

*Preparing for an  
Incredible Summer*

Parent Information Handbook



YMCA Camp Huckins

Located in Freedom, New Hampshire

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## 2015 Important Dates

### Alumni Work Weekend

June 5-June 7

### Tri-Ath-Loon

June 7<sup>th</sup>

### Mother/Son Weekend

June 12-June 14

### Two Week Resident Camp

Session One      June 27- July 11

Session Two      July 11- July 25

Session Three    July 26- Aug 8

Session Four     Aug 8- Aug 22

### CIT Program

July CIT (One & Two)      June 27-July 25

August CIT (Three & Four) July 26- Aug 22

### Family Camp

Aug 24- Aug 29

### Labor Day Family Camp

Sept 4- Sept 7

### Mother/Daughter Weekend

Sept 18- Sept 20

### Women's Wellness Weekend

Oct 2-Oct 4

# *The Huckins Experience*

Dear Camp Huckins Parents,

Welcome to a new and exciting season at YMCA Camp Huckins. We are glad you are joining in on the fun and excitement of our girl's Summer Camp Program. We offer opportunities for positive growth and development in an environment that is safe, fun and educational. This is a place where your daughter will participate in an array of outdoor activities, develop some new skills and form long lasting friendships. As you read through this handbook, you will obtain a better understanding of how our program operates. Our hopes are that it will help prepare you and your daughter for a safe and fun camp experience. However, if you have further questions or concerns please feel free to contact us. We are very excited about this summer and we look forward to introducing your daughter to new friends and memories to last a lifetime.

Sincerely,  
YMCA Camp Huckins Staff



# All About Huckins

## General Information About Our Camp

### Simple and Enduring

Huckins is not—and has never been—a complicated place. Perennial friendships, hearty laughter, singing at the top of your lungs, and waking to the call of the loon are the simple memories that carry through a lifetime. Fresh air, open sky, and the time and opportunity for young people to become more confident and self-assured, these are the basic traditions and values we hold dear.

Since 1928, Camp Huckins has been providing an enriching summer experience for children. Situated on the beautiful Lake Ossipee in Freedom, New Hampshire, Camp Huckins is accredited by the American Camping Association (ACA) and is a YMCA camp for girls. We have 1,400 girls ranging in ages 8-16 who come to Camp Huckins for 2 or 4 week sessions each year. At the end of each summer, Camp Huckins also offers two Family Camps for those who would like to enjoy the camp experience with their children. Camp Huckins is a place with many enduring traditions and enriching activities, a place that people return to year after year, as campers, counselors, program staff and Family Campers. They come back because they are touched by how, year after year, Huckins remains "Constant and True".

### Camper Grades and Divisions

The camp is divided into four living/activity units: **Juniors, Middlers, Seniors** and the **Leadership Division**. Campers range from girls who have completed third grade through ninth grade. In our tenth grade program, campers become eligible for the Counselor-in-Training program where their leadership potential is closely supervised.

Junior Division, completed grades 3, 4, and new 5th graders; Middler Division, completed grades 5 and 6; Senior Division, completed grades 7 and 8; Leadership Division, completed grades 9 and 10.

### Camper Activities

Campers participate in activities by divisions. Fellowship is nurtured all through camp wide special events, mealtime, campfire and evening programs. Morning activities are scheduled and have an instructional nature so that campers are exposed to all programs offered at camp. The cabin stays together in the morning and follows the schedule located in their cabin. Afternoon activities are free selection and allow each camper to pursue an activity of their choice and to socialize with other campers and staff. Daily specials, team competition, waterskiing and horseback riding are available. Hiking day trips are offered each session.

In accordance with YMCA standards we maintain an active waterfront that includes swimming lessons and free swim. Huckins has 2,800 feet of sandy shoreline bordering the beautiful, clean,

clear water of Broad Bay on Ossipee Lake. There are floats with a tower, one-meter board and slide.

## Our Staff

Many staff members at Camp Huckins have a special connection with camp. All of our Counselors have grown up through the Huckins experience summer after summer. They have been selected from our Leadership training program and have clearly demonstrated role model qualities. They understand the overnight experience and all that Camp Huckins can offer the campers. In order to provide the best supervision for our campers, each cabin has two counselors with a ratio of 5 campers to 1 counselor. Junior Counselors are seniors in high school and Senior Counselors are at the college level.

