

Getting Ready for Camp

It is not uncommon for children to experience homesickness. Homesickness can be prevented. Parents are the best preventers. The following is a list of tips to help minimize homesickness:

- Talk with your child about going to camp. Whenever possible, allow your children to participate in the decision-making process (which session, length of stay).
- State how missing home is a natural feeling that almost everyone experiences.
- Reassure your child that you believe he/she is capable of handling the feeling of homesickness.
- Prepare self-addressed, stamped envelopes (especially for younger campers) for your child to use to mail home.
- Involve your child in packing. Pack familiar clothing and a special memento like a family picture. Again, for your younger children, pack a favorite stuffed animal or blanket. Allow your child to pick out the clothing he/she wants to bring and make sure your child knows where things are packed in the trunk.
- Drop a letter in the mail a few days before your child comes to camp. This way, he/she will have mail waiting and remember to write frequently. In your letters, encourage your child to experiment and participate in all activities offered – not just those in which they are proficient. Also, encourage them to be open-minded and make new friends with different groups of kids. Finally, praise your child for their growing independence and self-reliance.
- Refrain from promising to call every day, saying how much you will miss them, or promising that you will come to get them if they say they want to come home.
- A few days before camp begins, remind your child about why he or she wanted to come to camp. Talk about the fun your child will have and the activities he/she will enjoy. Remind your child that you are sending him or her to camp because you love them and think this is a great chance for him/her to learn new things, have a great time and make new friends. Remind them that not all children get this opportunity and that going to camp is something very special.
- For campers under 10 years old, prepare them by reading books about going to overnight camp and allow them to have non-threatening experiences away from home (overnight stays with grandparents or a friend).
- Finally, do not make a fuss at the time of departure. Our campers are immediately involved in an active and interesting program. The “good-byes” are usually harder on the parents than on the campers.