

A Message from the Camp Director about
HOME SICKNESS

Az Soccer Camp

One of the wonderful benefits of any residential summer camp is the opportunity for a child to develop independence while in a supportive community. Many successful adults look back on their camp experience as a fundamental building block in their personal development.

We are proud of the fact that in the three decade of Az Soccer Camp, we have never had to send a child home because of homesickness. Developing independence while at camp may, however, mean overcoming a degree of homesickness for some children. As I look back on over 30 years of directing a Az Soccer Camp, some of the campers that got the most out of the camp experience were the ones that struggled with homesickness to one degree or another in the beginning. It could be as simple as being uncomfortable with new surroundings until fun activities begin in earnest, or it could be more pronounced and last for several days with a copious amount of tears and heart wrenching letters home. Either way, homesickness can be (and normally is) a good thing...and children overcome with the help of a wonderful camp staff.

My staff is experienced with helping campers move past homesickness. Normally, we will work on getting the camper active and involved, helping the camper meet new friends, and letting them know that it is normal to have these feelings. At times, I will encourage a homesick camper to write down their feelings in a letter home. If you receive a letter from camp that is less than positive, don't worry too much. Homesickness is usually over by the time you receive the letter 😊

Homesickness is not always exclusively for children. Parents can also have an adjustment to camp as well; instead of being "homesick", they are "campsick". If you feel that you might fit into that category, establish a relationship with the camp and myself prior to opening day to improve your comfort level. You are welcome to e-mail me (scott@azsocccamp.com) or call me at 480-217-4095... (but not your child) with any concerns or about your child's progress at camp. We post daily pictures of campers at camp. Seeing a picture of your child smiling and having a great time might be all that it takes to cure your "campsickness"!

Set your child up for Success!

The foundations of a successful camp experience are often laid months before opening day. Here are some things you can do as a parent to help set your child up for success at camp:

- **Involve your child in the decision about camp.** While a camp experience is a wonderful experience for most kids, it is not for everyone. If, after your best efforts, your child says "I don't want to go to camp", you might want to look at an alternative for the upcoming summer. Maybe when his/her friends report back on their camp experience your child will be ready for the next summer.
- **Familiarize you son or daughter with camp.** Look at the camp DVD or video on the web page - look at the photos together that are on the camp website.
- **Never tell a child he can leave early if he doesn't like camp-** it sets him up for failure and he will focus on the "deal" instead of the experience. It also communicates to your child y that you don't expect them to have fun!
- **Have your child attend camp with a friend if you suspect it might help the transition.**
- **Send encouraging letters** telling him/her how proud you are of their accomplishments. Keep the letters focused on camp and not on things that are happening at home. Especially avoid writing about an event she would have liked to attend or saying how much she is missed or the "dog misses you".
- **Give information to your counselor** beforehand about what works for him/her.
- **Don't linger at camp too long on opening day.** Staying too long just delays the transition to new surroundings and can add to your daughter's anxiety level.
- **Help your child understand the Cell Phone policy prior to camp** so they will not be expecting to hear from you. We have a policy regarding phone calls at Camp. You can find that under the Registration/Dates tab all the way down on the bottom.