

Leanne's Ten Commandments to prepare your kids for camp.

1. This is your child's time. You may have had yours if you went to camp. Their experience will be different and that is ok.
2. Child development is called development for a reason. It is process and takes time. Do not compare your child to any other child, including a sibling.
3. Do not be dismissive of your child's anxious thoughts. Yes, they are just thoughts but they are real and never a choice. Help them to build coping strategies.
4. Transitions and uncertainty cause anxiety. As parents we want to give absolutes and reassurance but instead we should be stressing the safety and security of the environment where they will be.
5. Allow for adjustment by allowing time and space for growth. Encourage risk taking and new experiences even when they are outside your child's comfort zone.
6. Trust the system - where you are sending your child and to whom.
7. Be transparent - tell the camp the truth about any family issues or medical or psychological issues and medications your child may be taking.
8. Also be transparent and honest about informing the camp of anything that can help your child to be successful - past camping experiences, phobias, friendships, etc. This is not only for first-timers and applies to day camps too.
9. Keep your own anxiety in check and get help for yourself if you need it.
10. The Myth of Happiness - understand that your child won't be happy every second of the day at camp or elsewhere .

