



A group of diverse children are outdoors, blowing bubbles. The children are of various ethnicities and are smiling and looking up at the bubbles. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

# SHAPING DIVERSITY IN KID'S ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

2017 Parent and Director Diversity Survey Results



# WHY IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO TALK ABOUT DIVERSITY IN KID'S PROGRAMS

How and why your organization should focus on the underserved children in your community to bring about grassroots change in a fraught culture.

In today's political and cultural climate, it can be difficult to talk about race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation and a whole host of other issues being hotly debated everywhere you look.

Localized kid's program directors may not be on the forefront of these discussions, but you're definitely in the trenches, perhaps even dealing with these concerns in deeply personal ways.

## Making a Difference

Youth activity directors have an unparalleled opportunity to change the lives of at-risk children, while contributing to the transformation of divisive bias in our culture that is occurring on many levels, not simply along racial divides.

Knowing exactly how to take action can be a challenge, however. How do you go about diversifying your program?

Expanding your program beyond the typical demographics that seek you out depends on offering and marketing programs to those outside your traditional audience. It takes learning who that audience is and how to reach them.

## Our 2017 Parent and Director Diversity Survey

We polled parents and kid's activity directors to explore the gap in perceptions between the two. We wanted to learn:

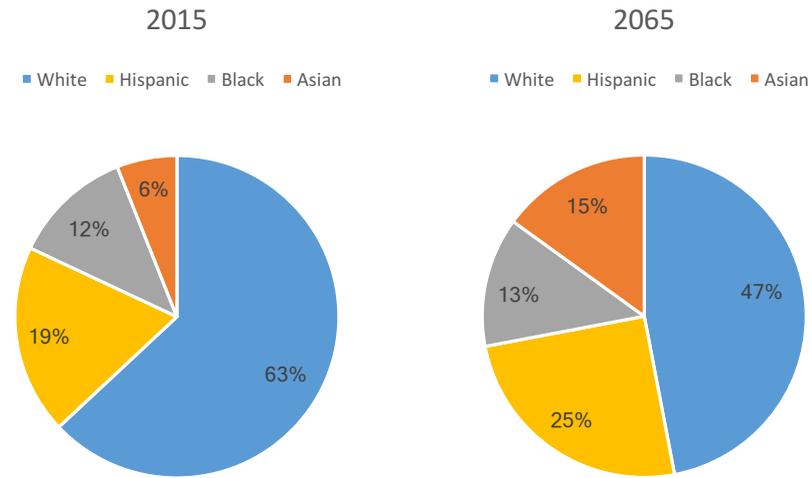
- + Trends, inequities or challenges that are actually occurring
- + How much diversity in kids' programs matters to parents
- + What we can do about underserved, non-white and lower socio-economic campers and students

The results not only validated what we all know to be true, but also highlighted surprising areas of interest.



## The Face of America

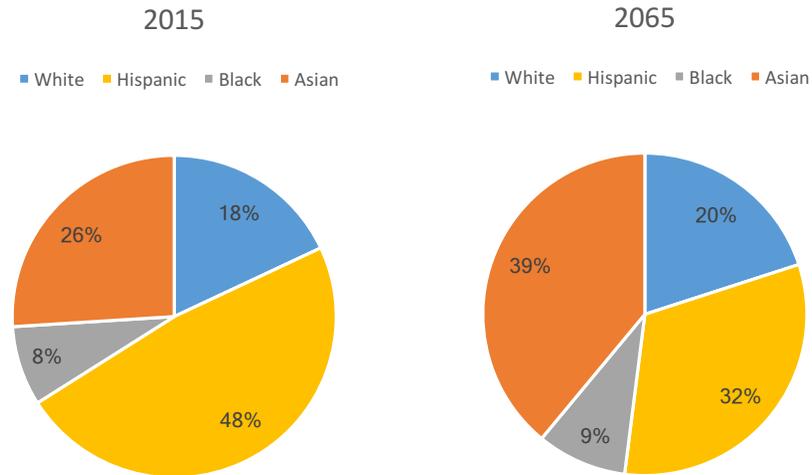
First, it's important to provide general context around population, parent perceptions and trends. When we think of diversity, we tend to start with race, so we'll begin with what the United States currently looks like ethnically and what it is projected to look like in 50 years.



