

American Diabetes Association

CAMP CAREFREE

Greetings ADA Camp Carefree Parents/Guardians!

Summer 2005

As the first day of camp approaches, the staff here is working hard to prepare for the best year of camp yet. No doubt, you are preparing too, getting the old trunk out of the attic and deciding what will need to go in it. As you think about these practical matters, it may be worthwhile to think about how your child will adjust to camp, and what you can do to help. Younger and first time campers may have more of an adjustment period than older, returning campers. But even kids who have been away from home before may experience a bit of homesickness. In light of this, we have put together a few suggestions we have found to be good ideas in the past--a list of DO's and DON'T's that other parents have found helpful.

DO:

Talk about camp ahead of time. Express your excitement for your child, emphasizing what a good time he/she will have.

Let them know that a little bit of homesickness is normal. You may like to share a story from your own childhood of a happy time that you had when you went away from home.

Send the child with a "security" item; such as a stuffed animal or a favorite pillow.

Send the child with a picture of friends, family or other important images of home.

Send your child mail. It lets your child know you are thinking about him/her too.

Send your child a letter or postcard before he/she is at camp, so that there will be mail waiting on the first day.

Give the camp address to your child's friends and siblings so they can write too.

Include things in the letter that will make your child feel good, like what's going on in the neighborhood, silly antics the pets are up to; and that you are looking forward to seeing your child when you pick him/her up on Closing Day.

Send Care Packages, if you want to. Stationary, stamps, puzzles, colored pencils, film, the funny pages and stickers are just a few things that would be appropriate to send.

Expect that your child may be homesick for a few days. This is normal and nearly always gets better within a few days.

Let us know ahead of time if your child's birthday will be during camp. We will be sure to make it a special day!

We hope these tips are useful, and help to make it a great year for your child at Camp Carefree! If you learned any strategies over the years, please share them with us so that we can pass them on to other parents! We are looking forward to seeing you soon!

DON'T:

Give your child the impression that "only babies get homesick." Let them know that it's okay and will get better.

Forget to write your child! Mail time is important at camp, and it can be disappointing not to get mail.

Deliver bad news to your child at camp. If a pet dies or someone is hurt, it may make the most sense to wait until the child comes home to share the news. If there is an emergency, the child must know about, tell the Camp Director so that the staff can be prepared and be with your child to help break the news.

Expect to talk to your child on the phone while at camp. Part of normal child development is learning to spend time away from home and family. Important messages can be relayed, if necessary, but the campers are NOT allowed to use the phone.

Include things in a letter that will make the child feel bad. Such as: "We miss you so badly, it's terrible at home without you", or: "You should have been there yesterday, it was the most fun we've ever had!"

Send food. Caloric food disrupts the camp Meal Plan. "Sugar Free" create tension in the cabin because of sharing. They also invite creepy critters into the cabin.

Be alarmed if you get a letter stating that your child is homesick. Just as they need to know homesickness is normal; YOU need to know it is normal too! Most often, by the time the letter arrives, they are fine!

Hesitate to call the staff if you would like to know how your child is adjusting to camp life. If your child has never been to camp before, you may want to speak to a staff member to find out how things are going.

THE ADA CAMP CAREFREE STAFF