



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF FIRST YEAR CAMPERS

(Also valuable to parents of returning campers)

Many first year campers have never been away from home for an extended period of time. It is natural, therefore, for these youngsters to have a certain amount of reluctance as the moment of parting from friends, siblings, and parents grows closer. Some youngsters will also carry these concerns to camp. It is with this in mind that we have prepared this guide for parents.

Homesickness is a natural result of the change in the child's environment and circumstances. The parent can take comfort in the fact that many campers do not go through this phenomenon and for those who do, the recovery is generally swift. All of us at camp are particularly aware of the first year campers. From the directors on down, each staff member knows the name of each first year camper before camp begins and is equipped to help the youngster with the adjustment. With cooperation from the parents, the child quickly adjusts.

The following pointers are designed to help us prepare your child for the enriching and fruitful experience that camp provides:

AT HOME

If your youngster exhibits concern about going to camp, encourage expression of feelings. The child is worried about a total unknown and looking for your understanding. At this point, it is helpful to tell your child that concerns are normal and natural. Many first year campers feel the same way. Permit calls to the camp office with questions if there are specific worries about bunkmates, clothes, bed or anything else. Try to give the assurances needed; however, always feel free to contact the camp directors to help in any way in which they might be able. Often times specific answers are not necessary after the child has had the opportunity to express himself or herself to a listening ear.

Under no circumstances be ambivalent about the length of your child's stay at camp. They are there for the full time frame and should understand this. It is important that a camper understand his/her commitment and is not encouraged to leave something he/she has started. A "try out" approach can create definite problems. Although it might satisfy the child at home, it is certain to create a serious homesickness problem at camp. On the other hand, do not make your child feel that he/she must go to camp every summer, no matter how enthusiastic you may be about the benefits of the camp experience.

Reassure your child that everything at home will be the same as when he/she left. This means that pets will be cared for, possessions will be protected from siblings, and that his/her room will stay as it was left. If, for any reason, this cannot be promised, inform our office of the circumstances. We can be most helpful when we are informed.

Please notify us of any upsetting event which may have occurred prior to camp or is to occur during the summer. In this category would be an illness or death in the family, poor school grades, divorce, or moving to a new house or a new city. **This is extremely important.**

By all means, when seeing your child off at the bus, make your parting brief and pleasant. Prolonged good-byes and abundant tears will be emotionally upsetting to your youngster. The same procedure should hold for Visiting Day at camp.



PLEASE inform the camp directors if your child has undergone professional counseling at any time previous to camp. Our knowledge of the facts will give your camper the best chance of success. No refund of tuition will be made for children sent home because of problems of this nature.

AT CAMP

After having seen your child safely off to camp, your full cooperation is needed in order to insure a successful summer for your camper. Most children are quite sturdy and extremely flexible, adjusting to new situations quickly and successfully. On occasion, however, a parent may find it difficult to adjust to the youngster being away from home. While this feeling is quite natural for a parent, it should never flow over into the kind of actions that may serve your camper negatively. Below we have listed suggestions for helping your child at camp:

1. Write frequently with good news and in a cheerful tone (chatty and pleasant).
2. **DON'T** telephone your child. We strongly suggest that the telephone be used only in an emergency. Before phoning, ask yourself the question, "Am I serving my child's needs or my own?" However, feel free to call the directors of the camp at any time if you have some concerns as to your child's progress. Also, you may be assured that the directors will call you if your child is experiencing unusual difficulty.

CONCLUSION

We believe you have made a wise decision to not only send your child to sleep away camp but to Camp Mesorah . Overnight camp is an experience that cannot be duplicated in any other environment. Here, a child can achieve the poise and confidence that comes with the mastery of physical and craft skills. But perhaps even more important, he/she is a vital participant in a structured and democratic society of his peers. In the living experience at camp, a youngster quickly learns that his sense of well being is best served by a constructive attitude toward his bunk group and the camp community. He finds that justice for all can only be achieved in a fair but ordered society. He learns to value himself as a contributing member of a larger group. What could be a more important experience in today's world?

We have assembled the most professional staff available. Countless hours through-out fall and winter have gone into the evaluation and preparation of the programs. We are well prepared to serve the needs of today's camper and specifically, with your cooperation, your child.

We believe you have made a priceless investment in your child's future.

Welcome to the time of your life!