



## Listen CI Camp 2024 Family Survey Summary

Camper feedback over the years has made camp what it is today. We are so thankful for your participation in Listen CI Camp 2024 and the many comments and suggestions you shared on the survey! We have carefully reviewed the surveys and wanted to share the common themes and recommendations for making camp the best possible experience for all.

### Children's Experience

- **Connection and Belonging:** The kids loved the opportunity to interact with peers who have similar experiences, fostering a sense of community and acceptance.
- **Fun and Engagement:** Activities like the dance party, axe throwing, archery, ropes course, spaghetti towers, escape challenge, oobleck, marshmallow catapults, roller skating, and rock climbing were popular and facilitated bonding among the kids.
- **Mentorship:** The interaction with older children and volunteers was beneficial for personal growth and development.
- **Identity:** In the survey responses, 97% of you said that as a result of camp your child better understands who he/she is as a cochlear implant recipient.

### Parents' Experience

- **Support and Community:** You appreciated the chance to connect with other parents, share experiences, and learn from each other.
- **Informative Sessions:** Workshops and panels on various topics were highly valued.
- **Child Development:** Several of you observed positive changes in your children's confidence, social skills, and communication abilities during camp.
- **Advocacy:** In the survey responses 99% of you said that as a result of camp you feel better prepared to help your child navigate his/her CI journey.

### Common Highlights

- **Parent Education:** Feedback on all of the sessions was positive and included many comments expressing appreciation for the opportunity to learn from the mentors and each other.
- **Mentor Panel:** The mentors are consistently praised for providing valuable insights and support. The July session mentor panel was recorded as a Listen Foundation podcast. Please see the letter for the link.
- **The Future of Cochlear Implants:** Dr. Kelsall's presentation was a favorite and many of you requested his slides. Please see the letter for the link.
- **Social-Emotional Support:** The workshops and presentations related to this are always greatly appreciated and needed in our community. Please see the letter for the link to Andrea's slides.

- **Opportunity for Connection:** Most of you mentioned that the chance to interact with other families in a supportive environment was a major benefit. In fact, 93% of you mentioned the importance of the Listen CI Camp community on your survey.

## Areas for Improvement

- **Food:** For those of you who were new to camp this year, there was a definite improvement in the quality of food from last year. Know that I request options per the dietary restrictions you list during camp registration. Unfortunately, we simply don't have much control over the quality or choice of food. The YMCA does not allow us to specify particular dishes or cater from outside. The YMCA is cooking for approximately 4,000 people per meal so we may need to adjust our expectations to "camp food"- plenty of it, does the job, but not yet Michelin rated. My discussions with the YMCA about food service will continue, but bring plenty of snacks!
- **Scheduling:** There continues to be a fairly even split between those desiring more activities and those wanting fewer activities with longer breaks in between. Likewise, some of you want more time with your kids and some of you would like more time exclusively with other parents. We will do our best to hold this in balance within the constraints of the YMCA scheduling and childcare limitations.
- **Parent Social:** Some of you desire a less structured parent social, others prefer a more structured event. Based on 2022 camper feedback, we are now breaking into smaller groups during the Parent Social to allow for more intimate conversations between more and less experienced parents. Last year and this year several of you mentioned that you prefer this arrangement to the entire group sitting in a circle around the firepit where you only have the opportunity to speak to the person to your immediate right or left. If you are interested in developing a structured activity for parents to participate in for a portion of the parent social time, please contact me.
- **Policy Changes:** Several of you inquired about the policy changes. Over the past year, the Listen Foundation underwent a thorough liability review. In the interest of safety and the enjoyment of all constituents, the Board of Directors made the decision that all Foundation events are alcohol free. This is a "no alcohol" policy, not a "no open containers" policy. Additionally, as none of the camp volunteers are licensed childcare providers, the decision was also made to require one parent to directly supervise his/her child(ren) under the age of 5 at all times as well as his/her child(ren) age 5 and above with the exception of the limited times they are signed out to Listen CI Camp volunteers. And each family is required to have at least one parent at the YMCA at all times.

## Impact of the Camp

Many of you reported that camp had a profound impact on you and your children. You mentioned that it provided a supportive environment, fostered friendships, and offered valuable educational opportunities. Many families expressed their gratitude for the camp's existence and requested an expansion. Nothing could make us happier!

Again, thank you for your insightful suggestions aimed at making camp an amazing experience for all. I am already using your feedback in grant writing to raise funding for the 2025 programs. We look forward to seeing you next summer. In the meantime, I invite you to reach out if I may serve as a resource to you throughout the year.

Wishing you all a wonderful back-to-school season. Take care!

*Janette Cartwell, MS, LPC*

Listen CI Camp Director

*The leader in listening and spoken language therapy for children who are deaf and hard of hearing*