

Homesickness Tips

Before Summer Programs Attendance (Prevention)

1. Involve children in the decision to spend time away from home.
2. Educate children, almost everyone misses something about home, it's normal.
3. Practice being away from home (such as overnight visits with grandparents).
4. Practice corresponding (emails provide an opportunity to feel closer to home).
5. Learn about the new environment with your child.
6. Get to know the people in the new environment.
7. Encourage children to make new friends.
8. Refrain from expressing your own anxiety about the time away from home to your child (parents can share their own separation anxiety with other adults).
9. Use a calendar with your child to maintain objectivity about their real length of time away from home.
10. Tell your child you want them to have fun. Be enthusiastic and optimistic about your child's away from home experience.

Remedies for Homesickness (Intervention)

1. Do something fun, such as play with friends, to forget about homesick feelings.
2. Do something to feel closer to home (write an email, look at family photos, write a family experience story).
3. Talk to someone who can help you feel better (counselor, teacher, friend).
4. Think about the fun things you will be doing at camp, the things you enjoy.
5. Remember your time away from home is actually pretty short (use a calendar).
6. Think about what your loved ones would say to you to help you feel better and be successful at attending summer programs.
7. Bring a little bit of home with you (favorite stuffed animal, blanket, pillow).
8. Keep busy (you'll have less time to feel homesick if you keep busy with friends and activities).
9. Don't dwell on home and loved ones at the times of the day when you might be or feel the most alone (bedtime, quiet time).

Do's (and maybe a couple of don'ts)

1. Do tell your child that you believe in their ability to stay at summer programs until the final day. This will increase your child's possibility of success!
 - Demonstrates your confidence in the child's ability to cope.
 - Does not plant the seed of homesickness.

- Does not point the child to an escape route which bypasses coping strategies.
 - Does not paralyze enthusiastic and supportive teachers and staff who may be told by a child, “My parents said I could come home early if I didn’t like it here”.
2. Do speak to your child by phone, if you must, prior to a fun activity instead of right before bed when they will feel the most alone. The TSBVI residential instructor can help you find the perfect time.
 3. Do remember that talking about homesickness prior to departure does not cause homesickness. Preparation is the key to success.
 4. Do speak to staff if you are having concerns about your child’s homesickness and give them time to intervene.
 5. Do remember that this time away from home is not the best opportunity for a drug holiday for your child.