You can do much to prepare your child for going away to camp, especially if it is the first camp experience. Talking honestly with your son or daughter about what to expect can ease the transition from home to camp. Many kids expect camp to be fun all the time. While your child should expect to have a great time while here, you can tell him/her that he/she will at times experience many different emotions: elation at discovering new friends, fear of confronting a new situation, disappointment when a game or project hasn't gone well, and even sadness leaving friends at the end of a session.

Homesickness may occur, especially if your child is young or living away for the first time. Homesickness is neither a dislike for camp nor is it indicative of camper maladjustment. It is normal. Discussing this with your camper and letting him/her know that this is a common feeling will make it easier to deal with should it occur. If it does, the most appropriate action is to let your child stay at camp, except in very unusual cases. Our camp staff members are trained to work with homesick campers and within a day or two most campers have completely recovered. If you receive a letter that is less than positive at the beginning of camp, don't worry too much – homesickness has often been resolved by the time the letter reaches home. Please do not make bargains with your child by telling him/her that he/she can come home if he/she does not like camp, or that he/she only has to stay a week and you will come get him/her. We have found that this sets campers up for failure as they never commit to giving camp a chance. Focus on the positive and know we are here to make camp a successful experience!

In letters to your camper, it may be helpful to ask about experiences at camp rather than to dwell on happenings at home. Try to put your own feelings of separation into proper perspective, and then write your child an encouraging response. Express your confidence in your child's ability to cope and that the staff is there to help. It is usually a good idea to avoid referencing how much you will miss your child and it helps if parents avoid talking about what they will be doing while their child is away. If you receive a letter that is cause for concern, don't hesitate to notify us by phone.