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San Antonio

ourKids

Magazine



Why Summer Camp Is Great For Parents

Have you ever thought about how sending your kids to camp can benefit you, the parent?

Choosing The Perfect Camp For Each Child In The Family

*Learn more about
how camps can be
tailored to your
child's needs*

2022 Summer Guide



May / June 2022 // Vol. 37 No. 3

Spring Cleaning Jobs You Might Miss

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A note from the Editor

Hi, everyone! My name is Andres. I'm the new editor of OurKids Magazine. Things might look a little different, but I promise that our goal to provide you with stories and resources for you and your kids remains our top priority. Soon, we will be relaunching our website, and a new iPad app. I encourage you to reach out to us on social media or directly though email to tell us what's important to you. I look forward to it, and thank you for being a reader!



Andres Flores

Andres@ourKidsMagazine.com

Author Sarah Lyons writes about how motherhood changed her perspective on her own mother

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BETTY STIEREN KELSO
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Choosing The Perfect Camp For Each Child In The Family



Story by
Christina Katz

A mistake parents can make when choosing a camp is confusing their child's needs with their own needs. If you want your child to be happy at camp, focus on who he or she is

“Focus on who he or she is rather than on who you were as a camper.”

rather than on who you were as a camper. Your goal is to create a harmonious relationship between each of your children and the camp experience, not for your child to follow in your well-worn hiking boots.

Going to camp should be a choice for every child. Don't force camp on a child who is terrified by the idea. At the same

time, feel free to plant the seed in your children's minds from an early age that camp is a fun, life-enhancing adventure for those willing to try it. If older siblings have gone to camp and liked it,

then younger siblings may already be eager to go

themselves. But if your child is not enthusiastic, don't push camp on them without learning more.

Camp Considerations

Feel free to present your camp experiences and what you got out of them to your kids, and invite others in the family to do the same. At the same time, however, communicate clearly your understanding that your

child is not you or anyone else, and that you like and respect the person your child is already. Sending a child to camp to correct or fix things about them is backwards. The person who needs to change their attitude in this scenario is the parent, not the child.

If you have worries or concerns about your child, don't send your child to camp to address those feelings. Find someone you can talk to so you can learn to accept your children for who they are and meet their range of individual needs. Kids who are secure and comfortable in their own skin thrive at camp, whereas kids who are insecure and anxious may flounder.

“Going to camp should be a choice for every child. Don’t force camp on a child who is terrified by the idea. At the same time, feel free to plant the seed in your children’s minds from an early age that camp is a fun, life-enhancing adventure for those willing to try it.”

A Range Of Choices

Sending kids to camp may have been your idea, but in order for kids to feel good about the adventure, they need to buy in to the idea, as well. The first question to ask yourself is, which types of camp are best suited to your child’s physical, emotional, and mental needs? Would day camp or overnight camp be the better choice at this developmental stage? If choosing overnight camp, would your child prefer to be close or far from home? Also consider the mission and style of the camp. Would your child prefer to rough it for a week in the White Mountains or stay in a cozy, family-style camp with modern amenities closer to home?

Parents may need to let go of the idea that what was good for them as children is good for their kids. What was good for you as a child may traumatize a sensitive child or a child with special needs. Strive to meet your kids where they are. Parents may experience some grieving in letting go of preconceived notions of sharing childhood experiences with their children. But try to leave the past in the past, so you can make the healthiest choices for your family in the present. For example, if you were a rugged and athletic child, these

traits may have been widely admired, as they usually are. If your family of origin had a bias against sensitive or artsy kids, you will want to be aware of a possible unconscious tendency in yourself. You may also need

“ Parents may need to let go of the idea that what was good for them as children is good for their kids. “

to steel your mind against what others think about who your child is. You are not taking a poll. This is not the 1950’s or even the 1980’s. Try to view the camp landscape through the eyes of each of your children instead of through the eyes of others or tradition.

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Types Of Camps

This list breaks types of camps down to the most basic types. Camps can become much more specialized as you explore within categories, so this list is just to help you get started considering all your options.

Day
Overnight
Sports
Education
Leadership
Technology
Arts
Wilderness

Girls
Boys
Co-ed
Family
Religious
Traditional
Specialized
School vacation

What if you are different from your child in even more profound ways than personality? What if the two of you have very little in common at all? Would you both crave the same types of camp experiences? Would you even be likely to choose the same camps?

