

Another season of fun and friendship is about to begin at Camp Talooli! We have always taken the safety and well-being of our campers--your children--very seriously. We want to do everything in our power to keep the trust you have afforded to us by leaving your child with us but we cannot do it without your help.

First off, ask yourself what you want your child's experience at camp to be like. Camp is a wonderful environment full of supportive adult role models that will spend the week encouraging your child to do a number of things. Some of those things include:

- Making new friends
- Feeling comfortable being away from home/parents
- Trying new experiences
- Trying new foods
- Stepping outside their comfort zone
- Participating in group decision-making/activities
- Taking responsibility for their own actions/group actions
- Being involved in the larger camp "community"

Have a discussion with your child ahead of time about some of the expectations that will be placed upon them while they are at camp, and how they will respond to each of these expectations. The experience they will have, for the most part, depends on your child and their frame of mind. Having this discussion can help you to steer their attitude in a positive direction and prepare them for what they are about to face.

Here are some tips to help your child have a successful week at camp:

1. Visit Camp - visiting camp before your child leaves to go to camp for the first time this summer will help your child familiarize or re-familiarize themselves with what camp looks like, who some of the staff are, and some of the activities they'll be doing. Having the opportunity to visit camp with you, their parents, will help them to feel more comfortable with coming back and visiting on their own. They'll also have the opportunity to ask questions if there's something they want to know or are feeling anxious about. *Camp Talooli will be holding Open Houses on May 4th and June 1 between 1-5pm and a Family Camp weekend May 16-18.*

2. Choose the best session for your child's needs - we have both day and resident camp programs running at the same time. Involve your child in making the decision about which one he/she will be attending and what to expect for each type of program. Being involved will make the experience more comfortable for your child.

3. Prepare together - Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing some anticipated situations such as meeting other campers, trying new activities, eating new things, and what to do if your child is missing home (but don't use the "H"- word!). Often times parents make the mistake of setting their children up for failure before they even leave home for camp. Worrying with your child about whether or not they will become homesick (and actually using the word to describe the feeling) will cause them to worry about it themselves and place a label on it when they begin to miss home. Prepare them for the feelings they will likely be having and come up with tools ahead of time that they can use to work through them while still being successful at camp.

4. Consider taking a buddy - Campers can be grouped with a friend who is no more than one grade below or above them. This may help your child feel more comfortable in a new environment. If this isn't possible keep in mind that most kids come *without* buddies and make lots of new friends.

5. Send mail - If your child is staying overnight at camp be sure to send them some mail. Kids love to get cards and letters. You can even send email messages through Bunk1.com. Make a plan with your child to write back and forth and be sure to send them with envelopes, paper, and stamps.