

PREPARING FOR CAMP | GUIDELINES FOR CAMPERS



Thank you for trusting YMCA Camp Lincoln to care for your child this summer. Camp Lincoln is a great place to learn, grow, make new friends and try new things. For some of our campers, we know this might be the first time away from home without family. Here are a few tips to help your child (and you!) feel more prepared for that big first step.

REMEMBER, CAMP IS FUN!

Children are naturally excited about camp. As parents, we might feel worried for our children, but we don't need to let them know. If you seem stressed about camp, they will feel stressed. If you are excited, they will be excited. If you are worried about camp, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are happy to answer your questions. But when talking with your child, talk to them about what a great time they are going to have. Keep them excited, and they will feel confident and ready for their first day.

RESPONSIBILITY AT CAMP

If your camper will be away from home for the first time, here are a few things to talk about with them before the first day of camp:

- Make sure your camper can identify all of the items they are bringing to camp. If you buy a new swim suit they've never seen and put it in their bag, they won't recognize it among the other swim suits at camp. Have your camper pack his or her own bag each day so they remember what they need to bring home again each night. Expect that these items make it home. If they don't, remind your camper to check the lost and found at camp. Label everything with your camper's full name. We have over 500 campers here each day, so initials aren't enough.
- Sun Screen and bug spray are essential items for comfort and safety at camp. Both should be applied at home before coming to camp, and reapplied during the day. While our counselors are happy to help apply these items, it's great if your child can do some of it independently. The more time counselors spend applying sun screen, the less time there is for adventure. Have your child practice applying both at home. Be sure to remind them to keep away from eyes and mouth. Sun screen sticks and sprays make application faster and easier.
- Campers who attend Camp Lincoln must be able to use the bathroom independently, including wiping, flushing, washing hands and changing into and out of swim suits each day. A wet swim suit can be tricky to remove if a camper hasn't done it without help. Practice putting on and taking off swim suits, and placing all clothing back in their backpack when done. This will help them feel confident and eliminate lost items.
- Choose footwear wisely. Camp is located in the woods. Campers enjoy running, hiking, climbing and walking on uneven ground, with roots, rocks and sticks. Make sure their footwear keeps them safe and comfortable. Toes must be covered, so please do not send flip flops or other open toe sandals. If your camper does not know how to tie shoes, please send them with shoes that don't need to be tied. They are too likely to walk around with untied shoes and trip. There are plenty of great sandal options with covered toes which are sturdy enough for camp.

HOMESICKNESS ISN'T JUST FOR OVERNIGHT

Although campers are only with us during the day, some of our younger campers haven't been away from home before. This can cause them to be nervous before the first day of camp. Here are some tips to help them feel confident and prepared.

- Practice. Have your camper spend a day with someone familiar. Go out with grandparents, or spend the day at a friend's house without Mom and Dad. Help them learn that it's fun to leave home, and that you will be back to pick them up at the appropriate time.
- Visit camp. We offer new parent orientations and open houses with tours of camp. Meeting staff, seeing our facility and asking questions in person can alleviate a lot of anxiety. Your camper will feel more comfortable arriving at camp for the first day because they are familiar with the facility.
- When dropping your camper off, allow them to experience camp in their own way. Remember, camp builds confidence! So when your camper gets out of the car, and heads to camp for the day, they will feel proud and excited. If you linger and watch them, they may wonder why. They may assume they can't make it on their own, and start to question themselves. If your camper has a difficult time adjusting, we will call you. If you are worried, you are welcome to call or email our office. We would be happy to check on your camper and give you a call back.
- If your camper is nervous, please don't promise to pick them up early. Remind them that camp is a lot of fun, and you can't wait to hear about their day. If you offer to pick them up early, they may feel like you don't believe they can be successful.