

Hints for Home-Missing

Campers of all ages, sometimes get homesick. We prefer to call this 'home-missing' rather than a sickness. Our staff is trained to deal with these issues in a nurturing manner. We try to keep all campers involved in camp activities which will take their mind off missing home. There are some important things a parent can do to help their child have a positive camp experience.

Before Camp

- Be positive about the upcoming camp experience. Focus on the activities the child will be involved in at camp.
- Review the camp schedule so your child becomes familiar with daily life at camp.
- Visit camp. Knowing what to expect alleviates anxiety. Please call before visiting so a staff member is available to talk with you.
- Refrain from making the following statements: *"If you don't like camp you can call us any time."* Or *"Give it a try and if you don't like it you can come home."* While these statements are well-intended, campers become consumed with the thought of going home and success at camp is difficult.
- Avoid telling your child they can call you from camp. This option is not available to campers. We do not have the phone capability to allow everyone access to camp phones.

While Your Child is at Camp

- Please do not call camp asking to talk to a camper. Unless it is an emergency, we cannot bring the child to the phone. This ties up our phone line, keeps emergency calls from reaching us, and often makes a happy camper miss home or a home-missing camper even more upset.
- Campers love mail, so write often! Keep letters positive and refrain from telling them what they are missing or how lonely you are. Focus on questions about their camping experience and how proud you are of them.
- An occasion may arise when you receive a negative letter from your camper. Please realize 2-3 days have elapsed since the letter was written. Whatever was troubling the camper could be completely forgotten or resolved by the time you receive the letter.
- Please call the camp director with any concerns. The staff will be happy to give you a progress report on your child and look into any concerns.

Barry Conservation Camp Camper Strategy for "Home-missing"

- We will help the camper connect with other campers and become involved in camp activities.
- We may find a special role for the camper to undertake.
- We will help the camper define and set hourly, daily and/or weekly goals.
- We will focus on camp experiences the camper can take home to share with their families.
- We will encourage campers to write home.
- If camp staff members do not feel a camper is responding to our strategy, the camp nurse or director will contact the parent for advice.
- We want campers to have a positive experience while at camp. For children to get the most out of their experience they must want to be at camp. They need to perceive it as a choice and not a mandatory stay.