferring mostly Jewish counselors (72%, 65%, 49% and 18% respectively), and the same ordering with respect to seeing the presence of Israeli counselors as “essential.” Thus, while Jewish counselors and campers are widely attractive to the in-married, they offer little attraction to the mixed married, especially those who are congregationally unaffiliated.

With respect to Jewish cultural and religious elements in the program (e.g., Shabbat, Hebrew), the differences between parental categories are arrayed in the same direction. The percent regarding the celebration of Shabbat in camp for their children as essential takes on the expected contour: 43%, 34%, 24%, to 9% for the affiliated in-married at one end of the spectrum to the unaffiliated mixed married at the other.

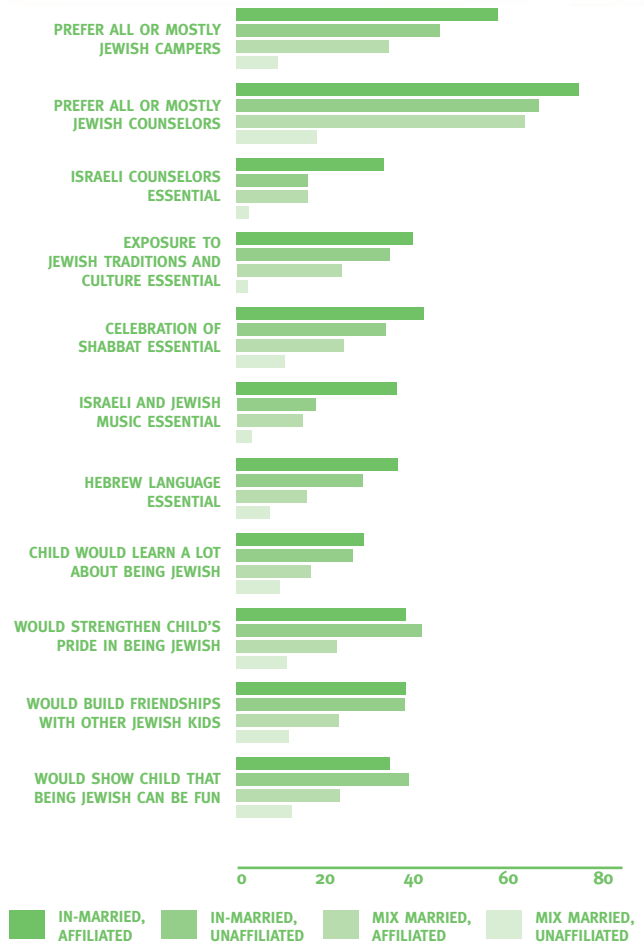
In other words, the in-married more than the mixed married are not only more engaged in Jewish life, not only more desirous of Jewishly engaged youngsters, and not only more concerned that their children will grow up as Christians; they are also more likely to seek a Jewish environment—in people and program—at the camps to which they send their children.

Not surprisingly, a greater portion of the more Jewishly engaged segments see the arguments for Jewish camp related to their Jewish educational impact as “very persuasive.”

In like fashion, what may be called the fear of ghettoization as expressed in the argument that, “My child should be exposed to all kinds of kids, not just Jews,” follows the opposite contour: lowest among the affiliated in-married (13%) and highest among the unaffiliated mixed married (28%), with the other two groups in between.

In short, the in-married more than the mixed married, and the congregationally affiliated more than the unaffiliated, seek Jewish educational and socialization benefits from Jewish camp. The argument that a parent should send a child to Jewish camp to learn about being Jewish and to make Jewish friends is less compelling to the mixed married, especially those who are non-affiliated.

FIGURE 22: AFFILIATION, MARITAL STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL/SOCIAL IMPACT OF JEWISH CAMP



The in-married and affiliated seek Jewish educational and socialization benefits from Jewish camp.

