**Beating the "End of Camp" Blues**

Camp is an action-packed adventure. Each day brings new and exciting opportunities for growth and accomplishment. At the same time, strong bonds of friendship and community are developing. It truly is a life-changing experience. And when the embers of the last campfire have cooled, and campers make their way home, often children experience a mild case of the "end of camp blues."

The blues are not uncommon — causing some children to be tired, moody, quieter than usual, or even irritable or grumpy. The American Camp Association® (ACA) recommends the following tips for families to help ease the transition from camp to home:

* **Help them relax and adjust to the slower pace of non-camp life**. Suggest they take a warm shower and get plenty of rest. Plan to have an "old favorite" for dinner.
* **Encourage reconnecting with friends from home**. Volunteer to set up play dates and get-togethers to help re-establish a sense of belonging with friends they haven't seen in a long time.
* **Allow your child to write, email, or call camp friends**. Many camps encourage campers to exchange e-mail and IM addresses with one another. Parents should make sure to oversee their child's online activities, and make sure that all camp policies are being followed.
* **Be open and available to talk about camp**. Allow your children to reflect on their friends, their favorite moment at camp, and what they miss most about camp. Sharing experiences and feelings will help them feel connected to you, and will make the transition easier.
* **Organize a small "reunion."** Getting together with local camp friends can help reassure your child that though his or her friends are out of sight, they are not out of mind!

If your child gets the blues, remember that they miss camp because they had fun — and they enjoyed taking healthy risks in a safe and nurturing environment. And, it is normal for them to miss their camp family the same way they missed their home family at camp. By being supportive and understanding, families can ease the sadness and help campers adjust to life at home. And, families can help campers remember that next summer is not that far away.

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