## The Face of America is Changing

### Foreign-Born Population

Data scientists predict that at current immigration rates, the number of Hispanics who are born outside the U.S. will fall below the percentage of Asians who are born outside the U.S.



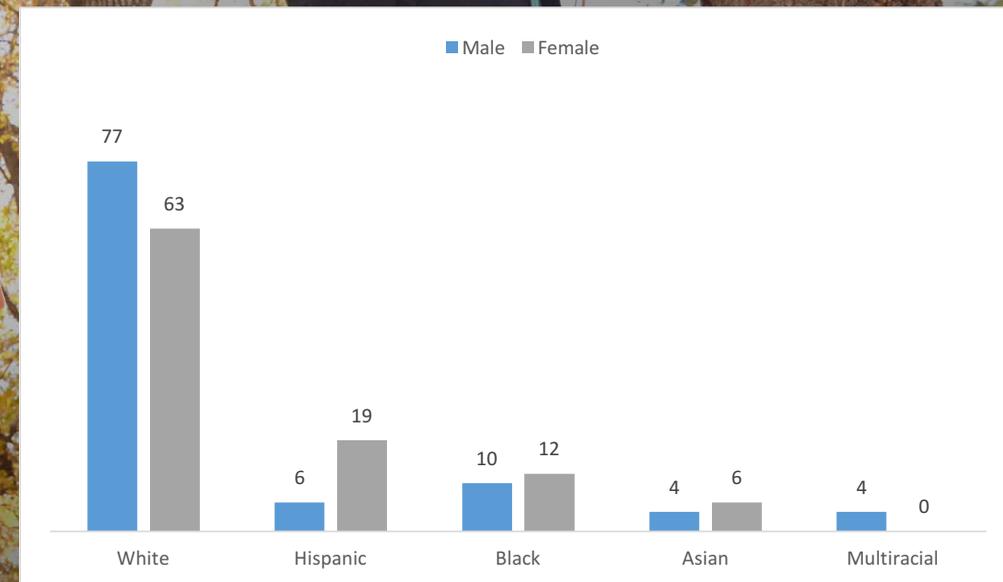
Source: Pew Research





## The Face of Kid's Programs Should Be Changing, Too

The American Camp Association compared 2016 camp participation data to the U.S. population and found that most areas are not proportionately served, though 20% of camps said they served more minorities last year than in previous years.



## Widespread Diversity Inequities

While available data and research related to other types of youth activities, including sports, is often outdated, scant or even non-existent, research that is available demonstrates significant participation gaps between:

- + Wealthy and low income
- + White and racial minorities
- + Boys and girls
- + Able-bodied and disabled youth



## Socio-Economic Status and Children's Activities

Income is the primary factor correlating to children's participation in activities.

### Sports

- + 70% of families polled responded that cost is a concern.
- + 32% from households making less than \$50,000/year say that fees are too high and make it difficult for their children to continue participating.
- + 16% from households making \$50,000/year or more said the same.

#### ESPN poll (2014)

### After School

- + 1 in 3 kids participated in summer learning programs (up from 2009 survey).
- + 85% support funding (up 2% from 2009).
- + 50% of low-income parents with non-participant children would enroll if they could.

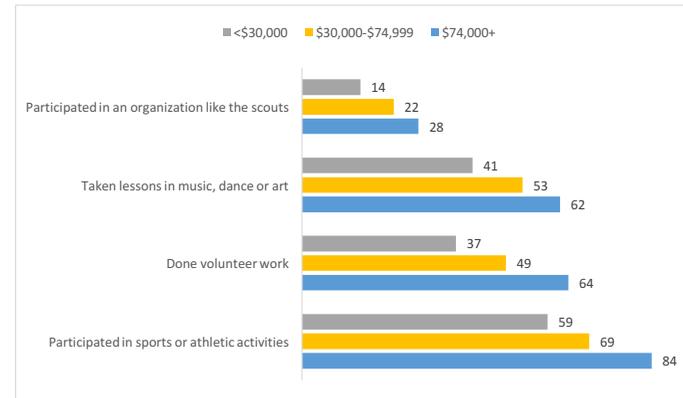
#### American Afterschool Alliance (2014)