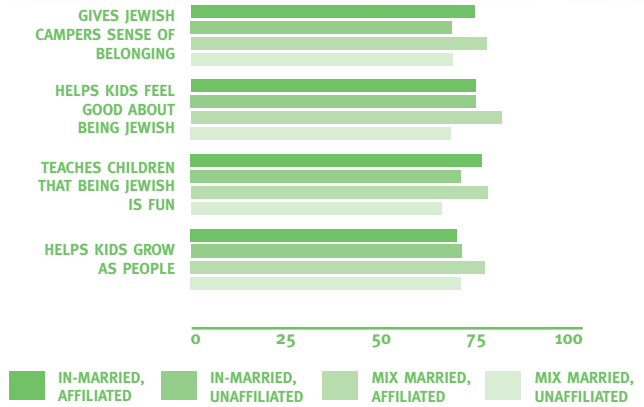
FINDINGS

WIDE APPRECIATION FOR JEWISH EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF JEWISH CAMP

Perceptions of Jewish camp for all four segments of families hardly differ with respect to a variety of issues (Figure 23).

Respondents of all types largely affirm the Jewish educational impact of camp. In other words, with respect to the empirical assessment of the Jewish impact of Jewish camps (“do they work?”), the mixed married “get it” just as much as the in-married. They understand that Jewish camps are effective Jewish educational instruments, even if they themselves have little interest in them for their own children. The practical implication here is that better communication of the Jewish educational value of camp will have little impact upon enrollment of children from engaged and not-so-engaged families. Camps’ Jewish educational value is already widely accepted, if not appreciated.

FIGURE 23: APPRECIATION OF JEWISH CAMP, AFFILIATION AND MARITAL STATUS



All groups exhibit high levels of appreciation of Jewish camps.

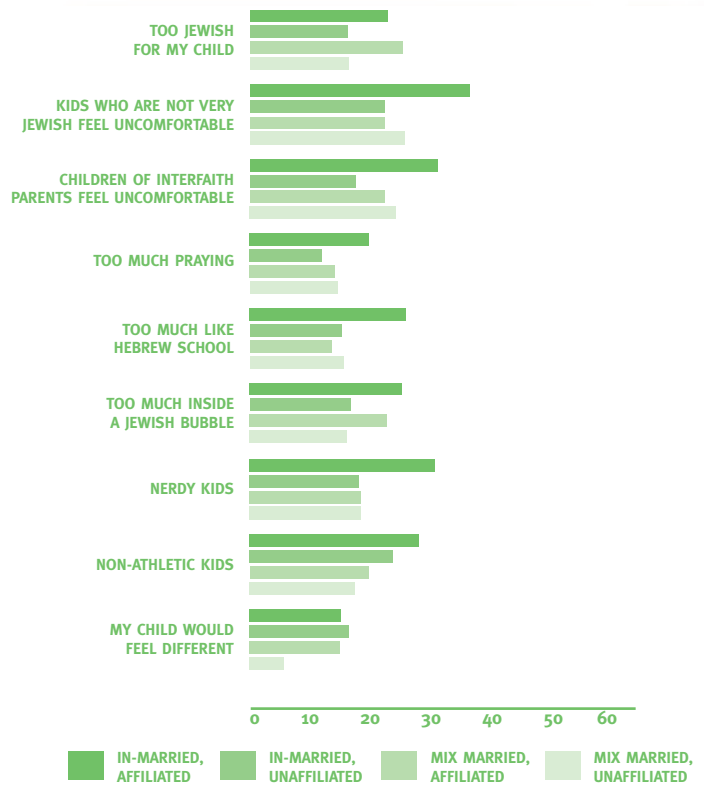


FINDINGS

FEW PARENTS HOLD NEGATIVE IMAGES OF JEWISH CAMPS

As a whole, parents in the sample reject the idea that camps are “too Jewish” or “not enough fun” (Figure 24). They also reject a wide variety of unflattering images of the campers who attend Jewish camps (“nerdy,” not “cool,” “non-athletic”). The mixed married hold these unflattering views no more than the in-married. In fact, in-married congregants hold somewhat less favorable images of Jewish camp and campers than others. For the mixed married and unengaged Jews, the low rates of participation and interest in Jewish camps cannot be attributed to especially unfavorable images of camp. Neither can it be attributed to the lack of confidence in Jewish camps’ ability to deliver on their promise to educate children Jewishly. Rather, their low rates of camp participation derive from their relative indifference to providing a strong Jewish educational background for their children, as well as their disinterest in their children resisting the appeal of Christian belief (a matter that is, for most, of little importance).

