

Benefits of 4-H Youth Camping

At the Southwest 4-H Educational 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?

- ✿ Approximately 3,000 youth ages 5-18 are involved in the Southwest 4-H Educational Center programming annually.
- ✿ Approximately 300 4-H teen and adult volunteer leaders support, supervise, and teach those youth.

How are youth involved?

- ✿ The Southwest 4-H Educational Center provides opportunities for youth in three ways: 4-H residential camping, 4-H specialty/day camping, and 4-H school enrichment based upon the Virginia Standards of Learning.

What type of educational programming is provided?

- ✿ Leadership development, environmental and aquatic science, shooting education, robotics, outdoor adventure, low ropes course, climbing, arts/craft, journalism/broadcasting, horsemanship/animal science, wildlife, fishing, swimming, rappelling, and communication and expressive arts

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 Southwest 4-H Educational Center at (276) 676-6180 or www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4H/southwest

* Garst, B.A., and Bruce, F. A. (2003). Identifying 4-H Camping Outcomes Using a Standardized Evaluation Process across Multiple 4-H Educational Centers. *Journal of Extension*.

*18 U.S.C. 707