Benefits of 4-H Youth Camping

At the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center

What is the purpose of 4-H camping?

- 4-H camping is cooperative group living in a natural environment that focuses on developing life skills, social, spiritual, mental, and physical development in young people.
- 4-H camping emphasizes experiential learning; campers “learn by doing.”

Who participates?

- More than 10,000 youth ages 5-18 are involved in the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center programming annually.
- 1,000 4-H teen and adult volunteer leaders support, supervise, and teach those youth.

How are youth involved?

- The W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center provides opportunities for youth in four ways: 4-H residential camping, 4-H specialty/day camping, 4-H school enrichment (based on Virginia Standards of Learning), and adventure education.

What type of educational programming is provided?

- Leadership development, environmental/aquatic science, performing arts, shooting education, forestry, outdoor adventure, computer science, low ropes course, climbing, primitive skills, arts/craft, horsemanship/animal science, multimedia, robotics, wildlife, canoeing, fishing, outdoor sports, ceramics, skateboarding, mountain boarding, backpacking, rock climbing, caving, whitewater rafting, and swimming

How do youth benefit from 4-H camping?*

- Youth have the opportunity to learn and have fun in a safe environment while surrounded by caring adults.
- A recent study of the impacts of Virginia 4-H camping conducted with 11,000 youth campers (ages 9-13) from across the state of Virginia found that 4-H camp participation helped youth learn to:
  - Make new friends
  - Develop new skills
  - Become more independent and able to take care of themselves
- A recent study of parents/guardians of Virginia 4-H campers found that 4-H camp participation changed youths’ behaviors in the areas of:
  - Taking care of their own things (self-responsibility)
  - Becoming more independent /Taking initiative
  - Sharing

For more information:

- Contact your local Extension office
- Contact the W.E. Skelton 4-H Center at (540) 721-2759 or www.skelton4H.ext.vt.edu


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