

# Safe Haven Camp Evaluation Report

**Reporting Period:** September 2024 – August 2025

**Prepared for:** Matanel Foundation

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**Organization:** Orr Shalom – For Children and Youth at Risk

## Project Objectives (as outlined in the original proposal)

- **Accommodation and Safety:** To ensure that these children have a secure and enriching place to be during the vacation periods.
- **Emotional Support:** Through therapeutic activities and the constant accompaniment of professionals (Counselors, Social Workers and National Service Mentors), camp offers a structured, supportive environment.
- **Educational Enrichment and Personal Development:** Safe Haven emphasizes educational and cultural activities, including art, music, sports, and day trips. These activities are designed not only to provide fun and relaxation but also to foster a sense of achievement, boost self-esteem, and encourage personal growth.

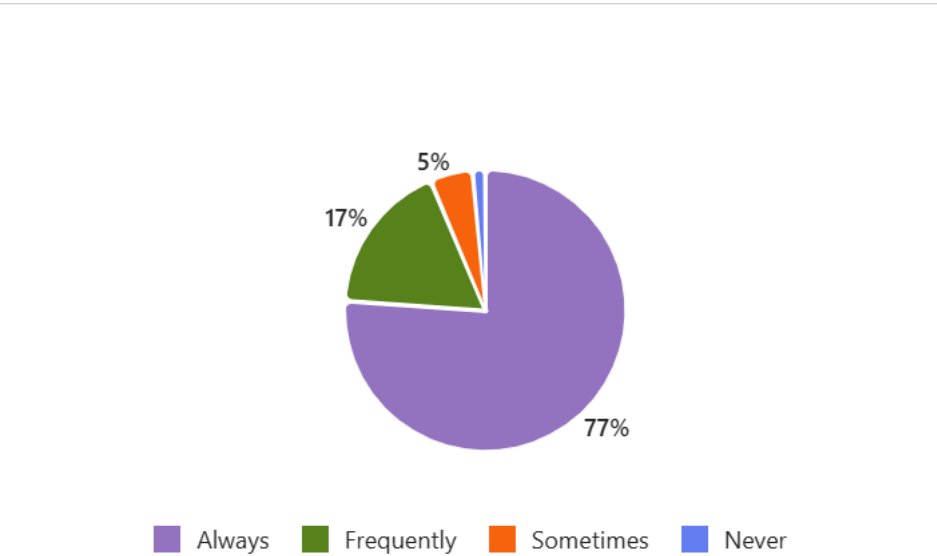
All the objectives outlined in the original proposal were successfully achieved during the camp sessions:

- **Accommodation and Safety:** Children were provided with a secure, structured, and nurturing environment during 44 days of vacation across Sukkot, Chanukah, Pesach and the summer.
- **Emotional Support:** Campers benefited from the constant presence of counselors, social workers, and National Service mentors, receiving therapeutic support in a stable, encouraging framework.
- **Educational Enrichment and Personal Development:** A wide range of activities including arts and crafts, pool time, therapeutic surfing workshop, sports, and day trips, offered both recreation and opportunities for growth, helping participants build their confidence and self-esteem.

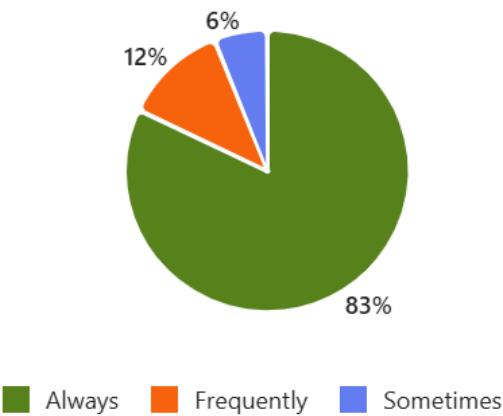
# Quantitative Evaluation

At the conclusion of the Safe Haven Summer Camp, the Camp Director completed a survey for each child who attended. Given the children’s traumatic backgrounds and their status as minors, the surveys were completed by staff rather than by the children themselves. Camp was not an optional activity for these children; it was a necessity, as they had no other safe alternative during summer vacation. The survey focused on each child’s experience in four key areas: participation in activities, enjoyment of those activities, social comfort, and trust in staff, as reflected in their willingness to seek support

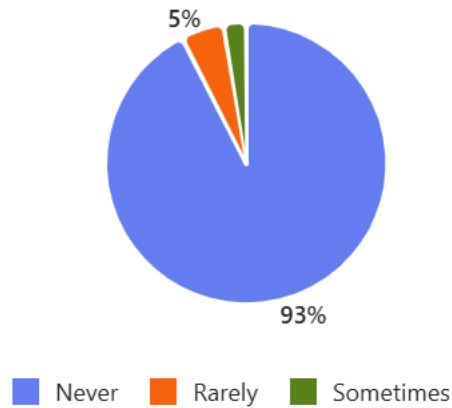
## 1. This child actively participated in the scheduled camp activities.



