

Camp 42

PREVENTING HOMESICKNESS: TIPS FOR PARENTS

For many kids coming to Camp 42, this will be their first time sleeping away from home for a week. Kids and parents alike may worry about what to do to prevent homesickness. It sounds counterintuitive, but the best way to prevent homesickness is to avoid contacting your child during camp. Camp 42 has experimented with allowing campers to call home in the past, but invariably this ends with the camper in tears, worried that mom and dad miss him or her so much that it would be best for the camper to go home and comfort them! Therefore, **Camp 42 does not allow campers to call home during the week of camp.**

Rest assured that **the Camp Director will call you if your child is having significant trouble adjusting to camp.** Most kids are so busy having fun that they forget to feel homesick at all! If you are particularly concerned about how your child will handle camp though, please talk to the Camp Director in advance.

To minimize the possibility of homesickness, Camp 42 also suggests that parents consider trying the ideas below. These are based on recommendations of Phillips Exeter Academy psychologist Dr. Christopher Thurber, and the American Camp Association (ACA):

- Encourage your child's independence throughout the year. Practice separations, such as sleepovers at a friend's house, can simulate the camp environment.
- Involve your child in the process of choosing a camp. The more that the child owns the decision, the more comfortable the child will feel being at camp.
- Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing anticipated situations, such as getting themselves dressed and ready in the morning without parental supervision.
- Send a note or care package ahead of time to arrive the first day of camp. You can mail it using the addresses below, or you can bring letters and packages to drop-off and we will deliver it to your camper on the day you designate.
 - *Name of Camper, Cabin Number*
 - Camp 42
 - % Camp Long
 - 82 Camp Long Road
 - Aiken, SC 29805
- Acknowledge, in a positive way, that you will miss your child. For example, you can say "I am going to miss you, but I know that you will have a good time at camp."
- Don't bribe. Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message. The reward should be your child's new found confidence and independence.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal.
- Talk candidly with the camp director to obtain his/her perspective on your child's adjustment.

- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is a first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.¹

During the week of camp, parents may also get a sense of how their child is doing by checking for periodic updates on camp activities at your Camp 42 location's Families and Campers Facebook group.

- [Camp 42 South Carolina Families and Campers](#)

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