FIGURE 24: NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS OF CAMP, AFFILIATION AND MARITAL STATUS



The mixed married hold negative images of Jewish camp no more—and often less—than do the in-married.

FINDINGS

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JEWISH CAMP FAMILIES, NON-JEWISH CAMP FAMILIES, AND NON-CAMP FAMILIES

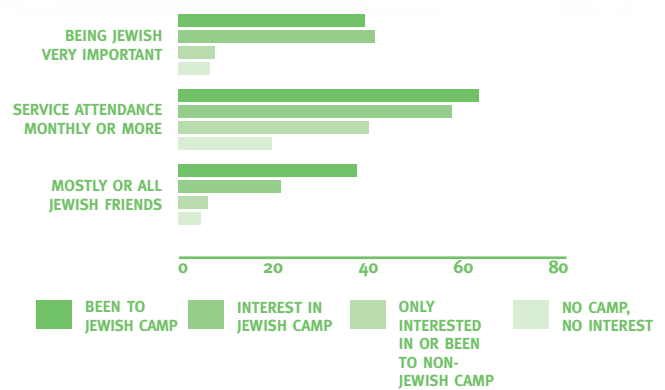
Quite striking are the repeated and almost uniformly sharp differences that separate the parents of current campers and those with an interest in Jewish camp from those who with no experience or interest in Jewish camp (be they those whose children have attended non-Jewish camps or have attended none at all) (Figure 25).

Those with an interest in Jewish camp are far more likely than those with no interest to (1) see camp as a valued Jewish educational instrument, (2) manifest relatively high levels of Jewish involvement, (3) hold higher aspirations for their children's Jewish identities as adults, and (4) be raising Jewishly engaged youngsters today. A few survey questions illustrate these points. We compare two key groups: those with no Jewish camp experience but who have an interest in Jewish camp vs. those who have attended non-Jewish camp but express no interest in having their children attend Jewish camp. We find the following variations, respectively:

- **Camp would strengthen child's pride in being Jewish: 47% vs. 6%**
- **Being Jewish is very important: 43% vs. 11%**
- **Important for the child to celebrate Jewish holidays as an adult: 50% vs. 9%**
- **Most of the child's friends are Jewish: 20% vs. 2%.**

These patterns, repeated over numerous questions, lead to an overall inference: the current, high-potential market for Jewish camp is broad-based and contains many very different constituencies. They exhibit very different levels of engagement in Jewish life and very different motivations for sending their children to Jewish camp.

FIGURE 25: JEWISH ENGAGEMENT OF PARENTS AND THEIR INTEREST IN CAMP



The current Jewish camp constituency is far more Jewishly engaged than those with no interest in Jewish camp.