Each of our four camper divisions is supervised by an adult Divisional Leader who lives in the division. Program specialists are recruited for their outstanding ability in a particular field as well as leadership qualities. We host several international staff each year who work in program or service positions. Each session we have 3 registered Nurses living at camp. With over 100 staff members, many who return summer after summer, Camp Huckins has a wonderful family atmosphere.



# Before Camp Begins

## *Important Things to Know Before Applying for Camp*

### Application Process

- Our **Application** process is simple! Go to our website [www.camphuckins.com](http://www.camphuckins.com) and under “Registration” you will find a link to apply online. Please refer to our website for specific registration dates, as returning campers start registering on November 1<sup>st</sup>. A \$60 deposit is required at the time of registration and is non-refundable once you are accepted.
- **Waitlists** are active and utilized into June each summer. Our Registrar will call you if a spot becomes available in the session you selected. Your deposit will not be cashed until that time. In the event you do not get into camp your check will be returned to you.
- **Final Payment** is due by May 1<sup>st</sup>. We do accept partial payments throughout the winter months to accommodate your personal budget. If your account is unpaid on May 1<sup>st</sup>, your child will lose her spot. Payment must be in US Dollars and we accept checks and Credit Cards (Visa or Mastercard).
- **Camp Bank:** All campers must have money deposited in their Camp Bank Account (All charges will be deducted from this account. The recommended amount for 2 weeks is \$100.00 (less for girls who do not horseback ride or water-ski). “W” and “CITS” will need about \$150. Other charges deducted may include: laundry, birthday cake, craft shop supplies, trips, and store purchases).
- **Returned checks** are charged a \$25 fee.

### Special Needs and Accommodation

YMCA Camp Huckins will provide services to children with disabilities or any special needs in the same manner as services are provided to other children of comparable age. We will make reasonable accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the residential camp experience. Requested accommodations shall be reviewed on a case-to-case basis. Food allergies will also be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the camp office for details.

## Cabin Mate Request

Cabin requests can ONLY be made in writing by sending an email to [angela@camphuckins.com](mailto:angela@camphuckins.com) (requests made in any other way will not be honored). Cabin assignments are made in the best interest of Camp and your daughter. There are many factors that go into cabin placements and we will do our best to honor ONE mutual request (meaning two girls have to request each other). Campers requesting each other must be in the same grade and session. We do our best to accommodate mutual requests and will allow one request per camper. We make every effort to make sure girls are not placed with more than one girl from the same town. Our hope is that your daughter will make new friends while at camp.

## Trunk/Chest of Drawer Sizes

We are very strict on the size of trunks allowed in the cabin. The size is as follows: 32" x 18" x 13 ½". Please do not bring anything higher than 13 ½" as it must fit under the bunk. If the trunk is oversize, it will have to be unpacked and sent home with the parents. Anything larger presents a safety hazard.

Chest of drawers must also conform to specific dimensions, which are as follows: 15 5/8" x 12 5/8" x 27", only one per camper. We ask that you please adhere to these sizes in order to make your daughter's first hours at camp less stressful.

## Other Forms

These additional forms need to be completed before your daughter arrives at camp (all can be found on our website):

- Letter to my Counselor (due June 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Health History Form/Medication: (*being replaced by CampDocs, an online health form*)

## Directions to Camp

Route 16, North and South, is the major route in Eastern New Hampshire. Interstate Highways 95 (to the South) and 93 (to the West) connect onto Route 16.

### **Campers from the South, North and West:**

In West Ossipee, turn right onto Route 41 at the blinking tallow light. Go about 1 mile and take a right onto Ossipee lake Road. Go approximately 5 miles to **Pequawket Trail** on right, with Camp Huckins sign. Turn right and immediately BEAR LEFT. Camp Huckins entrance is 1 mile down on left.

**Campers from the East (Maine):**

**Route 25 West** through Cornish, Porter to Effingham NH. Turn Right at the blinking yellow light, onto **Route 153 North**. Go approximately 1 1/2 miles to road on left marked by large pine tree loaded with signs. Turn left and proceed to stop sign. Bear left at stop sign and continue past Ossipee Lake Marina. Continue to next left (**Pequawket Trail**) with Camp Huckins sign. Turn left and immediately BEAR LEFT. Camp Huckins entrance is 1 mile down on left.



