

Top 10 dos and don'ts of Camp

Dos

1. Do sign up. Camp is a great way to practice independence, make new friends, learn about teamwork, be creative and experience many new activities.
2. Do involve your camper in the process of picking out a camp. The more they know, the more comfortable they will be.
3. Do prepare your camper by discussing their fears and concerns.
4. Do address homesickness. Everybody misses home. Help them pick out something to give them comfort while away. Do show your confidence in them that they will be able to overcome their homesickness and have a great experience.
5. Do be prepared for tears if they have to call home because of homesickness. Be prepared with words of encouragement. Keep a positive attitude about the experience. Staff will let you know if things have gone beyond what they can handle.
6. Do follow the camp's list of things to bring. Pack as light as possible. Pack something to be shared with everyone...such as a game or snack.
7. Do put the camper's name on EVERYTHING.
8. Do talk about the new people they will meet. Talk about how to be a good friend so they can make good friends.
9. Do read all of the camp policies and Camp's Code of Conduct. Encourage your camper to follow all camp rules. They are there to help everyone have a safe and enjoyable time.
10. Do remember camp staff is trained and ready to help your camper with homesickness, safety, team building and fun.

Don'ts

1. Don't let your fears and concerns keep you from a new experience.
2. Don't bribe your child to come to or stay at camp. Their success should bring them a new found confidence and independence, not be just because they wanted whatever the bribe was.
3. Don't plan an exit strategy in case you or your child gets homesick. Arrive at Camp with a positive outlook. Unless their homesickness is severe, they will get past it. Encourage them to enjoy camp and make new friends.
4. Don't make your child feel like a failure if they can't finish camp. Praise them for how much they accomplished and encourage them to try again.
5. Don't advise them to break a few rules because that would be fun. Rules are there for everyone's protection.
6. Don't tell them ghost or scary stories about camp. Camp Staff already has their hands full trying to make everyone feel safe and calm so they can sleep at night.
7. Don't pack things on the "don't bring list" provided by your camp.

8. Don't over pack. The odds of getting everything back are lessened the more you pack. Don't expect all socks and underwear to return home. No one claims them when they are left in the showers.
9. Don't pack bars of soap. If possible use liquid bath soap. Bars become a gooey mess no one wants to pick up and become a hazard when left on the floor.
10. Don't expect college staff to know how to handle extreme behavioral and social disorders. Make sure the camp you pick is trained for your child's special needs and has a staff/camper radio to ensure your child has their needs met.

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