FINDINGS

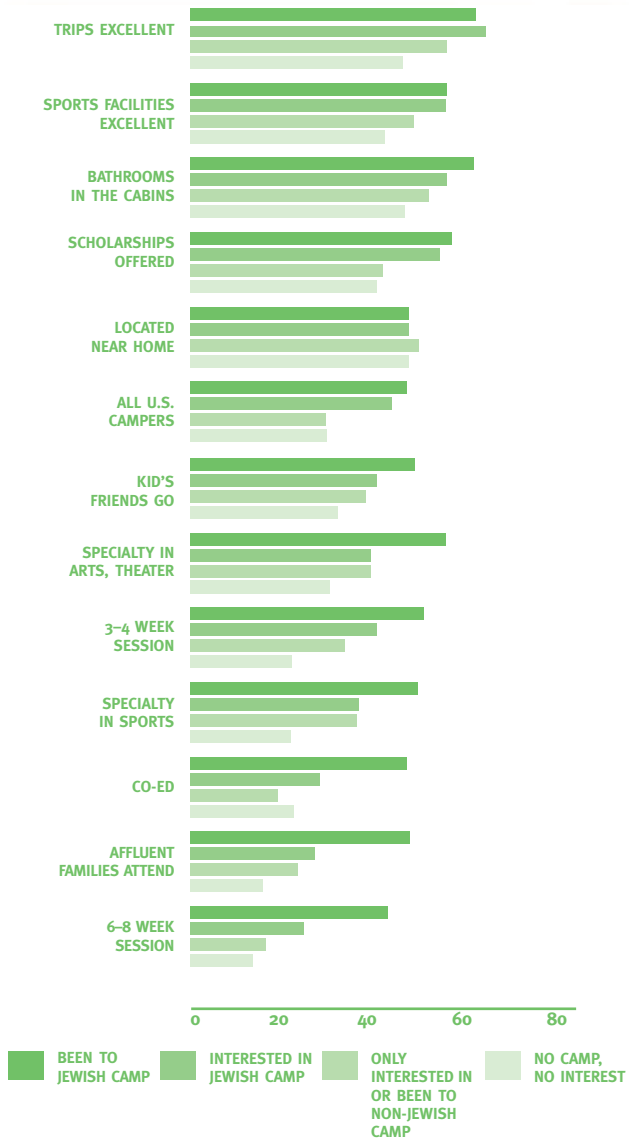
APPEALING FEATURES: TRIPS & SPORTS

Beyond Jewish-related features, what else are parents looking for in camps? We examined several specific features, many of which were suggested by our preliminary qualitative interviews. Of particular interest are the responses of people who have not yet sent any children to a Jewish camp, but express a strong interest in eventually doing so (Figure 26). A few features emerge as especially important:

- Excellent trips
- Excellent sports facilities
- Bathrooms in the cabins (indicative of simple creature comfort)
- Availability of scholarship aid.

Also of note is that respondents preferred shorter sessions (3–4 weeks) to longer sessions (6–8 weeks).

FIGURE 26: CAMP OFFERINGS AND APPEAL, AND CAMP ATTENDANCE OF CHILD



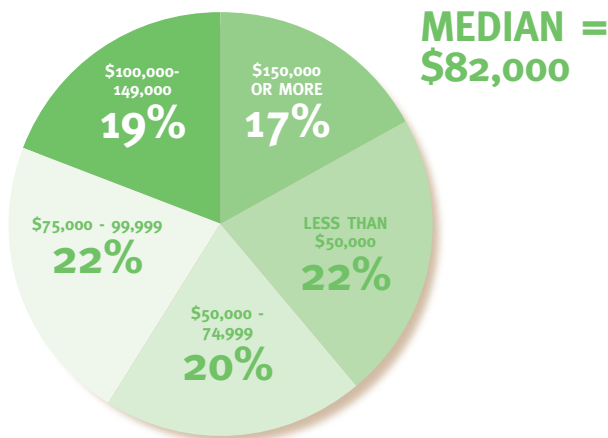
For those who have not yet sent children to Jewish camp, quality of trips, sports facilities, and access to bathrooms in the cabin rate most important.

FINDINGS

SCHOLARSHIPS: MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE LEAST ENGAGED

The distribution of our respondents' annual household income covers a wide range (Figure 27). As many as 22% report incomes of less than \$50,000, and just 17% earn more than \$150,000. Median income reaches around \$82,000. While Jews are generally more affluent than other Americans, these figures certainly point to the likelihood of economic limitations, if not distress, among many Jewish families in the Midwest.

