



Preparing for Camp

Preparations you as a parent can make and conversations you can have with your child before they come to camp.

Parents who are *themselves* emotionally prepared for their children to be at camp and who have a plan for helping with that transition are better able to get their kids ready for their first adventures at camp. The following items are suggestions about what you as a parent might discuss with your child before he or she goes to camp that will help them be more successful once they get there.

“Inoculate” a child against homesickness—what parents can do:

1. Involve them in shopping for camp, maybe even doing some packing together.
2. Pack a favorite personal item, like a t-shirt, or small stuffed animal.
3. Have the child “practice” showering, sleeping over at friends or relatives, and writing letters.
4. Talk with them about the fun things they are looking forward to doing at camp.
5. Parents should share stories about their own first forays away from home—keeping the spin positive!
6. Parents can point out what a child does well and how that will be an asset at camp.
7. Post a letter to a new camper one or two days before they depart for camp, so that it will be there on the first day.

Conversations to have with your child before he or she comes to camp:

1. Every camper is part of a group and as a camper we expect you to cooperate and help out.
2. If you are having a problem, your counselor is there to help you; you don’t have to wait to tell us, you can tell your counselor. Be honest and ask for what you need.
3. If your counselor doesn’t help or is part of what makes you uncomfortable, the person you can talk to is Kyle (the Program Director) or Craig (the Camp Director). *Parents should know who this “back-up” person is and how their child will recognize them.* Parents should also be able to get in touch with that person.

Kyle Gonnerman, Program Director at 1-800-966-9622 or

Craig Cheney, Executive Director, at (260) 336-4989 (cell)

4. Clean-up is *part of camp*; you do it everyday; we expect you to participate.
5. There are many new things at camp and you may not like them all or be as good at some as you are at others. *We expect you to try!*
6. Go about making a new friend or two. If you are timid about meeting someone new, ask about what they like and be a good listener.
7. Not everyone has to be your friend, and you don’t have to be everyone else’s friend. If you have one or two good friends at camp, that’s great.

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