### Camp

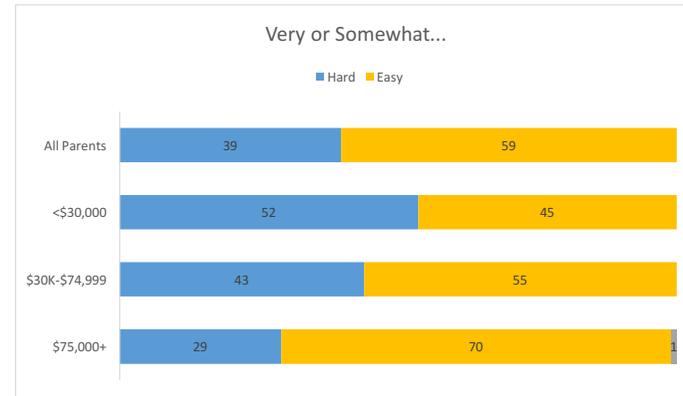
- + 34% of campers' families have a high household income.
- + 46% of campers' families have a mid-level household income.
- + 18% of campers' families have a low-level household income.
- + 12% of campers' families live at or below the poverty level.

#### ACA Enrollment Report (2016)

Correlation between higher household income and extracurricular activities



Lower income parents find it harder to find afterschool care



Source: Pew Research





## Nationwide Parent & Director Survey Results

Who Took Our Survey?

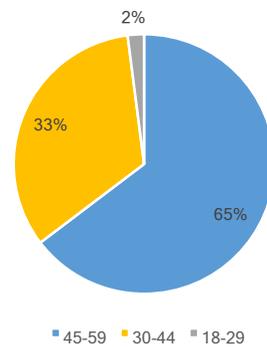
### Survey Details

Total number of respondents: 1,510

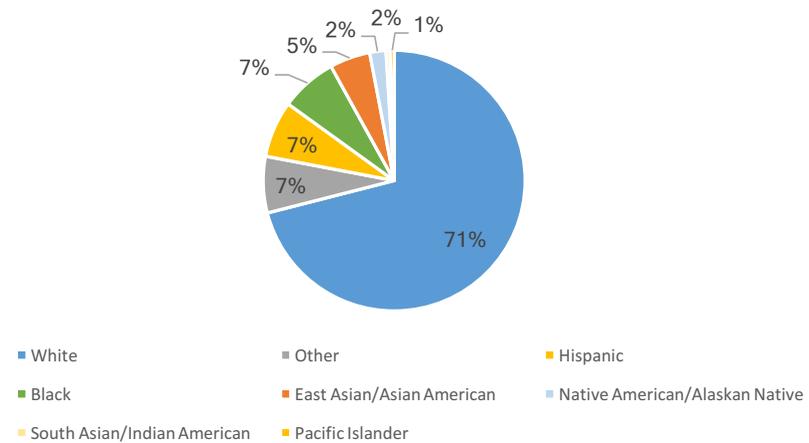
#### Ethnicity Responses:

- + Race and ethnicity questions were based upon how the census and other survey systems collect data.
- + Of the parents who took the survey, 940 identified their primary race or ethnicity.
- + Respondents were predominantly White; some racial and ethnic groups were underrepresented, including Hispanics.
- + We did not ask respondents to identify native or preferred language, or whether they were immigrants.
- + Where numbers were not statistically significant, comparisons are predominantly between White, Hispanic and Black respondents.