Be Respectful

Children know intuitively when they are liked and accepted. They also know when parts of them are disliked and rejected. To look at a child and compare him or her to your childhood self or to siblings or peers is disrespectful and hurtful. To really see your child and accept him or her for who she is means loving and respecting your child as is. Each child is an individual

with so much to offer the world, whether you can see and accept this or not. If you choose the best camp for your child, you can relax knowing the folks in charge will see the value in your child. When you can see the value in your child, others see it, too.

Trying to force a child to be more like you, when the child is not you, may seem harmless and common in our society, but there is a cost. A child can feel when she is being criticized, so even if you are trying to bring the two of you closer together by putting your child through paces you were put through as a kid, your child may feel unseen and unknown.

You can't send a child who is not like you to camp and get a version of yourself back. Not only does camp not work this way, life doesn't work this way. Take a good, long look at each of your children. Resist the urge to see them as a version of yourself. None of them are you. There will never be another you in all the world. Once you see, understand, and accept each of your children, then you can work together to choose the perfect camp.

Author, journalist, and writing coach Christina Katz has learned that seeing kids as the individuals they truly are always pays off in the long run. She also knows it's always a mistake to do what everyone else is doing, even if that's what the child thinks is best in the short run.

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Additional Information:

Do your kids a favor and see them for who they truly are. Love each of them to the best of your ability. If you struggle with any of this, admit it, and get some help. Often, parents are so busy taking care of everyone else that they neglect themselves. Individuation is an ongoing process that begins in childhood and continues for a lifetime. Parents can benefit by finding self-expression practices that help them keep up with their own needs. When parents take care of their own emotional needs, the need to project their needs onto their children diminishes and healthy boundaries can be restored. These workbooks are a good place to start for any parent who is feeling out of touch.

The Artist's Way Workbook by Julia Cameron
The Creative Journal by Lucia Capacchione
Journal To The Self by Kathleen Adams
Start Where You Are by Meera Lee Patel
The Secret Me by Shane Windham
The Inner Child Workbook by Cathryn L. Taylor



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2022 Summer Guide

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Abby's Attic Summer Sewing Camps are back! Kids age 5+ learn to use a sewing machine on their first day. Each week is a different theme. Choose from a single half day of camp, to five full days, or anything in between. Our summer camps are also an excellent way for your child to work on reading and math skills during the summer, as they will follow written instructions, work with fractions, and more. Materials and snacks included.

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It is also a great tool to help boost your child's confidence while encouraging self-expression, self-discipline, diligence, and fulfillment. In addition, working together as a group helps foster teamwork, sportsmanship, and the spirit of camaraderie.

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Story by
Tanni Haas, Ph.D.

Most parents know that kids benefit tremendously from going to summer camp. But have you ever thought about how sending your kids to camp can benefit you – the parent? Based on my own experiences as a seasoned parent of summer campers as well as conversations with other parents, I can assure you that camp is great for you too. Parents are used to always putting their kids first. From the moment they wake up in the morning until the time they go to bed at night, they're constantly on our minds. What do they need? What can we do for them? Imagine what happens when they go off to summer

camp and the house is suddenly quiet. Here's what happens: slowly but surely you begin to relax in a whole different way. Suddenly, you can hear your own thoughts, and that'll give you the mental space to reflect on what YOU would like to do – to put yourself first for once.

Use that mental space to do things you've been wanting and meaning to do all year. Perhaps there's a hobby you'd like to pursue. While the kids are at camp, you have the time to take that yoga or painting

class, and you get to choose – all by yourself – whether you'd like to do it after work or on the weekend. Get together with some friends you haven't seen for a while. If they've kids at

“Use that mental space to do things you’ve been wanting and meaning to do all year.”

camp, too, chances are that they're available and eager to spend some time with you. Go on a romantic date or two with your partner. The possibilities are endless.

Being able to focus on yourself, your partner, and other people

Why Summer Camp Is Great For Parents



in your life who mean a lot to you is no small matter. As parents, we're used to being responsible providers and caregivers. However, there's so much more to a person: we're also partners and friends. These are important parts of our identities that we need to remember to cultivate. Sending your kids to summer camp may bring out your more playful side that you haven't shown for a while.

Another great thing about sending your kids to summer camp is that it'll give them an opportunity to develop and reach important developmental milestones without you being there every step of the way. They'll become more independent, more mature, and much better at solving problems on their own.

Trust me: Every time my now-teenage son came home from camp, I could tell that he'd grown in leaps and bounds. Seeing how your kids grow also makes you trust them more: you realize that they're able to develop new skills and take care of themselves even when they're not under your watchful eye. Ultimately, summer camp is great preparation for the day that all parents will face: the day when their kids move out and they become empty-nesters. You will miss them - a lot - and they'll miss you too. But, if you've done your job well and you have developed deep and meaningful relationships with them, your kids will always come back to visit. Just like they will each year after summer camp.

