

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Hints for parents to help their campers have a great week at camp!

The benefits of a week at camp are numerous. Campers are given an opportunity to develop independence, decision making skills, self-confidence and esteem, all within an extremely safe environment. There are several things you can do to make this week a successful one for your child.

TALKING IT UP!

- ✓ Talk about why you want your child to go to camp. If you were a camper, at Camp Okema or another camp, talk about your camp experiences.
- ✓ Talk about how your camper will respond to camp staff. Campers are expected to respect staff and to follow instructions. Remind your camper that staff are fun, caring people, there to help them have a great week, but staff also need to enforce the rules of the camp.
- ✓ Talk about the daily tasks they will need to do for themselves at camp. Tasks such as getting ready for the day, or to go to bed, how often they should change their clothes, etc. Camp staff will work with campers and remind them to do these things, but this is a great opportunity to teach campers to take responsibility for their basic needs.
- ✓ Talk about the exciting activities to try at camp. Encourage your camper to keep an open mind and to be ready to try new games, crafts, and to make new friends.

ACTIVITIES AT CAMP OKEMA

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|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ❖ Canoeing | ❖ Tuck Time | ❖ Daily Worship / |
| ❖ Swimming | ❖ Basketball | Bible Study |
| ❖ Archery | ❖ Beach Volleyball | ❖ Lots of other |
| ❖ Crafts | ❖ Various Games | activities related |
| ❖ Theme Meals | ❖ Skits | to our daily |
| ❖ Campfire | ❖ Playground | themes! |

WHAT IF I HAVE TROUBLE?

Many campers are nervous about going to camp, which is completely normal. However, there are many ways to help campers to calm their nerves so that they can enjoy a great week at camp.

- ✓ Have your child practice staying overnight at a friend or relative's house, so that camp is not their first time away from home without you. This helps to build confidence and a sense of security.
- ✓ Encourage your child to express exactly what it is that scares them (ie: missing mom or dad). Voicing these concerns will help you to prepare your camper, and to communicate with camp staff and special concerns your child may have. Assure your camper that camp staff will be with them to encourage them throughout the week.
- ✓ Make a plan with your camper to address issues they may face at camp. For example, if someone is being unkind, campers should tell a staff member.

HOMESICKNESS

- ✓ Homesickness is very common. Homesickness is most often experienced by first time campers; by campers worried about something specific at home (ex. parent's illness or special family event); if campers speak with or see parents/guardians; or when campers become tired and/or grumpy.
- ✓ Staff are trained to help campers deal with feelings of homesickness. In almost all cases, staff are able to work with the individual camper and the homesickness is turned into a victory for the child, an obstacle they learn to manage and overcome. If a camper is extremely homesick and/or not responding to assistance, parents/guardians will be contacted by camp staff. Our goal is to help all of our campers make it through the week successfully.

PHONE USE

- ✓ Campers will not be allowed to phone home, except with the permission of the Program Leader of the camp. Phoning home seems like a solution to homesickness, however in our experience it almost always makes the homesickness worse. If a phone call is needed, staff will contact parents/guardians. If you would like to inquire about your camper, please call the camp office. Staff will be happy to report back to you. Speaking with people from home can often bring on homesickness, even if it was not an issue before.

BUT WHAT IF I MISS HOME?

- ✓ Do **NOT** promise your camper that they can phone to be picked up anytime they want. Instead, encourage them to see the week as a challenge, and remind them that you will be very proud of them for making it through the week.
- ✓ **DO** encourage your camper to talk with their cabin leader or other staff if they are feeling sad or having a problem. Encourage them to listen to staff and to try their best to follow instructions. Staff are not being mean by

suggesting ways the camper can overcome homesickness. Feeling homesick is not wrong, but if campers give in to those feeling, they miss out on the awesome fun of camp life.

FOR THE PARENTS

We would like to thank you for entrusting your children to us during their stay. We realize what a privilege this is, and the trust that you are placing in us. We take that trust very seriously.

OUR STAFF TEAM

Camp Okema has an excellent roster of volunteers and staff leading and supporting camps throughout the summer.

- Each is chosen for their ability to serve as Christian role models while caring for campers
- All staff must submit a Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sectors Check
- Cabin Leader Training prior to the start of camp prepares our leaders and volunteers for the summer
- Medical care is provided by the onsite First Aid Personnel

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT CAMP OKEMA

- ✓ When you arrive you will be directed to register your camper's arrival, and at that time you will be introduced to the staff who will be leading your camper's cabin group for the week.
- ✓ All necessary medication will be turned in to the Camp Nurse for the week at this time as well.
- ✓ If you have not previously pre-paid your campers Tuck fee for the week this can also be done when you arrive.
- ✓ Please take the time to look around the camp, familiarize yourself with the surroundings and ask any questions you may have. We hope that you feel extremely comfortable with our camp before you leave.

AND WHEN YOUR CHILD RETURNS HOME...

Expect lots of stories and excitement! Some campers will even go through a bit of "down time" after all of the activity at camp. This is common, but it will pass. You can begin talking about the fun that awaits them next year!