FIGURE 27: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

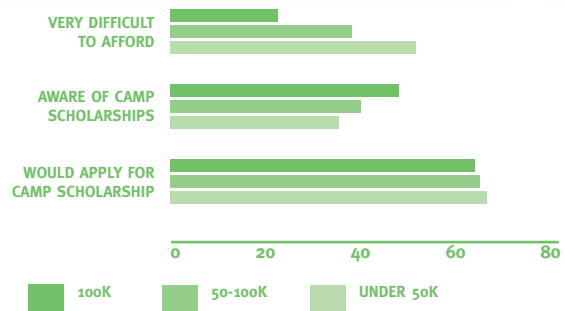


Hence, it should come as no surprise that these families express concerns about their ability to afford Jewish camp. Just 24% of those earning \$100,000 or more say they would find camp difficult to afford, but concerns mount among those with more limited finances: 41% among those earning \$50-100,000, and 55% among those earning under \$50,000 (Figure 28).

But perceived difficulty in paying for Jewish camp is not simply a matter of income. It is also a matter of perceived value of Jewish camp (Figure 29). Of those who have an interest in Jewish camp but have not yet sent a child to one, 36% would find camp costs difficult. The figure rises to 45% among those who have sent children to non-Jewish camps but have no interest in Jewish camp, to 53% among those who have no interest in Jewish camp and no participation in either Jewish or non-Jewish camp.

Similarly, the affordability concerns are highest among those who are the least engaged in Jewish life and the least interested in Jewish camp. As many as 61% of the unaffiliated mixed married claim that they would find Jewish camp difficult to afford as contrasted with all the other segments, such as the affiliated mixed married where just 28% express such concerns.

FIGURE 28: INCOME LEVEL, AFFORDABILITY, AND SCHOLARSHIP AWARENESS



Families making under 50k find camp much more difficult to afford.

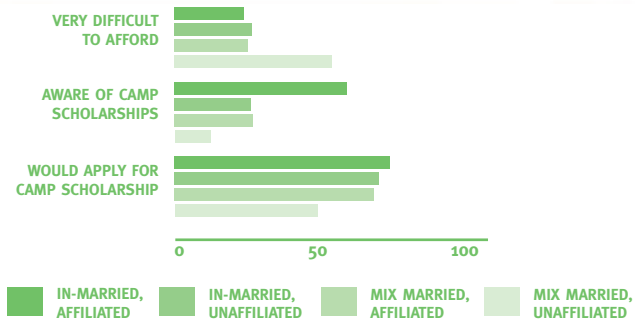
FINDINGS

Over two-thirds of all families would apply for scholarships if they were aware of them. And the readiness to apply runs across all income groups, and rises with interest and participation in Jewish camp.

At the same time, the groups that are among the most interested in scholarship aid are also those least aware of its availability. Those with low levels of awareness include the least affluent families, the unaffiliated, the mixed married, and those less connected to Jewish camp. Those who have sent children to Jewish camp are about twice as likely as those who have never sent children to know that camps offer scholarship assistance.

The policy implication here points to the likely efficacy of offering scholarship assistance. Those who are the least attracted to Jewish camp are the ones who find camp least affordable. Financial aid or incentives may be especially valuable in prompting the least interested (such as many mixed married families) to sample Jewish camp for the first time.

FIGURE 29: AFFORDABILITY AND SCHOLARSHIP AWARENESS VS. AFFILIATION AND MARITAL STATUS



In-married, affiliated families find camp much less difficult to afford.



SUMMARY



1. Non-Jewish children not “in play”: Parents raising their children as non-Jews (36% of the mixed married) express little interest in Jewish camp. The analysis presented in this study is limited to families raising children as Jews exclusively or as “Jewish and something else.”

2. Higher camp attendance patterns among the in-married: About a quarter of Jewish children in the Midwest attended a Jewish camp last year. Attendance is far higher among the children of the in-married than among the children of the mixed married. In-married families also patronize non-Jewish camps more than the mixed married.

3. In-married Jews score higher on all measures of Jewish engagement, as compared with the mixed married. They are personally more involved in Jewish life, maintain higher aspirations for their children’s Jewish identities, and create environments where their children are more Jewishly engaged.