# While Your Daughter Is At Camp

*Policies and Procedures, Contacting your Daughter, Additional Programs*

## Check-In Procedures

- Check-in is **between 2:30pm and 4:30pm** (parking on the property will not be available until 1:30pm and the town will not allow cars to park along Huckins Road). Camp staff will greet you in the parking lot and direct you to your daughters' cabin.

CITs will receive information regarding their check-in procedure.

- **Health Clearance**- after parking your car, you will be directed to the Health Clearance Area where your daughter will be checked for lice and the Health Update Form will be collected. You will not receive your cabin assignment until you have been medically cleared. After 2:30pm, you will be able to be “medically cleared” in each division.

- Cabin assignments will be given out starting at 2:30pm on check-in day. This is done by our staff in the parking lot.

- To receive a cabin assignment on check-in day, your camper **MUST** have the following complete and in our office:

- Health Form (CampDoc)
- Letter To My Counselor
- Payment in FULL.

- **Nellie's General Store** will be open on check-in and check-out days, as well as during camp. Campers may go daily for supplies such as stamps, toothbrush, batteries, etc. Campers in the Junior Division may only purchase clothing with a parent/guardian present.

- Please leave your family pet/s at home on change days. It is an extremely busy time at camp and for safety reasons it is best.

- All visitors should leave camp by 4:30pm.

## Mail and Package Policy:

All campers love to receive mail while at camp. Write your daughter often and keep it newsy, upbeat and encouraging. You should also understand that initial letters home may involve strong feelings of homesickness, especially from first-time campers and that such feelings are completely normal. Children's emotions change rapidly, and the letter you receive today may reflect a moment long forgotten. Please, never tell your daughter that she can come home after a few days if she wishes. These "pick-up deals" encourage homesickness and defeat the purpose of what a resident camp like Camp Huckins teaches. To ensure you receive mail from your camper, we suggest you provide pre-addressed and stamped envelopes for your daughter. Please do not fax or email letters.

We get a TON of mail at camp! Please limit packages to large envelopes only- NO BOXES. We ask that you do not send food, candy, or gum. All food sent to camp will be discarded.

Please mail all letters and packages to:

**Camper Name**  
YMCA Camp Huckins  
17 Camp Huckins Road  
Freedom, NH 03836-4403  
**Cabin Letter**

Please bring one letter already written to be put in our mailbox on opening day. This way your daughter will receive a letter the first day they receive mail. Each Division Leader has a mailbox located on their porch.

## Daily Schedule

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
7:15	Rise & Shine
7:50	Breakfast
9:15	First Instructional
10:10	Second Instructional
11:05	Third Instructional
12:45	Lunch
1:45	Rest Hour
2:45	Free Time (with daily specials)
5:40	Dinner
6:45	Evening Program
8:30	Call to Quarters
9:00	Bed Juniors & Middlers
9:15	Bed Seniors

## Activity Areas

This list includes the activities offered at camp.

Archery  
Arts & Crafts  
Basketball  
BB's  
Canoeing  
Dance  
Drama  
Environmental Education  
Hiking  
Horseback Riding \*  
Kayaking  
Land Sports  
Ropes Course  
Sailing  
Swim Lessons  
Tennis  
Volleyball  
Waterskiing \*  
Windsurfing

### **\*Waterski & Horseback Riding**

Waterskiing is available to any camper who has passed her Outside Area Test. The \$18.00 fee is per lesson. Horseback Riding is available to all campers who have finished 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The \$25.00 fee is per lesson.



## Out of Camp Trips

Campers may participate in out-of-camp trips, including day hikes or sports events with other camps/teams. Camp provides all supervision and transportation.

## Meals

All campers and staff eat meals family style with their cabin group in the Dining Hall. In addition to our main dish option, we provide a vegetarian option, peanut butter and jelly is available each meal and our extensive salad bar is available at lunch and dinner. Apples are always available and “Snack Shack” is available each day from 3 to 4pm.

We can accommodate some food allergies, each is considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the office for any questions or concerns.

