

# Fact Sheet

## Child Safeguarding and Summer Camps

### History of Summer Camp Industry & Regulations

- **1910** - The American Camp Association (ACA) is founded under its original name, Camp Directors Association of America.<sup>1</sup>
- **1948** - The ACA publishes its first set of accreditation standards.<sup>1</sup>
- **1974** - The Children and Youth Camp Safety Act is introduced to the senate but does not pass.<sup>2</sup> In **1987**, it is introduced to the house and again does not pass.<sup>3</sup>
- **1974** - The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act is passed and includes sexual abuse in its definition of maltreatment.<sup>4</sup>
- **1976** - Mandatory Reporting Laws are implemented nationally as all states have laws requiring professionals to report suspected child sexual abuse.<sup>4</sup>
- **1988-1990** - 10,000 copies of *Camp Director's Guide: Preventing Sexual Exploitation of Children* are distributed for free to camps in the U.S. and Canada, through the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and partner, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.<sup>5</sup>
- **1992** - Industry-standard videos become available to residential camps, including modules about Counselor-Camper Contact, designed to be shown to staff during training with the purpose of educating all staff about the parameters for safe (camp and non-camp) contact with campers.<sup>5</sup>
- **2016** - The ACA makes their most recent update to the resources page for child sexual abuse prevention.<sup>6</sup>
- **2018** - A CBS News report identified at least 578 child sexual abuse victims from camps spanning from 1960-2018 (with the legitimate number being much higher, given the reality of disclosure delays and nondisclosures).<sup>7</sup>
- **2019** - The ACA publishes its most recent standards. There is no explicit mention of child safeguarding policies specific to abuse prevention in the general overview of ACA's accreditation standards.<sup>8</sup>

### National Regulation of Summer Camps

- The ACA is the only national accreditation body for camps. In 2021, they accredited over 15,000 camps serving over 26 million campers.<sup>9</sup>
- 8 states do **not** require overnight/residential camps to be licensed.<sup>10</sup>
- 10 states do **not** require day camps to be licensed.<sup>10</sup>
- 18 states do **not** require that camps run criminal background checks on their staff.<sup>10</sup>
- Distinctions between child care facilities (which are regulated) and camps are vague.<sup>11</sup>
- Due to a lack of regulation, it is unknown how many children attend camps, or how many camps exist in the United States. It is also unknown how many children are victimized, injured, abused, or suffer deaths from camp-related causes given the lack of required reporting from camps.<sup>11</sup>

### Regulations of Summer Camps in Missouri

- Licenses are **not** required for day or overnight/residential or day camps.<sup>12</sup>
- Criminal background checks are **not** required for staff.<sup>12</sup>
- Summer camps and boarding schools (often residential) providing "recreation" or "education," and any facilities operating under the umbrella of a religious organization, are specifically exempted from certain state child care licensure requirements.<sup>12</sup>
- Prior to July 2021,<sup>13</sup> religious organizations in Missouri (e.g. residential boarding schools) were exempt from all state oversight due to a law passed in 1982. Missouri was one of only two states having no regulation for exempt religious organizations.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ACA. Our History. Retrieved from <https://www.acacamps.org/about/history>.

<sup>2</sup> Congress.gov. Summary of Children and Youth Camp Safety Act. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/93rd-congress/senate-bill/3639?s=1&r=60>.

<sup>3</sup> Congress.gov. Summary of Children and Youth Camp Safety Act. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/100th-congress/house-bill/3571?r=53&s=1>.

<sup>4</sup> Family Law Quarterly. A Short History of Child Protection in America. Retrieved from [https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/35363\\_Chapter1.pdf](https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/35363_Chapter1.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Circuit Court of Christian County, Missouri. Case No. 15AF-CC00882-01. First Amended Petition, John Doe IX v. Kanakuk Heritage, Inc., et al.

<sup>6</sup> ACA. Child Abuse Prevention Resources. Retrieved from <https://www.acacamps.org/resources/child-abuse-prevention-resources>.

<sup>7</sup> CBS News. Hundreds of Sexual Abuse Cases Reported at Children's Camps Across US. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hundreds-sexual-abuse-cases-childrens-camps-reported-across-us-cbs-this-morning>.

<sup>8</sup> ACA. Standards-at-a-Glance. Retrieved from <https://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/overview/standards-glance>.

<sup>9</sup> ACA. 2021 Impact Report. Retrieved from [https://www.acacamps.org/sites/default/files/page\\_documents/about/2021-ACA-Impact-Report.pdf](https://www.acacamps.org/sites/default/files/page_documents/about/2021-ACA-Impact-Report.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> ACA. State Laws and Regulations. Retrieved from <https://www.acacamps.org/resources/state-laws-regulations>.

<sup>11</sup> Cal Matters. Children's Day Camps: Attend at your own Risk. Retrieved from <https://calmatters.org/children-and-youth/2022/06/day-camps-california-unregulated>.

<sup>12</sup> ACA. State Regulations for Missouri. Retrieved from <https://www.acacamps.org/resources/state-laws-regulations/state-regulations-missouri>.

<sup>13</sup> Missouri Independent. Missouri Agency Begins Implementation of New Law to Regulate Unlicensed Boarding Schools. Retrieved from <https://missouriindependent.com/2021/08/06/missouri-agency-begins-implementation-of-new-law-to-regulate-unlicensed-reform-schools>

<sup>14</sup> STL Today. With Key Endorsement, Bills to Regulate Missouri Religious Boarding Schools Advance. Retrieved from [https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/with-key-endorsement-bills-to-regulate-missouri-religious-boarding-schools-advance/article\\_97889dc3-7793-5bb8-8b20-3c90f6eb0a4a.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/with-key-endorsement-bills-to-regulate-missouri-religious-boarding-schools-advance/article_97889dc3-7793-5bb8-8b20-3c90f6eb0a4a.html).