4. Most mixed married raise children to identify as both Jewish and Christian. Hence, these children’s connection with being Jewish may well warrant special attention. This pattern also extends to many “conversionary in-marriages,” that is, of Jews-by-choice with Jews-by-birth. Families raising children with plural identities display far lower engagement in Jewish life than do those raising their children as exclusively Jewish.

5. Jewish commitment motivates Jewish camp participation:

Attending Jewish camp and interest in Jewish camp are strongly related to all and any measures of Jewish engagement, be they pertaining to the parents or to the children. Parents who are more Jewishly engaged and who have higher aspirations for their children’s Jewish involvement as adults express greater interest in Jewish camp. So, too, do children with higher levels of Jewish engagement, as well as those with more Jewish friends.

6. Jewish engagement explains the gap between the in-married and the mixed married. Statistically, once the levels of Jewish engagement on the part of the in-married and mixed married are taken into account, very little difference in camp participation separates the two groups. This implies that the low rates of camp participation by the mixed married derive primarily from their low rates of Jewish engagement.

7. The competence barrier, not fear of stigma, is the issue.

The mixed married are no more adverse to participation in Jewish life than the in-married. The two groups are equally comfortable (or uncomfortable) participating in Jewish settings. The in-married are, in fact, uncomfortable with Christian settings, far more so than the mixed married. Social stigma does not seem to repel the mixed married from entering Jewish settings such as camp.



SUMMARY

The implication: Welcoming and sensitivity, while valuable inherently, hold little promise for significantly expanding the participation of mixed married families in Jewish camp. At the same time, camps ought not ignore the Judaic competence barrier that alienates some potential camper-families, in particular the mixed married. Camps believe that a camper need not be fluent in engaged Jewish life to get value out of camp; however the words and actions of the respondents, especially the less Jewishly engaged segment, suggest otherwise.



8. Congregational affiliation a key distinction: The minority of mixed married families who join congregations are more Jewishly engaged and more connected to Jewish camp than the unaffiliated mixed married. Policies that appeal to these families may well serve in time to reach the intermarried who are not currently congregation members. The implication: Begin outreach and recruitment efforts of the mixed married with the select minority who are congregationally affiliated.

9. In-married more than the mixed married seek Jewish campers, counselors, and Jewish educational experiences in camps for their children.

10. Wide appreciation of camps' Jewish educational value:

The value of Jewish camp as a Jewish educational and socializing instrument is well understood and widely accepted. Parents, be they in-married or mixed married, appreciate the Jewish educational effectiveness of camp. The inference: Additional efforts to communicate camps' Jewish educational value hold little promise for expanding recruitment.

11. Few parents, be they in-married or mixed married, hold negative images of Jewish camp.

12. Parents of all backgrounds seek high-quality recreation, sports, and trips: Parents want, among other features, excellent sports facilities and trips, an issue that may stand on its own or represent a larger issue. In any event, creating, delivering, and communicating high-quality recreational experiences at camp is vital for expanding camp participation.

13. Financial aid can make a difference: The results point to the likely efficacy of offering scholarship assistance or financial incentives, particularly for families who are less Jewishly engaged. The availability of scholarship aid also needs to be better communicated, especially to less engaged families who are frequently unaware of available aid possibilities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

With the large and expanding number of mixed marriages taking place among American Jews, particularly among the non-Orthodox, the organized Jewish community has a compelling interest in engaging both mixed married parents and their children in Jewish life. History has shown that the children of the mixed married have high probabilities of marrying non-Jews, and then of raising their own children as non-Jews.

As we have seen in this study, almost two-thirds of mixed married couples raise their children as Jews. However, the children whom they do raise as Jews are, more often than not, being raised in two faiths—usually Judaism and Christianity. If the past is any guide to the future, Jewish children with plural group identities (such as Jewish and Christian) stand a diminished chance of continuing to affiliate with the Jewish community.