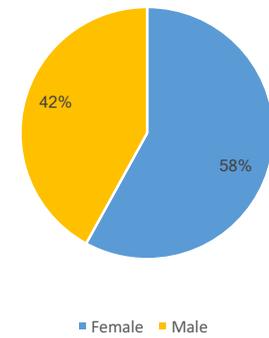
Age of Respondents



Ethnicity of Respondents



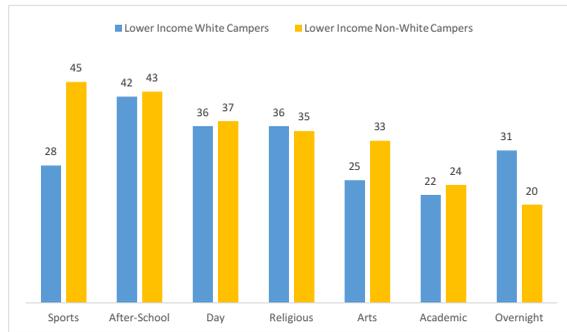
Gender of Respondents





## Program Participation by Type

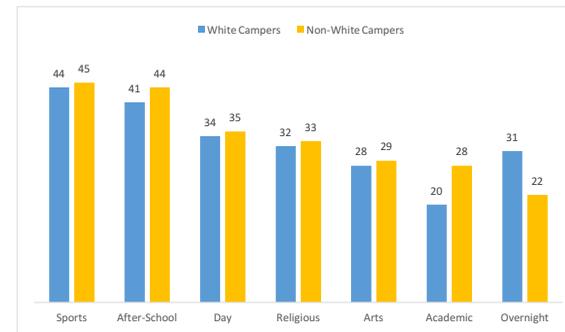
Lower Income Levels



For purposes of this survey, “lower income” is defined as households below \$50,000. The greatest participation gaps occur in sports and arts, where non-White children of low income participate at 61% and 32% higher levels than Whites, respectively, and in overnight camps, where, conversely, non-Whites are 35% less likely to attend than White children. When compared to the Program Participation by Type graph to the right, lower income Whites participate in overnight camps at the same rate as White campers in all income levels, which could be a result of the traditional nature of overnight camp among Whites. The availability of, or willingness to apply for, scholarships could also be a factor.

## Program Participation by Type

% Participation within the Past 12 Months

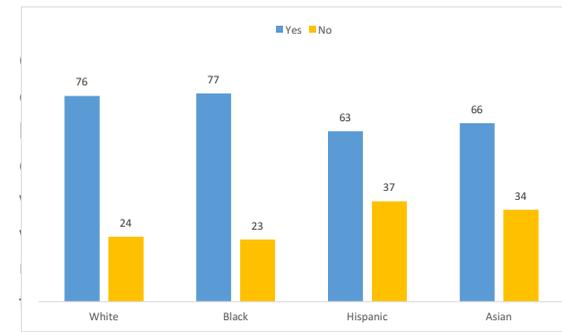


Across all income levels, our survey reveals surprisingly similar participation rates except in the academic and overnight categories. Whites are 29% more likely to attend an overnight camp and non-White children make up a 40% higher percentage of academic camps and programs.

No demographic data was collected for students who did not participate in the past 12 months. It is important to note that wider gaps exist when you look at non-participants vs participants.

## Parent Participation

% Participation in Camps or Activities as a Child



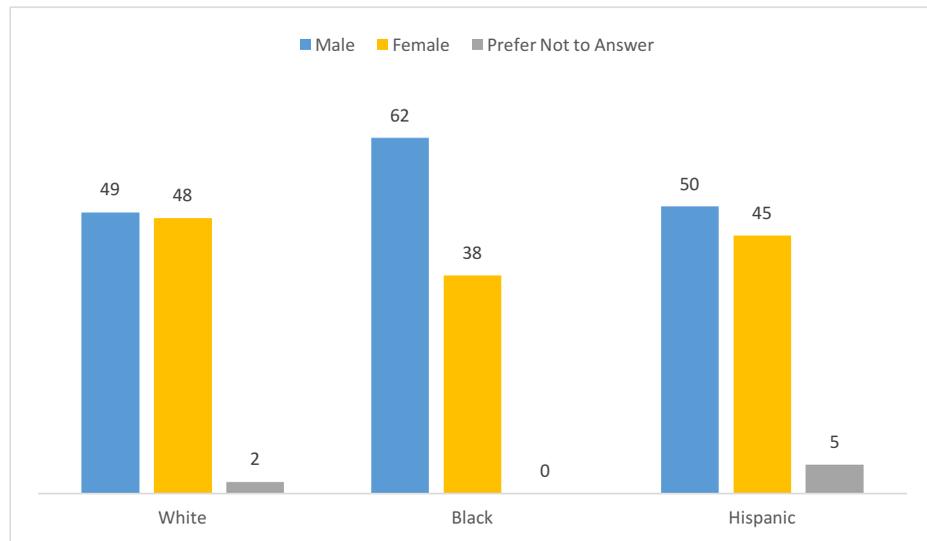
Our data shows that all ethnicities participated in extra-curricular activities at a high rate. The data here suggests that a generation ago, participation of Black and White parents was virtually equal and, while slightly lower, Hispanic and Asian participation was also close to equal. More research is needed to understand the impact of parent participation, or lack thereof, in childhood activity participation rates.