## Homesickness

Leaving home is a universal developmental milestone. Today, there is a clearer sense of what causes homesickness and how it can be prevented and treated. Parents should understand that initial letters home might involve strong feelings of homesickness and that this is normal. If after a second unhappy letter you have concerns, please do not hesitate to call our office. The Division Leader will check-in with your daughter and call you back. We discourage campers from directly communicating with their parent. Please refer to articles on pages 21-24 of this Handbook or click on the link below to learn more about preventing and coping with homesickness.

<http://www.acacamps.org/media-center/how-to-choose/homesickness>

## Dismissal

Camp Huckins is a close-knit community and we have high expectations that all girls will be “Nellie”. Being Nellie follows the YMCA values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. We reserve the right to dismiss any camper or staff member whose behavior is unacceptable and contradictory to the Huckins Spirit. Behavior such as fighting, bullying, stealing, use or possession of alcohol, tobacco or drugs, and use or possession of weapons of any sort are not tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal from camp.

“Rules for acceptance and participation in the program are the same for everyone without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or disability.”

**Packing List** (see full packing checklist on page 20)

- Shirts
- Shorts
- Jeans
- Underwear
- Socks
- Sneakers/flip-flops
- Pajamas
- Bathing Suits
- Bathrobe
- Sweater/Sweatshirt
- Raincoat
- 2 Flat Sheets/2 Fitted Sheets
- Pillow/Pillow Case
- Blanket/Comforter
- Bath Towels
- Beach Towels
- Sleeping bag
- Toiletries



Plastic Bucket with Holes for Toiletries  
Sunscreen  
Insect Repellant  
Flashlight  
Camera  
Extra batteries  
Stationary/Envelopes/Stamps  
Laundry bag  
Water Bottle  
One Dress-Up Outfit for Banquet

**Optional:**

Fun Dress-Up Clothes for Specials (wigs, boas, hats, clothes, etc)  
Tennis Racquet (we provide them as well)  
Instruments  
Books  
Mouth Guard (senior campers have lacrosse)

\*Please mark all personal belongings.  
\*Camp will not be responsible for lost items.

**Please DO NOT Bring**

Cell phones, iPods & MP3 players, handheld electronic games, plug-in lamps and fans, electronic book reading devices, camera chargers, expensive cameras, valuables, food and money.

**Huckins Health Policies**

- All campers must furnish a **completed Health Form** online using Camp Docs, an electronic health record system for Camps. Your daughter's physical must be completed within ONE YEAR of her stay at camp.

- **Medications** All prescription and over-the-counter medications should be provided to camp thru Camp Docs. Your camper's medication will be packaged in dose/blister packs and delivered directly to Camp Huckins prior to your child's arrival. CampDoc.com will manage every step of the process. There is a \$4.95 processing fee per camper requiring medication. If your daughter requires either an asthma inhaler or an epi-pen, please fill out the permission form which is available during the Camp Docs process. Camp Huckins has an attending physician, and two registered nurses who are in residence at our well-equipped Health Center.

•**Health Insurance:** Our health and accident medical policy provides basic limited coverage for all campers for routine office visits, prescriptions and outpatient hospital care. This restricted policy does not cover more serious accidents, sicknesses or pre-existing conditions. Parents will be responsible, through their insurance carrier, for all charges incurred if the camper requires medical care beyond the limits of the Camp policy.

• All parents will be notified of serious accident or illness of their camper.

## Huckins Continues to “Go Green”

Camp Huckins continues to reduce its’ carbon footprint and to “go green”. In 2008, we launched our first Environmental Education Program. This program takes place in the Junior Division at the “Nature Hut”. In addition to this program, here is a list of our other “Go Green” initiatives:

- Recycle stations in each division
- Solar water heaters on the roof of the Dining Hall (generates hot water to run the dishwasher)
- Vegetable gardens around camp
- Composting
- Pigs on site for food waste
- Encourage water conservation
- The creation of a Nature Trail
- Online communications to save paper!
- Re-usable plates for cookouts
- Photo voltaic solar panel system at bathhouse in the New Leadership Division

Our goal is to use this opportunity to educate our campers and staff on the importance of protecting and preserving our environment for the future.



# After Camp Ends

*Check –Out procedure, Lost and Found, Surveys,  
Registration for Next Summer, CIT Program*

## Check-Out Procedure

**\*\*Saturday 9AM to 11AM\*\***

- Please drive directly to your daughter's cabin to meet her and pick up her belongings.
- Check the rafters, clotheslines, under the beds, etc.
- Camper will receive a notice if her bank account is overdrawn- please stop at the office to take care of it. Remaining monies will be mailed to parents the following week.
- Nellie's General Store will be open.

