

## **Best Practices of Great Camp Parents**

It's already clear that you're a great parent; you've made a commitment to your child's future by sending them to summer camp. Studies have shown that summer camps make children more resilient and can help them to be better learners. Through observation, we've seen those benefits and more. Campers learn how to be more social, more curious, and more creative at camp. They get a boost of independence from being away from home. They learn about conflict resolution from living with their peers for a week. By sending your child to camp, you've already shown them that they won the parent lottery. They may not see all of the social, emotional, and academic benefits, but your camper knows you've provided them with the best week they'll have all year, and I can assure you that you've provided them with friends that will last a lifetime. If this is your first summer dropping your child off at camp, here are some tips from the veteran parents. If you've been here before, let us know what we missed!

--Register early! Camp UNC fills up quickly.

--Encourage your camper to make new friends.

--If a group of your camper's friends are preparing for camp by making t-shirts, bandannas, or other specialized items, make sure they make enough for new friends; it's very easy to feel left out when you're the only one in the cabin without that special thing.

--Pack more blankets than you think they'll need; it gets chilly at night.

--Leave notes throughout your camper's suitcase or, even better, send them some mail.

--We do not guarantee cabin requests, though we do try our best to honor them (imagine trying to parse out the social lives of 100+ girls!). Stay calm. If you panic or get angry, your camper will too. If you're excited about them making new friends, they will feel more comfortable with the idea.

--Want your camper to get the full experience? Leave their cell phone at home.

--Pack a book or age-appropriate magazine. We like to give our campers time to read and relax.

--Don't promise a nervous camper that you'll pick them up mid-week; let us do our job, and we promise we'll give you a call if they are having a hard time.

--Pack some funky costume pieces for skit night, glow sticks for campfire, or extra craft items to make decorations with. (Store-bought decorations aren't very creative, and they cost too much!)