For demographic, cultural, familial, and group survival reasons, the challenge of retaining the engagement of mixed married families in Jewish life and of socializing their children as Jews is a compelling one, but it is daunting. As we have seen, even mixed married parents raising their children as Jewish in some way (and most often as Jewish and Christian simultaneously) express relatively little interest in engaging heavily in Jewish life themselves. They, as a group and with many notable exceptions, report little concern for engaging their children in Jewish life or in seeing their children emerge as highly engaged Jews. As a consequence, they express little interest

in sending their children to camps whose leading promise is to provide their children with Jewish friends, Jewish counselors, and Jewish experiences in a fun-filled setting.

While nonprofit Jewish overnight camps are extraordinary vehicles for providing Jewish educational experiences, this will have little appeal to the mixed marriage segment of the market. Convincing such families of the Jewish educational value of such camps is both unnecessary and ineffective. Addressing certain negative images about camps will do little to raise participation rates in Jewish camp. It will also be ineffective to make the camps more culturally sensitive, more welcoming, more inclusive, and more mindful of the putative sensitivity to exclusion and stigmatization on the part of the mixed married—as ethical and admirable as these approaches may be in their own right.

Rather, we found just two clear routes to expanding participation in Jewish overnight camps in the Midwest, particularly among the children of the mixed married. First, camps need to provide and communicate genuine recreational value as symbolized by excellent sports programs and facilities, as well as safe and stimulating excursions and trips. Second, providing and publicizing scholarship aid and financial incentive opportunities raises the potential for more families to give serious first-time consideration to Jewish camp. Other issues, not covered by our research, may well come to the fore. But these two paths suggest a valuable response to the challenge of expanding the reach of Jewish summer camp, be it to the mixed married in particular, or to all Jewish families in the Midwest and beyond.

“Providing and publicizing scholarship aid and financial incentive opportunities raises the potential for more families to give serious first-time consideration to Jewish camp.”

APPENDIX

COMMENT ON FAMILY PATTERNS

Several observations regarding the distribution of family configurations in the sample lend a sense of credibility to the data.

Only a small number are single parent households, consistent with the observation that American Jews experience relatively low divorce rates.

The in-married are about evenly divided between couples with two born Jews, and where one spouse is a born-Jew & the other a Jew-by-choice. The number of these “conversionary in-marriages,” when compared with the number of in-marriages implies a conversion-to-Judaism rate of 27.5% among those born non-Jews who married Jewish spouses.

The distribution of in-married and mixed married approximates our expectations for a Midwest Jewish population sample. Thus, of married households in the EMI sample, more are mixed married (471) than inmarried (354). This distribution is consistent with the recent research on intermarriage among American Jews. In 1996-2001, for all the United States, 47% of Jews who married were married to non-Jews; this means that about 64% of all couples with at least one Jewish spouse are mixed marriages.

Thus, while a majority of the marriages (or couples) are mixed, the majority of married Jews are married to other Jews. This seeming paradox can be explained mathematically once one takes into account that every in-marriage comprises two individual Jews, while every mixed marriage contains only one Jew. Thus, the number of individual Jews in the EMI sample who are in-married ($2 \times 354 = 708$) exceeds the number of individuals who are mixed married (471). The proportion of married individual Jews (as opposed to the proportion of married couples) in this sample who are mixed married is $(471 / (471 + 708))$ 40%.

In this Midwest sample, about 57% of the couples are mixed married, or about 40% of Jewish individuals. This sample reflects rates of intermarriages that are slightly below the national rates (57% vs. 64% for couples or 40% vs. 47% for individuals) for two reasons. First, this sample includes only couples with children (the mixed married produce fewer children; and more have no children). Second, we have drawn a Midwestern sample where the intermarriage rate is a bit lower than the rest of the country.

In short, while we cannot be sure of the extent to which this sample is an accurate representation of the universe with respect to marital characteristics, by all appearances, the EMI sample certainly falls within striking distance of the distributions observed in relevant studies, both nationally and locally.

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