## Lost and Found

Camp is not responsible for lost items. On each Change Day, lost and found is located on Program Lodge porch. Please stop by the porch before you leave to look for lost belongings.

## Surveys

At the end of each session, you will receive an email with a link to our online survey through Survey Monkey. Please take the time to fill this out, including both positive and negative feedback. We use these surveys to improve, as well as to praise our staff for their hard work.

## Registration Reminder....for Summer 2016!

Our camp tends to fill very quickly each year, so we recommend registering your camper on the first day you are eligible.

- *Returning campers and sisters:* Online applications will be open from November 1, 2015.
- *Waitlisted campers from previous summer:* Online applications will be accepted starting mid-November, 2015.
- *New applicants:* Online applications will be accepted starting on December 1, 2015.

Even when camp is full, we encourage you to send in your application. Historically, we have taken many girls from our waitlists into the spring and summer months. Please email Angela, our Registrar, at [angela@camphuckins.com](mailto:angela@camphuckins.com) with registration and waitlist questions.

## Counselor-In-Training (CIT) Program

The CIT program is a special Camp Huckins leadership program for 16 year olds who have completed 10th grade in school and have been selected from our “W” (9<sup>th</sup> grade) program.

The focus of the program is to maximize the leadership potential of each girl while taking on a variety of different roles while working with peers, youth and staff. The size of the group is part of what makes this program such a success and allows for one on one time and teachable moments. All of our cabin counselors participated in our Leadership Program. We take pride in the fact that we “grow our own” staff.



## Campers and Social Media

Camp Huckins shares the concerns of many families, schools, and other camps regarding the dangers associated with young people’s use of social networking Web sites. As a camp, we discourage camper-staff relations on social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. We encourage letter writing as a “safe” way for campers and staff to keep in touch. Camp Huckins has monitored Facebook and Twitter pages where campers and staff can stay up to date with camp happenings. We encourage parents to discuss healthy “social” relationships with their children and monitor their online activity.



# What to Pack:

## CLOTHES

- T-Shirts
- Long Sleeve Shirts
- Shorts
- Jeans
- Underwear
- Sneakers / Socks
- Sandals / Summer Shoes
- Bathing Suit
- Pajamas

## OUTERWEAR

- Warm Jacket
- Sweat Shirt/ Sweater
- Sweat Pants
- Bathrobe / Slippers
- Rain Jacket/ Rain Boots

## LINENS

- 2 Flat Sheets & 2 Fitted Sheets  
Or 2 sets of Cot Size Sheets
- Pillow
- Blanket / Comforter
- Beach Towels / Bath Towels
- Face cloths/Hand Towels

## TOILETRIES

- Soap / Shampoo
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Hairbrush /Hair Elastics
- Sun Screen / Bug Spray(lotion, cream, wipes, pumps)- no aerosol sprays!
- Deodorant
- Plastic Bucket to Carry Toiletries (with holes in sides- so items will dry)

## OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

- Crazy Creek- or similar seat
- Ear Plugs
- Sleeping Bag
- For Hikes- a Small Backpack
- For Horseback Riding- Shoes with a Distinct Heel and Long Pants

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Flashlight
- Camera
- Extra Batteries
- Stationery/Envelopes/Stamps  
(pre- addressed & stamped with correct postage work best)
- Laundry Bag
- Water Bottle
- One Dress-Up Outfit for the Banquet
- Fun Dress-Up things for our special lunches  
(Wigs, boas, hats, glasses, etc...)

Footlocker or Container for clothing- this needs to be able to fit under the bunk  
Acceptable dimensions: 32" X 18" X 13 ½" (height)  
If your trunk is oversized, it will be unpacked and sent home with parent.

- Chest of Drawers- Only one - Acceptable dimensions: 15 5/8" X 12 5/8" X 27" (height)
- A battery operated diskman is acceptable for rest hour

## SENIOR CAMPERS

- Senior campers should bring a mouth guard for their lacrosse instructional

## PLEASE LEAVE THESE ITEMS AT HOME!!

- Cell Phones
- I-Pods & MP3 Players
- Camera Chargers
- Handheld Electronic Games
- Plug In Lamps and Fans
- Electronic Book Reading Devices

This is a basic list of items to bring to camp. Use your own judgment on quantity- laundry service is available for 4 week campers only. Be sure to legibly mark all clothing and items with her name! Camp will not be responsible for lost items.