## Sports Participation by Gender

% of Respondents Most Active/Involved Child

Among our survey respondents, reflective only of kids who actually participate in sports, White boys are 20% less likely than Black and 2% less likely than Hispanics to play sports. White girls are 26% more likely to play sports than African-American girls and 6% more likely than Asian girls.



## Title IX: Girl's Sports Participation

According to a 2007 study by Don Sabo, Ph.D. Professor of Health Policy at D'Youville College and Director for the Center for Research on Physical Activity, Sport & Health, White girls are less only slightly likely to participate than White boys, among all income levels. Ethnicity plays a bigger role in participation differentials.

- + 75% of White girls play sports
- + Compare that to less than two-thirds of African-American and Hispanic girls, and half of Asian girls
- + Less than half of girls of immigrant families play, whereas about two-thirds of boys from immigrant families do
- + Our survey showed that among households above \$125K, boys and girls were equally likely to be active
- + For families with a household income between \$50K to under \$125K:
  - + 50.4% of boys were most active
  - + 47% of girls were most active
  - + 2.5% said other or opted not to answer
- + For families with a household income below \$50K:
  - + 54% said boys were most active
  - + 45% said girls
  - + 1% opted not to answer



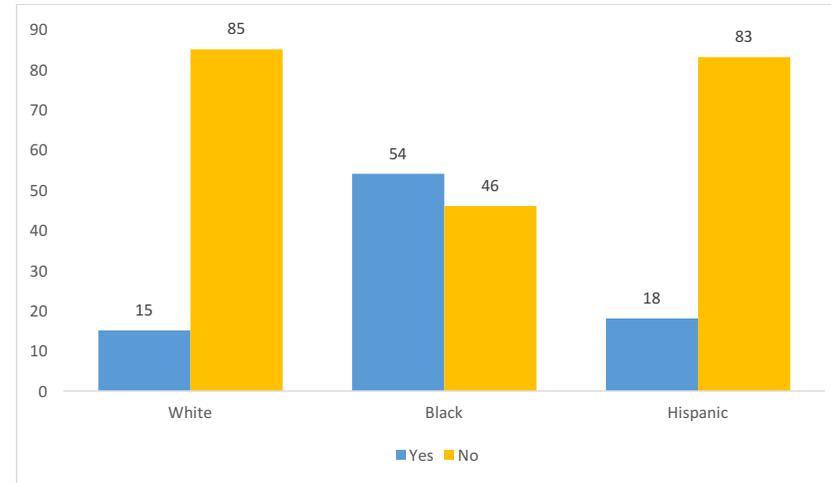
Source: ESPN



## Program Marketing Diversity

% of Parents Who Look for Their Culture in Marketing Materials

