



CAMP FELIX

HOW TO PREPARE FOR CAMP

Is My Child Ready for Camp?

Knowing when your child is ready for sleepaway camp isn't as simple as hitting a certain age. To help make that decision and make sure they will thrive at camp, here are some signs and developmental milestones that should be mastered by the time they go to camp:

- ✓ **THEY CAN TAKE CARE OF THEIR PERSONAL HYGIENE** (SHOWER, BRUSH TEETH, TOILETING/WIPING, DRESSING, ETC)
- ✓ **THEY DO WELL AT SLEEPOVERS OR WHEN SLEEPING AT OTHER PLACES AWAY FROM HOME**
- ✓ **THEY CAN SUCCESSFULLY PUT THEMSELVES TO BED AND USUALLY SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT**
- ✓ **THEY CAN HANDLE BEING IN NEW SITUATIONS/PLACES**
- ✓ **THEY KNOWS WHAT SLEEPAWAY CAMP MEANS** (SHARING A ROOM, NO PHONES, LIVING IN A WOODSY AREA, ETC)
- ✓ **THEY CAN FOLLOW RULES, LISTEN TO ADULTS, GET ALONG WITH A GROUP OF OTHER KIDS** (SIMILAR TO WHAT IS REQUIRED AT SCHOOL)

Discuss with Your Camper:

1. What are they hoping to experience at camp?
2. What activities do they want/not want to do at Camp?
3. Is the child ready to be as independent as the camp expects them to be (i.e. shower, get dressed, use toilet, eat, clean up, do hair)?
4. Is the camper prepared to follow rules, instructions, and code of conduct? Are they OK to be without technology/phone for a week?
5. Where are they in their identity journey and what will they need to feel affirmed at camp? Who can they turn to for help at camp?
6. How comfortable is the child with making new friends? What will they do if they're not getting along

with someone at camp?

7. How comfortable are they with sleeping away from home? Have they done it before?
8. How are you, as the parent/guardian, feeling about the child being away for a week?

What to Bring to Camp

There is no laundry opportunity for campers so campers should bring enough clothing for five days. Please mark camper's name on each item. Camp Felix is not responsible for lost or damaged personal articles. Please leave valuables at home.

There's lots of dust, grass, and sand at camp. New clothes/shoes will need a good wash when camp ends. Suggested items to bring:

- **Bedding:** Pillow with pillowcase and sleeping bag (sheets are provided at camp) **If you don't have this, please let us know and we will provide it for your camper
- **Clothing:**
 - 5-7 t-shirts
 - 5 pairs of shorts
 - 2 or 3 sweatshirts or long sleeve shirts
 - 1 or 2 pairs of long pants
 - 1 or 2 pairs of pajamas
 - 5 days-worth of socks and underwear
 - 1 warm sweatshirt or light jacket (fleece or heavy sweater)
 - 2 bathing suits
- **Footwear:**
 - 1 pair of flip flops or rubber sandals for swimming, boating, etc
 - 1 pair of comfortable sneakers
- **Other items:**
 - Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, and other toiletries as needed (deodorant, lotion, etc)
 - Sun hat
 - Water bottle
 - 2 Towels
 - Sunscreen that has an SPF of 15 or higher
 - Bug spray
 - **Medication – MUST GIVE TO CAMP STAFF UPON ARRIVAL AT THE BUS (CAMPERS CANNOT KEEP MEDICATIONS IN THEIR LUGGAGE)**

What NOT TO Bring:

- Knife, ax or other dangerous item or weapon
- Fireworks
- Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco/Vapes
- Food, chewing gum or candy
- Money, Jewelry
- Cell phone, iPad, speaker, music player of any kind, video games
- Any offensive material

How to Help A Nervous Camper

At camp, the fun usually outweighs any homesickness. While many kids don't feel homesick at all, some—especially first-timers—may struggle at first, and often grow the most from the experience. If you're worried, know you're giving your child a valuable opportunity to build independence and confidence. Below are some tips to help prepare a camper who may feel a bit nervous about Camp Felix:

1. **Focus on the fun!** Get excited about activities like swimming, sports, arts & crafts, campfires, and more. Activity information can be found in **Parent/Guardian Handbook 2026** - [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
2. **Attend Family Orientation** (July) to learn about daily camp life and schedules.
3. **Normalize homesickness.** Let your child know it's okay to miss home and that camp builds independence.
4. Strategize some coping strategies when they may feel sad. Suggest the following coping strategies:
 - Keeping a positive attitude and participating in camp activities will make the time go by faster.
 - Talking to the counselor or Social Worker at camp always helps.
 - Writing a letter home describing what camp is like and how they are feeling.
 - Keeping a journal about camp – camp has all the supplies!
 - Keeping busy with friends – find someone who can be a good friend and spend time getting to know that person.
 - Keeping a calendar and marking off days to see how quickly camp is going is really helpful.
 - Remember – camp is only 5 days (Monday through Friday), it goes by super fast!
5. **Encourage resilience.** Remind them that challenges help us grow and try new things.
6. **Pack together** so they know where everything is.
7. **Bring photos from home** for comfort.
8. **Set expectations.** No early pickups—sticking it out helps kids adjust, build confidence, and feel proud by the end of the week.

Camp Letter Writing 101

The first letter or email comes to you, and it's full of "I want to come home" and "I'm homesick!"

Should I:

- (a) hop in the car drive to Camp Felix to rescue my child? or
- (b) take a deep breath and think about possible next steps?

Getting a sad letter from your kid or finding out they're homesick is never fun, but expect to receive something like this during your camper's time at camp. Realize that letters are usually written during quiet times when campers are feeling more reflective. Usually, they are perfectly happy long before the letter makes it to your mailbox/inbox. If you feel uneasy after hearing from your camper, you can contact the Camp Director (Damiel) at 347-541-2314 for an update on how your camper is doing.

The best way you can support your camper is to write a letter or email (can be sent to Daniel.Sampson@nyfoundling.org or Jane.Feyder@nyfoundling.org). Tell your kid that you want to be updated on everything, the sad moments but also the activities and new friends and adventures they're having.

Remember the WHY of Camp

As you deal with hearing about your child's discomfort at camp, it's important to remind yourself and your camper why you chose the camp experience in the first place! Sometimes homesickness is part of the growth process, but we can instill confidence in our campers by encouraging them through uncomfortable and challenging situations rather than completely removing them from all sources of discomfort.

You and your camper are not alone. Camp Felix is here to partner with you to help both you and your camper have the most positive and growth-filled camp experience possible. If you are worried about your camper **call Camp Director Daniel Sampson at 347-541-2314 or Jane Feyder-Siegel 646-660-4849.**

To send letters to your child, email them to:

Jane.Feyder@nyfoundling.org

Daniel.Sampson@nyfoundling.org

For an update about your camper, text or call
Daniel Sampson (Camp Director) at **347-541-2314**

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

If you are unable to make it to Camp Felix for your assigned session, or would like to switch sessions or for questions about the bus location, or if anything else affects your attendance at camp, please contact Jane Feyder-Siegel
Jane.Feyder@nyfoundling.org 646-660-4849

HOMESICKNESS

DO'S & DONT'S

(When sending your child to Summer Camp)

DO

1

Focus on how much

FUN

camp will be!

2

Tell them it's natural to miss their parents and home when they're away, and that those feelings are normal.

3

Discuss Coping Strategies, such as:

Keeping a positive attitude and having fun, even when feeling sad.

Talking to their counselor or other adult at camp.

Keeping a journal about camp.

Writing a letter about camp and their feelings.

Keeping busy with fun camp activities and friends.

Taking pictures to show parents after camp.

Keeping a calendar and marking off days to see how quickly camp is going.

4

Let them know how

PROUD

you are of their

INDEPENDENCE

and how

EXCITED

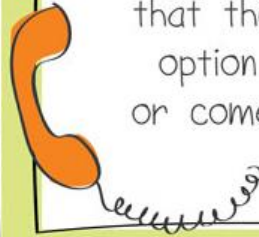
you are to
hear of their

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

when they
finish camp!

5

If they ask, tell them
that there is not an
option to call you
or come home early.



6

Encourage them to
write letters & postcards
telling about their new
friends & camp activities
they're doing at camp.



7

Write encouraging, cheerful letters to your child.



DON'T

1

Tell them,

"If you are
sad after a few days
of camp, call me, and
I'll come pick you up."

This will set your
child up for failure,
since most likely they
will have some sad
feelings that they will
need to work through.

2

Express a lack of
confidence in their ability
to be away at camp,
either directly to them
or in front of others.

3

Tell them you'll be
sad and miserable
at home without them.

4

Write sad letters to your child outlining how much
you miss them and telling them events they are
missing at home.

If your child is homesick, it will be encouraging
to hear that "nothing exciting is happening at home."