Tanni Haas, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Communication Arts, Sciences, and Disorders at The City University of New York – Brooklyn College.



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Spring Cleaning Jobs You Might Miss: 30 Tasks To Tackle In 30 Days

Story by
Christina Katz



Spring cleaning often feels like a huge job. But this list of 30 jobs to tackle in 30 days can spread out frequently overlooked tasks over the course of a month and make them more manageable. Imagine the sense of personal satisfaction you will feel each day, as you cross one more nitpicky chore off your list.

As you clean, create a shopping list of items you replace annually, and then give yourself a chance to track down the best bargains. Now is the best time to kick off your 30-day deep-cleaning spree. What are you waiting for?

Junk drawer. No one likes cleaning out the junk drawer, so go for the most troublesome job first. If you have more than one junk drawer in the house, tackle them all in one day. You'll be amazed how much satisfaction you feel when they are dumped

out, wiped out and re-sorted.

Fire alarms. Walk through the house and test each fire alarm. Replace batteries annually even if they work. Replace worn out alarms with new ones. You'll feel safer in your home as a result.

Coffee maker. Purchase enough descaler for your particular type of machine. Follow directions that come with both products. When you are through, rinse away any residue before using machine again. Then wipe the outside and wash all the removable parts by hand. Repeat quarterly to keep your hot beverages tasting delicious.

Electric teakettle. Clean this while you are cleaning the coffee maker. I usually buy two bottles of descaler and use one for the electric kettle and the other for the coffee maker. Repeat as often as needed.

Jewelry. Have everyone sort jewels on the same day. Spread jewelry out on a large table. Put aside anything that needs to go into a safety deposit box. Put invaluable broken jewelry with your craft supplies. Fish out anything you have outgrown. If an item has sentimental value, put it in your safety deposit box for safekeeping. Take photos of everything going in the safety deposit box, so you know what's in there.

Safety deposit box. Visit your safety deposit box at least once a year. Bring new items to store, remove items you need, and check your payment contract to ensure you never lose access. You can set your bill up on auto-renew, so you don't have to worry.

Tax records. If you file accurate tax returns on time and report

all of your income, you only need to hold on to your returns for three years. Double check IRS.gov to confirm this advice and then start shredding.

Fireproof file cabinet.

Store your private, security-sensitive documents in a locking, fireproof file cabinet in your home. Go through the contents of the entire cabinet each year and add and take away items to suit your priorities and sense of security.

Keys and locks. Have a spot where you throw all of your extra keys and padlocks. Add outdated keys to your craft supplies and toss broken or keyless locks. Check each car keychain in your family annually. Create an extra keychain with duplicate keys and keep it with a neighbor in case of emergency.

Office supplies.

Restock office supplies quarterly. Check with other family members before recycling supplies, in case they can use them. Then donate or recycle what's not necessary. Add items you need to your shopping list.

Closets. Pull everything

out that is not hanging and sort. Then pull out hanging items you no longer love or wear. Analyze your organizational system, and update it if necessary. Only put back what you love and wear. Keep a cloth hanging zipper bag with mothballs in your closet to preserve anything sentimental.

Coffee and tea mugs.

Put all of your stained mugs in the sink in a single layer. Fill the sink with water to just cover the mugs. Add one or two tablespoons of bleach to the water. Let mugs sit for 10-20 minutes, rinse thoroughly and place on a clean towel to dry. Do this quarterly.

Shower curtain liner.

Change your shower curtain liner annually or it will bring down your whole bathroom. To decrease new plastic emissions, open the bathroom window for the first day or turn on the bathroom fan overnight.

Kitchen cabinets.

Start on one side of the kitchen and work your way around from cabinet to cabinet, one shelf at a time. Remove items, check expiration

dates, and wipe off each shelf. Toss expired items, donate items you won't use, and add needed items to your shopping list.

Bathroom and

medicine cabinets.

Follow the same advice for kitchen cabinets, paying attention to things you no longer use that could be tossed or donated. Safely store any expired or unused pills for community disposal days, rather than flushing or throwing them away.

Laundry cabinets.

You will likely find a pile of buttons, safety pins, coins, and collar stays in your laundry cabinet. Get everything put away and place a clear jar for future pocket finds. Wipe up any solvent spills and put down a tray or liner. Restock infrequently used products that are getting low.




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Books. Get the whole family involved in an annual book purge. Keep books you love, donate or resell books you didn't enjoy. Store sentimental books in bins you re-sort once a year. Try not to save more than the contents of one storage bin per family member.