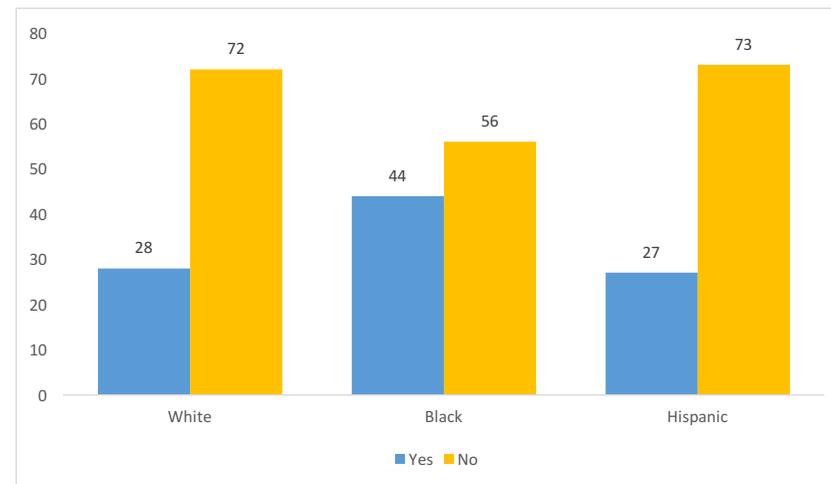
Our survey data showed that more than half of Black parents look for representation of their culture in kids activity marketing materials.



## Program Diversity

% of Parents Who Look for Diversity in Kids Programs

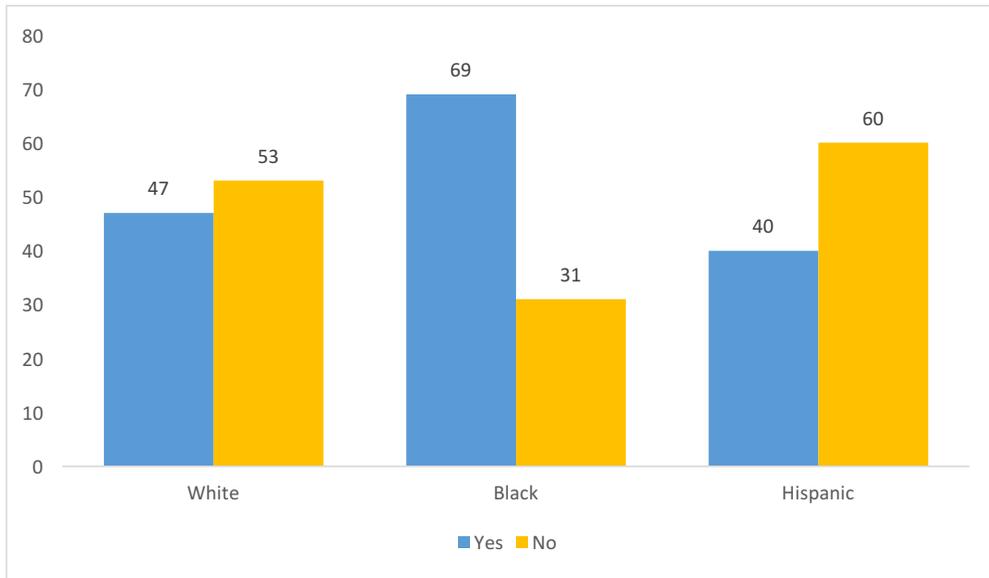
However, for Whites and Hispanics, the actual demographics of diversity matter more than representations of diversity in marketing materials.





## Program Content and Values

% of Parents Who Look for Their Cultural Values to be Supported in Kids Programs



Taking into account diversity in marketing materials, participant demographics and staff composition, support of cultural values —the program experience—matters most to all demographics. On a scale of 1 to 10, ALL parents ranked the following outcomes at an 8 or 9:

- + Develop independence
- + Gain leadership skills and self-esteem
- + Develop individual passions or interests
- + Stay physically active
- + Understand the importance of teamwork
- + Make friends and memories

## Values Matter Most

This word cloud represents the words our respondents used to describe their values.





## What can we do?

10 Steps to Diversify Your Marketing

### Establish Baselines

Successful initiatives usually start with a baseline evaluation in order to measure success. Take inventory of what you know about your customer base and your local community's makeup. What additional information could you begin collecting to give you more details?

If you're already collecting demographic data, how does that compare to the zip codes and cities you serve?

