

Homesickness

It is normal, even healthy, and it happens at some point to 95% of all campers. Even staff members experience it. Homesickness is common, but we can do a few things to help campers resolve those feelings and support a positive experience at camp.

Will my child be homesick?

Research shows us that some campers can almost “tell us” that they will be homesick BEFORE camp. Below are some indicators of homesickness.

1. Camper has a negative attitude about camp before camp.
2. Camper has had little or no previous experience at camp or staying away from home.
3. Camper has been forced to go to camp.
4. Parents show anxiety or doubt about camp.
5. An anxious event is happening at home—such as a move, a divorce, a relative’s illness.
6. Camper has a negative first impression of camp.

What can I do?

Parents can use the following strategies to help prevent homesickness.

1. Talk positively about camp to your child as soon as you are considering sending your child to camp.
2. Plan a few overnights for your child before his or her session at camp.
3. Talk with your child before camp to address fears he or she may have such as bedwetting, homesickness, darkness, or storms.
4. Visit Camp Rancho Framasa for a tour before camp. Contact Lauren at registrar@campranchoframasa.org.
5. Provide your child with materials to write home: pens, paper, addressed, and stamped envelopes or postcards.
6. Say good-byes and move on. Lingering during check-in may cause your child to hesitate and focus on his or her fears. Allowing your child to move ahead with this experience will create positive first impressions.
7. Realize that emotional ups and downs are common. You may receive an unhappy letter. This does not mean that your child is miserable at camp.
8. There are two ways to keep in touch with your camper. One is through “real-time.” Real-time consists of visits and phone calls. This type of contact can increase feelings of homesickness. The second is “a synchronized time.” asynchronous contact. Contacting a camper through an email, letter, or checking in via camp staff can alleviate homesickness by reassuring the camper about home. Asynchronous contact is the way to keep in touch with your child while he or she is at camp. Send positive letters and e-mails to your child. A letter that focuses on how much a child is missed or that focuses on how much fun is going on at home without him or her may cause undue stress to the camper.

What will the staff at camp do?

Staff will use the following strategies to prevent feelings of homesickness in campers.

1. Welcome and orient campers upon arrival and integrate campers into the camp experience by introducing campers to each other, taking campers on a tour of camp, and going over schedules/expectations in a fun and non-threatening way.
2. Connect campers with home by making sure campers receive mail every day and by providing opportunities for writing home.

Staff will use the following strategies to guide campers through homesickness:

1. Let campers know that it is OK to be homesick. Campers will be encouraged to share feelings.
2. Help campers cope with their feelings by helping each adjust to the things they can't change, such as the actual length of their camp stay, and help them change what they can, such as choosing to participate in activities or not.
3. If a camper does not work through his or her feelings of homesickness, the Summer Program Director (SPD) will phone you. It is almost always in the best interest of the child to remain at camp. In some rare cases, campers and their parents may speak on the phone. Phone conversations (real-time contact) have the potential to worsen a camper's homesick feelings. The parent and the SPD will discuss this and make the best choice for the child.
4. Most campers work through homesickness and enjoy their camp session. Many return to camp. Homesickness is its own cure. Working through it inoculates for the future.



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Questions? Contact registrar@campranchoframasa.org

