



## PREPPING YOUR CHILD FOR OVERNIGHT CAMP

You may never meet the staff who care for your child at camp, but we are all on the same team and need to work together so your child has an awesome time at camp.

- **Start prepping them early.** Talk about camp, mark it on the calendar, and make it a natural part of conversation.
- **Encourage them.** Talk to them about what activities they might like to do. Options include canoeing, archery, biking (age 11+ only), sports, chill time, bubbles, ukulele, guitar, art, crafts, jewellery, high ropes, low ropes, and kitchen adventures. Plus we play campwide games, tie dye t-shirts, and sing songs around the fire. Tell them you are proud that they are trying something new. Avoid comments about missing them at home or what they will miss while they are gone. *Focus on developing their independence and how much fun they can have at camp.*
- **Avoid the promises.** As hard as it is for a child to go off to camp for week, it can be just as hard for families to let them go. But when we promise to call them daily or come pick them up the moment they miss home, we don't give them a chance to develop fortitude - a crucial step in maturing. These promises also set staff up for failure because we will only call if your child is homesick - not missing home. If you make these promises it takes us longer to build a relationship with your child, if it happens at all.
- **Let them know it's okay to have fun and that you want them to!** Amazingly, some children who miss home think that if they have fun at camp they are turning their back on their families. We have heard the words "but my mommy needs me at home" many a time. Let them know that although you will miss them, you want them to have fun for the *whole week*. Sometimes they need permission to have fun at camp...and camp is really fun!
- **Write to them.** Approximately a week before camp, send 5 letters addressed to them at camp. We will hold them and hand out one per day. This gives them a connection to home and allows you to encourage them daily. It also gives them something to look forward to.

A few facts about missing home...

- most bouts last only a few minutes and happen during transition times
- camp is full of new people and it takes time to make new connections with staff and other campers
- even staff miss home, especially those who come from far, far away
- we will do everything we can to help your child have a great week at camp!

Mail can be sent to:  
CAMPER NAME, Session #  
c/o Camp McGovern  
422102 Concession 6  
Elmwood, Ontario N0G1S0