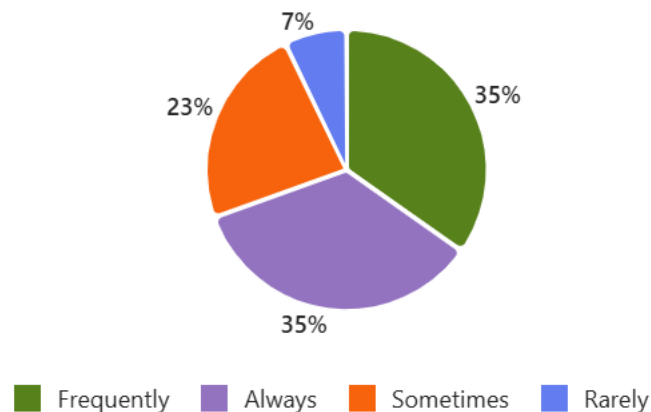
## 2. This child expressed positive emotions while participating in camp activities.



**3. This child appeared withdrawn during camp activities.**



**4. This child sought comfort of support from counselors when they felt distressed.**



**Qualitative Evaluation**

The following testimonials from Orr Shalom staff highlight how children from with histories of abuse, neglect and trauma, experience Safe Haven Camp – and how through trust, care and therapeutic support, they can heal, connect and grow. The testimonials come from the staff who support the children, rather than the children themselves due to the sensitivity of their situation and to protect their privacy.

**Reut, National Service Mentor**

"One second-grade girl from Ashkelon really connected with me. She didn't get along with many of the other mentors or counselors and often fought with them. Like many of the children at Safe Haven Camp, she carried a lot of pain and fear from her past, which made it hard for her to trust adults. Somehow, I managed to earn her trust, and she'd often come to me to talk about her problems, play and hug. One day she refused to join the nature walk we had scheduled. She was full of anxieties and fears about everything but also didn't want to stay behind. I talked with her, and she found the courage to participate and joined the trip. Moments like this show how meaningful it is when the kids know we are there to listen, support them, and believe in them."

**Ahuva, National Service Mentor**

"Working as a National Service mentor at Safe Haven Camp is very different from working in a Family Group Home. While all the children come from traumatic backgrounds, which often shows in their behavior, at camp I get to see another side to them. In camp, the kids often start taking initiative, helping the younger children, and showing real growth. For example, there's a boy in camp who is also in my group home. Usually, he struggles with following rules and instructions, but here I see him helping the younger kids, listening, and being responsible—everyone admires him. I'm so proud of his progress. It's amazing to see how much the children thrive in the nurturing camp setting."

**Talia, Counsellor**

"I'm a counsellor for the older boys and they all come with their own challenges. Many arrive at camp angry, withdrawn, or testing boundaries because of what they've been through. At first, it's hard for them because there's a schedule, rules, and structure. Slowly they get to know the camp, get to know us, and improve. The older boys have really progressed - they became friends, helped each other, and the camp became a safe place for them. Watching these boys let down their guard and start to trust is incredibly powerful."

**Amitai, Counsellor**

"Leading the younger boys at Safe Haven Camp is such a unique experience. Many of them come to camp from difficult backgrounds and don't know how to accept love. To connect with them, you have to understand them and get into their heads...and also try to play around like a kid again. I see real progress in the group—the boys build trust and even though they're not used to it, they are now open to receiving love and care. It's rewarding to be part of that process."

**Maayan, Family Group Home Social Worker**

"The connection between the kids and the counselors stands out to me. Even though the camp is only a few weeks long, the counselors know them very, very well—just like we do. In a very short amount of time, they manage to identify each child's personality, strengths and challenges. These children come from such heavy backgrounds, and at camp they're more

free, running around, going to the beach, doing fun things. Some of them still say they'd rather go home to their families, but the truth is many of them don't have a safe home to return to. At least here, they're doing fun things and getting love and care."

We are deeply grateful to the Matanel Foundation for your partnership with Orr Shalom. Thanks to your support, Safe Haven Camp is able to provide Israel's most vulnerable children, who have no family support, with a safe, nurturing environment and meaningful opportunities for growth and development.