## How to Say It to Your Kids: Homesickness

Paul Coleman, Psy.D.

(The following excerpt is taken from *How to Say It to Your Kids*, by Dr. Paul Coleman.)

Tommy placed his backpack on the floor of his cousin's bedroom, the place that he'd call home for the next two weeks. "It looks as if we got everything from the car," his dad said after their long drive. "We'll be going now, Tommy. Have lots of fun!" Tommy's mother hugged him hard. "We'll miss you," she said. "But we want you to enjoy yourself. You always enjoy playing with your cousins." Tommy's parents waved good-bye to their son and left. When they arrived home two hours later, the phone was ringing. "Mom!" Tommy said when she answered it. "I changed my mind. I don't want to stay. I want to come home." Homesickness is not unusual, but parents can make the problem worse if they mishandle it.

### Things to Consider

While many children experience homesickness, most feel much better within a day or two. If you can handle their temporary discomfort, they will probably be able to handle it, too. Homesickness may be more pronounced if the family went through a recent loss or stressful period such as a death of a relative or marital separation. Homesickness, while uncomfortable, can make a child feel competent when he learns he can overcome it.

### How to Say It

There are three phases: preparation, the actual leaving of the child, and post-separation. What you say at each phase can mean the difference between homesickness or away-from-home wellness.

In the preparation phase, listen to your child's concerns and questions, and explain what he can expect while away. "Here is the brochure for camp. As you can see, every day you will take part in activities, such as swimming and boating, plus you can pick certain things to do that are special, like archery."

- TEACH about homesickness if you think it is likely your child will feel lonesome. Don't belabor the point. "When you feel homesick, you may feel kind of sad in your stomach. It just means you miss us. But the feeling goes away after a day or so. It's just a feeling, and it won't hurt you."
- If your child asks what will happen if he misses you when away from home, EMPATHIZE and TEACH ways he can cope. "Most kids do feel a little lonesome. That's normal. When you feel that way, the best thing to do is some fun activity. Then later that night you can write me a letter and tell me all about your day."
- If your child protests your leaving, try to find out if he has any legitimate concerns. Maybe he needs to be introduced to another child or the camp counselor to feel more at ease. "Tell me what your worst fear is right now... What would have to happen for you to begin to feel better?"
- Find out what your child did that made him feel better and praise him. "So when you were feeling lonesome, you went swimming with the other kids. What a great idea."
- If your child is absolutely miserable and cannot be consoled, he simply may not be ready to be away from home for too long. "It's okay that you came home early. Maybe you have to be a little older to enjoy yourself away from your family."

### How Not to Say It

- "No one else is feeling this way. You should be excited." That is not reassuring and can make him feel worse. It is better to let him know that it is normal to feel a little sad or scared.
- "Well, that was a waste of money. Next time you want to go away to camp, don't ask." You're not teaching him anything useful. He'll just feel bad about himself or bad about you. What good does that do?

- "We'll all miss you so much while you're gone. It won't be the same here without you." Don't make him feel guilty about leaving. Mastering separation from one's family is an important developmental task.
- "Remember, if you want to come home, just call us and we'll come right away. Call at any hour, day or night." Don't go overboard on the reassurance. You are actually planting the suggestion that he will have a hard time coping. Besides, since many children feel a little homesick, rushing in to rescue them never gives them the opportunity to see that the feeling can go away.
- "You're too old to get homesick." No, he's not, and he might be feeling that way for good reason. A seventh-grader had to return home from a friend's house because he witnessed his friend's parents arguing and it scared him. Whatever the reason for homesickness, your child is experiencing it. Try to figure out the reasons.

Rule of Thumb: If you were very homesick as a child (or not at all homesick), you run the risk of over-identifying with your child. Your child may have feelings different from yours. Be open to that possibility.



## Prescription for Camper Homesickness

### [More camp advice for parents!](#)

This summer, millions of children will get their first taste of independence at a summer resident camp. For many, it will also be their first experience with homesickness. But parents don't have to feel helpless when homesickness strikes. The prescription for camper homesickness is a simple solution of preparation and patience.

