

# Key Strategies to Reduce Homesickness

- **Before Camp: Parents, please consider the following preparation:**
  - **Involve in Planning:** Show pictures and info from the website of Camp Grizzly. If necessary, reach out and set up a meeting with the Camp Program Manager. Let the camper help pack their own bag so they know where everything is.
  - **Practice Independence:** Arrange sleepovers with friends or family to build confidence.
  - **Set Expectations:** Discuss that missing home is normal but focus on the excitement of activities and new skills they will learn and friends they will make.
  - **Avoid "Rescue" Deals:** Do not promise to pick them up early, as this encourages giving up.
  - **Stay Positive:** When saying goodbye, express confidence in their ability to have fun.
  - **Focus on the Journey:** Remind them that camp is a short, exciting experience that builds independence.
  
- **During Camp: Counselors and Staff help Campers by:**
  - **Stay Busy:** Encourage participation in activities ie: archery, swimming, arts & crafts, games, and nature hikes to keep their mind engaged.
  - **Connect with Staff/Peers:** Encourage the camper to talk to counselors or make friends with cabin mates, as peer support is highly effective.
  - **Comfort Items:** Pack familiar items, such as a favorite stuffed animal, pillowcase or family photos to decorate their cabin.
  - **Camper Write Letters:** Encourage daily journaling or writing letters home to process emotions.
  - **Parent Send Supportive Mail:** Send encouraging, positive, and short letters from home. Avoid detailing exciting things they are missing to prevent feeling left out.

Separation anxiety is real for parents too. This may be your first time sending your child to camp. If you are concerned, or have questions, please email us while at camp at [CampGrizzly@norcalcenter.org](mailto:CampGrizzly@norcalcenter.org) and we can provide you with your child's update as necessary.

