

Do's and Don'ts of preparing a child for camp

“How to Avoid Homesickness”

Do

- Do discuss what camp will be like, visit the website and talk about the kinds of activities they will be doing.
- Do send a note or postcard in advance so there will be a personalized touch on the camper's first day at camp.
- Do acknowledge your child's feelings. Consider role-playing anticipated camp situations.
- Do offer calm reassurance that homesickness is normal, but conquerable.
- Do allow your child to pack a favorite toy, picture or other reminder of home.
- Do practice being away from home through long weekend getaways or sleepovers.
- Do honor our no phone call policy, but make sure your child understands that they can write a letter home.
- Do prepare yourself against any temptation to “rescue” your child. Your child's well being is very important to our staff. We will work with you to decide if a child needs to go home.
- Do let the camp nurse know of any medical or emotional needs (including medications) so she can help the staff manage homesickness along with other pertinent issues.
- When dropping your child off, do show your children that you love them and will miss them, but focus on the fun week awaiting your child.
- Do have your child attend with a friend if possible. Consider carpooling with the friend. This way the positive adjustments can begin even before you arrive at camp.
- Do realize that we understand how special your child is to you, and know that they are special to the camp staff, as well.

Don't

- Don't tell your child that you will come get them if they aren't happy at camp.
- Don't send notes listing things at home that your child may be missing (i.e., activities, people, pets).
- Don't worry! Your child will sense your worry.
- Don't plan on picking your child up for other weekly activities. Once they come to camp they should stay at camp. Not only does this make it more difficult for your child, but it also makes it more difficult for the other campers who are not seeing their parents through the week.
- Don't push a child who just isn't ready or comfortable with going to camp.
- Don't use bribery. The reward for the week will be the success of getting through the week and the fun had along the way. Bribing with material things will do more harm than good.
- Don't feel guilty about requiring your child to stay at camp when the staff feels they are capable of making it through the week. Remember that the best interest of the child is also our priority!
- When dropping your child off, don't become overwhelmed with anxiety. If you fear that you cannot control your emotions, consider making other arrangements for getting your child to camp.