

Homesickness

Everything new is a potential catalyst for homesickness. For a first time camper, many things at camp are new. In fact most people, regardless of age, can experience homesickness during a two-week period at camp. Managing homesickness is something that can be learned at any age. The following information can help campers to prepare for camp and to minimize homesickness, using some common coping strategies.

What is homesickness and who is most susceptible?

Homesickness is distress or impairment caused by an actual (or anticipated) separation from home. Anyone with little experience being away from home is susceptible. Homesickness can affect people of any age, although older children and teenagers tend to hide their feelings more.

As a parent, how can I help my camper prepare?

- 1. Talk about camp.** Visit the camp website (www.campkalalla.com) to see photos of the campsite, and review the camp activities and daily schedule. If you know an experienced camper, have them share stories and photos. Familiarizing a camper with the idea of being at camp will help them be excited about being there, while at the same time “normalizing” the experience.
- 2. Practice being away from home.** Arrange for the camper to spend a weekend at a friend’s, living out of a suitcase and using a sleeping bag. Write letters or postcards to the camper.
- 3. Talk to your camper about homesickness.** Say, “You may miss home while you are at camp. Let’s talk about what you can do if you start to feel homesick.”
- 4. Express confidence.** When you drop your daughter off at the bus or at camp, express confidence that they will enjoy camp and can handle the situation. “I’m going to go now, you are going to have a great time, you can do this!”

What techniques and strategies can I teach my daughter?

The following are suggestions you can make to your daughter to help her cope with homesickness. Remember that each person is an individual and what works best for one person may not work for another. Judge which technique(s) would be most appropriate for your daughter.

Keep busy: Some people find that doing something fun or physical helps them to take their mind off homesickness, while other people find that it helps to do something to feel closer to home, such as writing a letter or looking at a photo.

Talk about your feelings: Find someone to talk to: your counsellor, the director, the health care worker, a friend or another staff member.

Think of a loved one: Think about a loved one and imagine what they would say to make you feel better.

Think positive: Think about the good side of things. Remember there are things at camp that you don’t have at home - the lake, cabinmates, an adventure at your fingertips!

Enjoy being at camp: Remember that camp is actually pretty short, so enjoy the time you have there and you’ll be home before you know it!