



## What is homesickness?

Homesickness is a very common feeling that can affect almost everyone (not just children!) at some point in their lives. Anyone stepping into a new setting, whether it's a new school, town, or even a different country, can experience it. It's a natural response to being away from familiar people, places, and routines.

## How can you help prevent it?

Homesickness can't always be prevented, but there are simple ways to help reduce its impact before and during their stay. Below are some helpful recommendations to guide you in helping your child prepare for camp and dealing with homesickness before it even starts.

### What to do:

- Talk with your child before enrolling them in camp, make sure it's a decision between the two of you.
- If they are nervous about leaving home, listen to their concerns. Make them understand that camp is for a short time (although it feels like forever to them!) and you will miss them.
- Do not promise to call, visit or send a cellphone, as we have a 'no cellphone policy' for campers and calling home or visiting always makes the situation much worse! Instead, you can give your child some letters to open while at camp.
- Bring a Buddy! Campers that have a good friend with them have a familiar face in the crowd of unfamiliar ones!
- Discuss with the Camp Coordinator before camp and on the first day if your child is likely to be homesick. We can monitor their behaviour and divert attention from feeling homesick to something else. If their homesickness is severe, we may ask you to collect them.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal or favourite blanket or pillow.

### What to avoid:

- Making "pick up deals" with your child: "if you don't like it, I'll come get you." This sets the child up to fail in many ways.
- Using camp for children to have a break from medication. This is not fair on camp staff and volunteers or the camper.
- Sending a camper if they are sick or still recovering from an illness. Camp can be very tiring and may cause them to become unwell again. Apart from the risk that others will become unwell, being sick at camp is not a comfortable experience for campers.

