

Prepare your child and yourselves

First-time campers and their parents sometimes spend a good bit of time worrying about homesickness. For the first-time camper, preparation can make all the difference.

Be supportive and sensitive

Any new experience, especially in a new environment, causes nervousness. A positive outlook from both the camper and their parents, along with encouragement, are crucial to a successful camp experience. Talk to your child about camp, the expectations, activities, environment and the fun they will have at camp.

Homesickness is OK

Homesickness is natural and feelings of missing home, parents, pets or friends are expected. Once your camper understands this, your child may feel less anxiety. Try not to say: "I'm going to be so lonely without you." It may make your child feel guilty about going away. In your letters to campers, try not to dwell on how much you miss them, giving too much information about home may cause anxiety. Be encouraging by asking lots of questions about camp, their activities and new friends. With your help, you can help your child overcome his homesickness.

Avoid making a deal

Try not to tell your child: If you give camp a few days and don't like it, I will come get you. The offer to rescue your child is done with the best of intentions, but a child may focus on this and will never give camp a fair chance. Do not feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. This opportunity is the first step toward independence and plays an important role in your child's growth and development.

Summer camp is a special place

Besides being fun, camp is a wonderful growing and learning opportunity for your child, and will provide your child with the skills, lessons, friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. Camp is a great place to unlock a child's potential, develop self-esteem and enhance their social skills while having the time of their lives.

If you should receive a homesick letter from your camper, don't panic

Often the first couple of days are a big adjustment, and it may take some time for your camper to become more involved in the program, cabin and activities and to make new friends.

How we limit and handle homesickness

Our opening day and daily schedules are designed to minimize the feeling of homesickness. We spend extra time and effort with every new camper at the beginning of each session to make sure no one is feeling homesick. We have a strong support system that includes the Camp Director, Staff, Nurses, and Cabin Counselors. We also have Certified Child Life Specialists, individuals who are specially trained to deal with homesickness and are experts in Child Development. Child Life Specialists are an integral part of the healthcare team and come to camp to help your child cope with new experiences. We limit campers' telephone use, but we will call you if your child is really sad or wants to go home. Do not send a cell phone with your child to camp.