



Child Care Referral Service

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HELPING YOUR CHILD COPE AT CAMP TIPS FROM THE AMERICAN CAMPING ASSOCIATION

BEFORE YOUR CHILD LEAVES FOR CAMP:

- If possible, visit the camp ahead of time so that your child will be familiar with the cabins and other general surroundings.
- Consider arranging for a first-time camper to attend with a close friend, relative, or camp “buddy.”
- Do not tell your child that you will “rescue” them from camp if they don’t like it.
- Discuss what camp will be like well before your child leaves, being sure to acknowledge feelings; consider role playing anticipated camp situations, such as using a flashlight to find the bathroom.
- Send a letter to your child before camp begins so it will be there for their arrival.
- Allow your child to pack a favorite stuffed animal and/or picture so that your child will have a reminder of home.

IF ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS, SUCH AS HOMESICKNESS, OCCUR WHILE YOUR CHILD IS AWAY AT CAMP:

- Talk candidly with the camp director to obtain their perception of your child’s adjustment.
- Resist the temptation to “rescue” your son or daughter from this experience.
- Acknowledge your child’s feelings and communicate your love. You might want to say, “If you still feel this way in two days, we’ll discuss what we can do.”
- Support your child’s efforts to work out the problems with the help of camp staff.
- Remind your child, if necessary, that they have made a commitment to camp.
- Trust your instincts. The occasional child who is truly not adjusting to camp life at all should be allowed to return home after a reasonable amount of time and effort.