Pet items. Your pet supplies need to be checked and updated twice a year. Check pet medicines, treatments, and treats to make sure they have not expired. Clean or launder pet bedding and furniture. Use flea treatments, if needed.

Refrigerators and freezers.

Move freezer items so you can defrost freezers. Then empty, purge and wipe down inside of both refrigerators and freezers. Toss and replace any expired condiments. Restock both appliances and adjust thermostats for maximum effectiveness.

Oven and range hood. Spray your oven with oven cleaner the night before. Open windows the next morning and turn on range fan. Wear rubber gloves

and a mask to avoid inhaling fumes. Take frequent fresh air breaks until oven is wiped spic and span. Spray down and wipe your range hood inside and out. Repeat steps in the fall before the holidays.

Dishwasher. Take out the bottom rack and clean out the dishwasher drain. You may want to wear your rubber gloves for this. Run a hot water cycle with one cup of white vinegar in a container on the top rack. Then sprinkle a cup of baking soda around the bottom of the machine and run a short hot water cycle. Repeat these steps in the fall.

Washing machine. For a top-loading machine, add four cups of white vinegar to a hot water cycle, and then stop the cycle after the machine starts to agitate for a few minutes. Open the lid and let the machine sit for an hour. Then restart the machine and give it one extra rinse cycle. For front-loading machines, add $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of vinegar to the bleach dispenser or fill to the top. Run machine on hot, whites, or stain cycle and

then finish with an extra rinse cycle.

Toys. With the help of the whole family, dump out every container of toys and sort each one. Put aside any toys that are no longer age-appropriate and loved. A bin of old toys with sentimental value can be put aside for each child for the future. Revisit and update each bin each year.

Cleaning supplies and appliances.

Take apart appliances like vacuums and remove extraneous hair, dust, and grit. Use scissors to loosen hair from the rug beater to improve performance. When you are done, go over each unplugged appliance with a wet disinfecting cloth and then let dry thoroughly. Remove scuffmarks on appliances with rubbing alcohol on a cotton pad. Assess cleaning supplies and put items to restock on list.

Pantry and bulk storage. If you have a specific place where you keep pantry and bulk supplies, go through items, and move those that will expire soonest to front of shelves. Wipe each shelf.



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Toss expired items. Add needed items to shopping list.

Memorabilia. Sort family memorabilia into bins by each year. I have a special leather binder for my daughter's report cards and awards. She keeps ribbons, trophies, and the like in her bedroom. Eventually we will pack everything into a bin alongside her favorite toys and books. Until then, our memories are within reach.

Digital concerns. The best way to maintain digital items is to have a good backup and cloud system in place. If you automatically back up your computer to multiple locations, you can relax knowing your memories and important documents are safe. If, like most people, you have too many photos and videos, set aside a day to comb through them and delete everything unwanted. Be aware, when you remove images from your computer and phone, you will likely also remove them from your cloud.

Consult a professional if you need help preserving digital materials.

Linen closet. Set up a seasonal rotation in your linen closet. Rotate linens quarterly. Take linens that cannot be laundered at home to the Laundromat or dry cleaner for an annual or semi-annual cleaning.

Craft supplies. Use sorting bins for craft supplies. If you can't let go of something small and don't know where to put it, add it to your craft supplies. Throw away or recycle craft supplies you will never use.

Car. Get into your glove box and sort out everything you no longer need. Dig into every pocket and flip seats up so you can see what's fallen in the cracks. Be sure to check the way back and all the compartments you find there and under the floors. Restock emergency supplies, maintenance supplies and anything you wish you had handy.

Hire Out Window Washing

Hire professionals to wash your windows annually or pay teenagers to do it. Window washing is an arduous job, and unless you enjoy it, you are better off leaving it to those with special tools and elbow grease to spare.

Renew Home Supplies

Add any items you are missing to your shopping list before your 30-day cleaning journey:

Shower curtain liners

Descaler

Bleach

White vinegar

Cleaning supplies

Oven cleaner

Rubber gloves

Face mask

Batteries

Flashlights and safety candles

Charge cords and power strips

Closet hanging bag

Mothballs

Baggies for sorting small items

Trash bags for sorting things for charity

Storage bins



Home, Sweet Home: Why Staycations Are Great For Family Bonding

Story by
Tanni Haas, Ph.D.



If your family is anything like mine, you probably spend much of the year saving up for that one, big vacation trip with the kids. Giving the kids amazing experiences and memories that'll last a lifetime is worth saving and working hard for. But when it comes to strengthening family bonds, there's nothing like an old-fashioned staycation. Research shows that the more familiar your vacation surroundings are, the happier your kids will be. According to Dr. Karen Melton, the author of a recent study on the topic, "the best predictor of happiness for families is spending quality time together in familiar activities inside the home."

