

Is My Child Ready for Sleepaway Camp?

A helpful checklist for parents to reflect on before sending their child to camp.

Emotional Readiness

- * Has my child ever spent the night away from home comfortably (like at a friend's or relative's house)?
- * How does my child handle separation from me or other family members?
- * Does my child express excitement or anxiety when we talk about camp?
- * How does my child manage homesickness, fear, or disappointment in other settings?
- * Is my child adaptable when routines or surroundings change?

Social Readiness

- * Does my child get along well with peers and follow group rules?
- * Can my child share space and take turns?
- * Does my child make friends easily or show interest in meeting new people?
- * How does my child handle conflict or disagreements with others?
- * Is my child respectful toward authority figures (teachers, coaches, babysitters)?

Practical Independence

- * Can my child manage personal hygiene independently (brushing teeth, showering, getting dressed)?
- * Can my child keep track of their belongings and stay somewhat organized?
- * Is my child comfortable sleeping in a new environment (like a bunk house or bell tent)?
- * Can my child ask for help when needed, even if I'm not there?
- * Does my child handle daily routines (bedtime, meals, cleanup) without much prompting?

Emotional Maturity

- * Can my child express their feelings with words rather than acting out?
- * How does my child handle frustration or disappointment?
- * Does my child take responsibility for their actions or mistakes?
- * Can my child follow through with commitments (like finishing a sports season or school project)?

Interest and Motivation

- * Is my child asking to go to camp or showing curiosity about it?
- * Does my child enjoy group activities, outdoor adventures, or trying new things?
- * Is my child open to learning from new adults and experiences?
- * Does my child understand that camp may have challenges as well as fun moments?

Family Readiness

- * Am I ready to let my child go for several days or weeks without contact?
- * Do I believe my child will grow from the experience, even if it's challenging at first?
- * Can I send positive, confident messages to my child about being independent?
- * Have I chosen a camp that matches my child's personality and comfort level?

Tip: There's no perfect score! If most answers show readiness, your child may be ready for camp. If not, start with small steps—like a weekend sleepover or day camp—to build confidence and independence.

If you are concerned with any of the above questions and their answers, consider staying at nearby Eagle Creek Campground for the week (or the first night of camp) and join us for breakfast or an evening campfire. We are open to families supporting their child in their camping experience, provided both parties know beforehand the time of the visit and that any visit will be brief, with the goal being to ensure the camper (and parent) feels secure in this new experience!

Any questions, please don't hesitate to send us an email!