



How can I, as a parent, help my camper who is homesick—missing home?



We are so glad you asked! The first thing you should know is that it is completely normal for a child to miss home while at camp...even if the child has been away before and didn't have any problems before...it is normal and we want the child to realize that. There are several things to remember to do, or not do, when dealing with a camper who is missing home. Many of these start before the camper is dropped off.

- Be positive about camp and don't give an "out", ie...never tell the child to "try it and if you don't like it, then you can come home"...this NEVER sets the child up for success and leaves the child thinking that he or she may not make the whole session and often leads to a refusal or inability to make the effort to have fun.
- Let the child know that he or she may miss home and may even feel like crying sometimes and that is ok...missing home should not be a surprise emotion for the camper.
- Talk about what your child should do if he or she misses home...some suggestions are talk to the cabin counselor, write in a journal, hug a special "lovey", think about things for which he or she is grateful or loves about camp. Do NOT say that he or she will be able to call you. Campers are not permitted to use the phone for many reasons, mostly because this doesn't help the situation of missing home.
- Write letters to your child, let the camper know what is going on at home, ask open ended questions about the camp day or favorite activities but no matter how much you miss your camper, don't over-emphasize this or ask why he or she wasn't smiling in a picture you saw online. You can give examples of how you may have overcome missing home or simply praise your child for taking on this great adventure.
- Include pictures inside your camper's trunk of family and pets, if applicable. This can be a comfort to some children when they need a little "touch of home".
- Do not over-react to an unhappy letter...remember that most campers write during "down times" when missing home often rises. In addition, the camper may write after a missing home episode, then be perfectly fine...but never write another note letting the parents know all is well!

If you are concerned or need reassurance, please email margaret@campmarymount.com. We will do our best to get back to you within 24 hours. Please note that we are often out of the office, on the camp property, and the campers are busy at activities. We usually try to catch up to them during meal times when possible and may need a little extra time. Also, know that if there is a serious problem, we will notify you as soon as we can.

"Storms make trees take deeper roots"