University of California Psychologist Chris Thurber studied homesickness in 329 boys between the ages of 8 and 16 at resident camp. According to his results, homesickness is the norm rather than the exception. A whopping 83 percent of the campers studied reported homesickness on at least one day of camp.

Thurber and the American Camping Association (ACA) suggest the following tips for parents to help their child deal with homesickness at camp:

- Encourage your child's independence throughout the year. Practice separations, such as sleep overs at a friend's house, can simulate the camp environment.
- Involve your child in the process of choosing a camp. The more than the child owns the decision, the more comfortable the child will feel being at camp.
- Discuss what camp will be like before your child leaves. Consider role-playing anticipated situations, such as using a flashlight to find the bathroom.
- Reach an agreement ahead of time on calling each other. If your child's camp has a no phone calls policy, honor it.
- Send a note or care package ahead of time to arrive the first day of camp. Acknowledge, in a positive way, that you will miss your child. For example, you can say "I am going to miss you, but

I know that you will have a good time at camp."

- Don't bribe. Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message. The reward should be your child's new found confidence and independence.
- Pack a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal.
- When a "rescue call" comes from the child, offer calm reassurance and put the time frame into perspective. Avoid the temptation to take the child home early.
- Talk candidly with the camp director to obtain his/her perspective on your child's adjustment.
- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is a first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.
- Trust your instincts. While most incidents of homesickness will pass in a day or two, Thurber's research shows that approximately seven percent of the cases are severe. If your child is not eating or sleeping because of anxiety or depression, it is time to go home. However, don't make your child feel like a failure if their stay at camp is cut short. Focus on the positive and encourage your child to try camp again next year.

## TIPS FOR FUN-FILLED LETTERS AND CARE PACKAGES

- ~Mail call is one of the highlights of a young camper's day, but parents need to understand what to say and what not say in letters to their children.
- ~Be cheerful and positive. Assume your child is having a good time and say so in your letters.
- ~Show enthusiasm and ask questions about the food, the activities, the staff, the weather, new friends, and new experiences. Questions are asked not so much in hope of getting an answer but to suggest to the child what to be aware of during her stay.
- ~DO NOT write bad news of any kind.
- ~Do not say how much you miss your child or how much the dog or cat or gerbil misses her. Such reminders only reinforce any homesick feelings.
- ~Do not write a lot of home news that will make her feel like she is missing something. Save the list of movies you saw or places you went to eat until your camper comes home.
- ~Do not scold your child for not writing. For most children, writing letters is a wearisome task. To encourage writing, send addressed and stamped post cards to camp with your child.
- ~It is very helpful to drop a letter off at the office when you leave camp, so she will receive a letter on Monday. Also you may want to mail a few letters a couple of days prior to her coming to camp. Mail is very **slow** in Freedom!

Any cheery letter is fun to receive, but if you want to send a special treat try a few of these:

- Send a comic, paperback, or crossword puzzle book.
- Write a message in code, but make it simple enough so your camper is not frustrated. One code might substitute numbers for letters (A=1 B=2, etc) or assign a number to each vowel (A=1 E=2 etc).
- Write one word per postcard, number the cards, and mail one each day.
- Write a post card to everyone in your child's cabin. On each card, write a word or part of a sentence, number the cards. Tell them to put the card together to read the message.
- End a post card or letter in mid sentence. Add "to be continued". Finish the letter and mail the next day.
- Cut a circle out of paper and, beginning at the outer edge, write your letter around in circles.
- Paste a letter, hand drawn picture of magazine photo on a piece of cardboard and cut into puzzle pieces.
- Paste cartoons or jokes on a post card.
- Send newspaper/magazine article about someone the child knows (only if good news) or on a subject that she is interested.
- Buy one or more paperbacks that your child would enjoy and cut them apart. Send your child a chapter every day or two.
- Sealed with a Kiss Packages and Camp Pacs are always a hit. They have an agreement with camp to send packages in large envelopes. (Tips taken from parent magazine and our experience)



# Useful Links

## Associations

- [American Camping Association](#)
- [YMCA of the USA](#)
- [New Hampshire Camp Directors Association](#)

## Vendors

- [Camp Pacs](#)

Large assortment of camper care packages and other items.

