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## Whatever Happened to Summer Camp?

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The American experience of summer camp, once almost regulation fare for adolescents and tweens, is now headed to extinction — or for radical revision. One problem is American parents, many of whom seem to consider the outdoors a newly dangerous environment. Then again, part of the problem is parents who can't let their kids out of their sight — the mythical “helicopter parents” who hover constantly over their children.

As Judith Warner noted in *The New York Times* [subscription required]:

*Parents today, apparently, don't want their kids out in the wilds, where they might walk in the paths of potentially tick-bearing Bambi. They don't want the kids out of reach, where they can't take a mood reading at each and every at-risk moment of the day.*

Now, *Slate.com* is out with a series of historical reviews of the American summer camp experience, [start [here](#)].

As many youth leaders in churches will report, the summer camp experience for Christian teenagers has changed a great deal as well. Many teenagers have work schedules that make participation in such camps impossible. Others are consumed with sports and other activities. In any event, many parents seem to consider the experience optional — a matter of fairly low priority. Yet, get a group of Christian leaders together and many testimonies will point to strategic and formative experiences at church camps. Something important is being lost.

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