### Dig in Locally

Before you think like a program director marketing your organization, think like a community member. Research the things you'd want to know if you were moving into a neighborhood:

- + Median household income, racial/ethnic composition, jobs, religions, home values
- + Schools: Attendance, Free/Reduced Lunch, Sports Programs offered, Reviews

### Resources:

- + [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) – seriously deep data
- + [NeighborhoodScout.com](https://neighborhoodscout.com) – digestible reports on demographic data by zip code
- + [GreatSchools.org](https://greatschools.org) – school demographic information and reviews

### Analytics are Your Friend

You can see comprehensive data in Google Analytics about who is visiting your site, as well as their behavior while there:

- + Where are people coming from and what language are they using?
- + For languages other than English:
  - + Are they transacting at the same rate as English browsers?
  - + Are they bouncing at a higher rate? Spending more or less time on the site?
- + These stats may tell you a little something about your site's user experience.
- + Prominently place translator plugins in the header, such as Google Translate.

### Get Out of Your Circle

It's easy to focus on the demographic that comes to you. To grow your diversity, you'll have to reach out to build relationships with local leaders in the communities you're trying to reach: civic, religious, and community organizers.

- + Partner with individuals who can work with you and your staff.
- + Ask questions about their concerns, values, influencers, where they go for information.
- + Maintain school partnerships: Our survey shows that 67% of parents across demographics say they hear about activities from their kids and through school.
- + If you're already in the schools, offer services in your core competency (i.e. outdoor camp, field day, theater camp, school play) to reach a diverse audience.

### Build Buyer Personas

Understanding your target audience helps you:

- + Differentiate and drive marketing strategy
- + Guide program and product development
- + Align staff training to customer interactions
- + Social: Yelp (Restaurants, Specialty Stores, Facebook (Closed Community Pages), Community Organization newsletters (Cultural events, Volunteer work)

To develop strong personas:

- + Use your demographic data
- + Network with community leaders and influencers to validate and enhance your findings
- + Frame from the customer's perspective – define the problem to solve or objective to be met

### Create Better Content

When creating your marketing messages, think like a first-time camp parent:

- + Parents may be concerned about swimming, water safety and time alone
- + Give lots of details about safety and supervision
- + Focus on participant outcomes - your goal for attendees in your program
- + Parent testimonials can help provide assurance
- + Ease parent transportation and equipment woes
  - + Facilitate ride shares, transit schedules, etc.
  - + Offer equipment swaps, 'Best Places to Shop', 'What NOT to Buy' advice
- + Offer extensive FAQs, 'Prep Lists' and instructional videos

## Buyer Persona:

A semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer(s) based on market research and real data.



### **Nail Mobile**

Mobile actually helps bridge the digital divide:

- + A quarter of lower income families with school-age children say a mobile device is their only way to access the Internet at home.
- + 41% of lower income Hispanic families have only mobile internet access.
- + Utilize Google's Mobile-Friendly Test, PageSpeed Insights and Analytics.
- + Mobile registration and forms increase enrollment rates.

### **Ask Questions**

Customizing your information requests to gather additional information shows parents your level of awareness about all types of diversity categories:

- + On registration forms and post-program surveys, state: We (your value/mission statement). To serve you better, would you be willing to provide us with some more information about your camper and family?

Additional fields to consider:

- + 'Child lives with' - give options for blended, LGBTQ and intergenerational families
- + Other languages spoken at home
- + Food restrictions or accommodations
- + Has the camper ever been to a program like this?
- + Has the parent/guardian ever been to a program like this?
- + Contact/communication preferences: text, email, social media

### **Adapt the Experience**

Based on the results of the additional information you are collecting, consider program changes that support the feedback:

- + Conduct cultural competency or cultural sensitivity training with staff/counselors.
- + Program Adaptations:
  - + Shorter sessions
  - + Accommodate food restrictions
  - + Menu choices that reflect camper culture and traditional food ways
  - + Sessions or programs for girls and boys only
  - + Activities inclusive of cultural arts, music, etc.

### **Start Your Surveys**

How can you find out how willing participants are to not only return, but promote your program to their circle of influence?

A Net Promoter Survey is an effective tool that is strongly correlated with business growth.

- + Easy to implement
- + Create a common language for staff
- + Guide corrective action
- + Enable program performance monitoring over time

### **Promoter:**

A customer most likely to engage in growth behaviors, including referrals and new purchases (and give GREAT testimonies!)

**Diversify your program.**

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