**Take Camp Skills to School**

Millions of parents chose camp for their child or teen because of the immense benefits of the experience. Not only does camp foster making new friends and learning 21st century life skills like independence, problem-solving, and teamwork, but it’s also fun! As the summer fades and children return to school here are a few helpful hints to remind parents to pack a few extra items from camp in the school backpack:

* **Confidence** — All through the camp experience, children and youth have tried new activities and been successful; they feel empowered.
* **Curiosity** — Camp has given children and youth the chance to explore, study, and observe in an experiential learning environment.
* **Character** — Camp has challenged children and youth to develop character — through fostering respect for each other, a sense of community, and the ability to solve problems.

How can parents help transfer these skills into the classroom? ACA suggests the following tips:

* **Remember to Remind**—When campers come home, they often keep the spirit of camp alive for a week or two, and then things trail off. Use positive reinforcement to remind campers that you appreciate the positive attitude and willingness to help that they developed at camp.
* **Become Camp-Like** — Families can set the example by demonstrating a willingness to change something at home in order to sustain some of the changes campers have made. Bob Ditter, a clinical social worker and psychotherapist, suggests: “Parents have to make a decision. Are they willing to change something in their practice at home in order to sustain some of the changes their kids have made, such as having a job wheel that you put up on the wall outlining chores?”
* **Everyone Gets a Say** — At camp, children help determine how their day is spent. Their advice is actively sought, and they feel like equal players. Emulating this environment at home allows them to continue to stand up for themselves and feel like a contributing member of the household.
* **Avoid the Negative Compliment**— Don’t inadvertently sabotage efforts by pointing out differences in behavior. Instead of saying, “you never did this before,” praise the behaviors in a genuine way. For example, “I noticed how patient you were with your little brother.”

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