- [Best Name Tape](#)

Name tags for camper clothing.

- [C&N Footlockers](#)

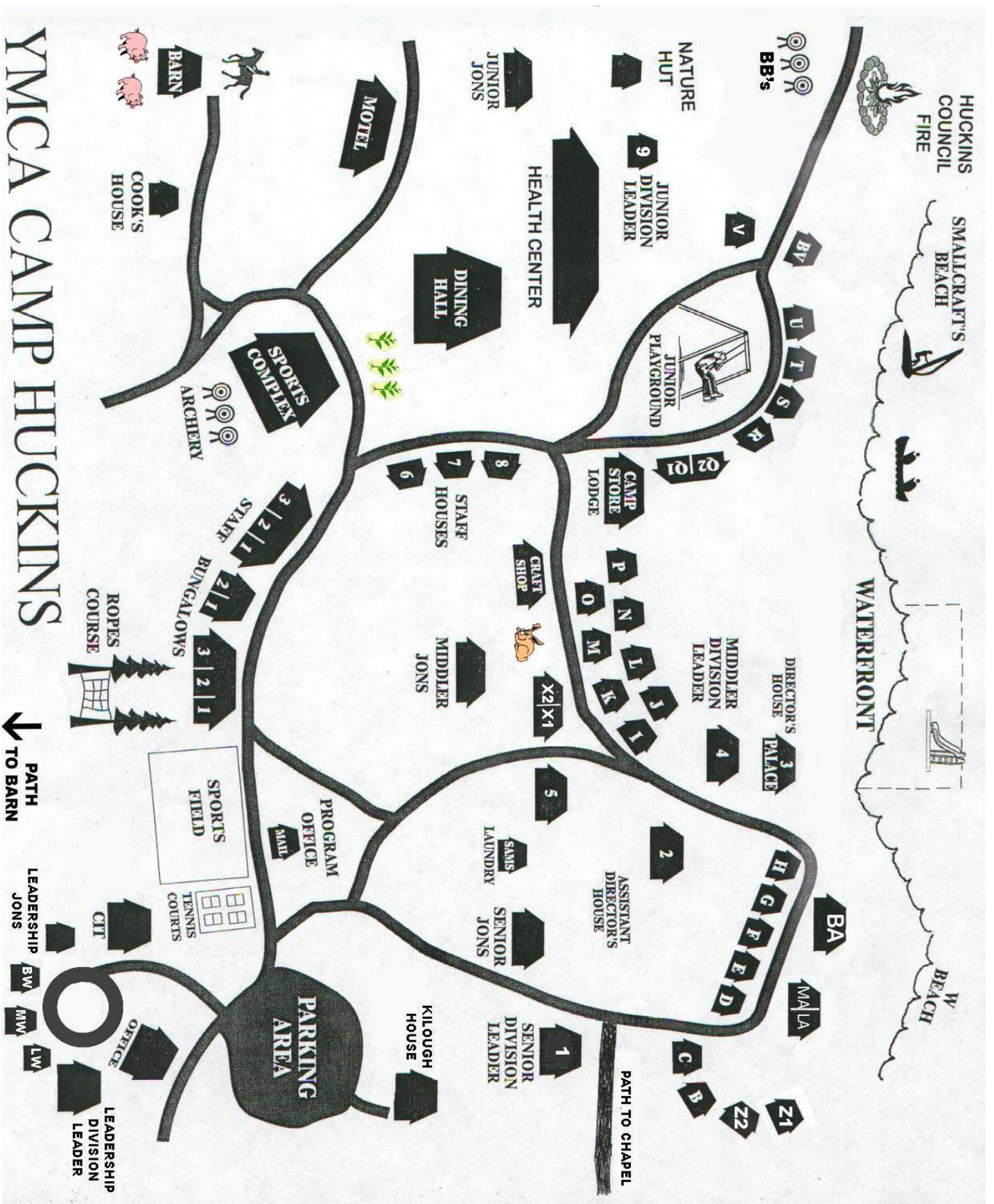
Our campers get great discounts on camp trunks.

The "Happy Camper" and "Companion" models meet the Camp Huckins Size Requirements.

- [Sealed with a Kiss](#)

Gift packages for campers- mailed in large envelopes.

# YMCA CAMP HUCKKINS



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