Sounds strange? Not really. If you think about it for a moment, it begins to make sense. Dr. Melton and her colleagues discovered that when families travel to new and unfamiliar places, they spend a great deal of time and energy organizing themselves and processing all that's happening. But when they vacation closer to home – and

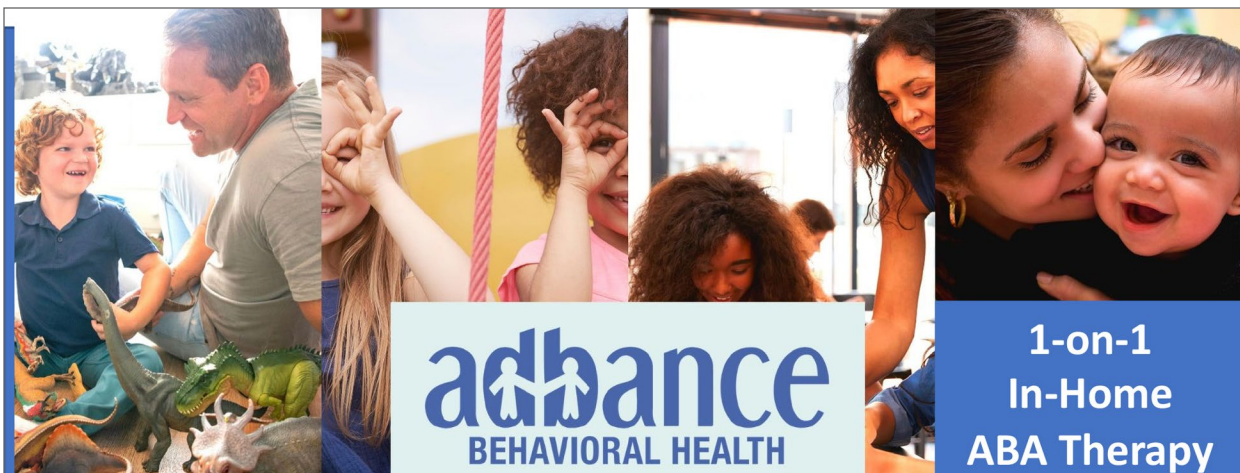
especially in their home – they have the time and energy to relax and focus on each other. During a vacation trip away from home, there are so many choices to make every day: what time to get up in the morning, what sites to see, what restaurants to eat at. The list goes on and on. At home, simply doing fun stuff together, we can just enjoy each other's company. So, what are some great staycation activities? Here are three of my family's favorites: **Playing Board Games** No matter how addicted they are to their online games, your kids can get into hanging out together as a family if you play a good board game. Our family favorites are Charade and Taboo: we laugh our heads off with the funny gestures and faces we make trying to give clues.

Listening To Music Most people walk around all day, with their headphones on, streaming their own music. It's good to take off those earbuds and enjoy music with the rest

of the family. It's fun to gather around a computer and take turns picking your favorite songs on YouTube. Your kids get to hear the oldies from your youth, and you get to hear the top songs of the moment that they like. Your kids' and your own musical tastes may change in ways you didn't think possible.

Cooking Meals

Few things bring a family together like cooking a meal. It's active, fun, everyone can participate, and in the end you get to enjoy the fruits of your labor. To add excitement, make the meal prep a fun challenge. Create rules like you can only cook with what you already have in the kitchen. If your family is big enough, divide into two teams with each responsible for different parts of the meal. One team makes the main course, and the other makes the salad and dessert. Take turns in the kitchen, and don't tell the other team what you've been cooking. Sitting down to eat will be a fun and surprising mystery.



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How Motherhood Made Me Appreciate My Mom

Story by
Sarah Lyons

When I look back at each important moment in my life: the day I learned to drive, my graduation, my wedding, the birth of my first child,

“I appreciate my mom so much more for the things she has always done with little or no recognition”

she is always standing in the background smiling and cheering me on. More importantly, she was part of the other not-so-monumental moments in my life like when I got stung by a bee, when the kids teased me, and when I cried my way through my first broken heart. My mom was always there to support me through all the moments, big and small. Now that I have been a mom for a dozen years, I appreciate my mom so much more for the things she has always done with little or no recognition. I now realize the sacrifices she made and the monumental effort she put in. Here are just a few reasons why I appreciate my mom a whole lot more since becoming a mom.

For maintaining

The mother's work is never done and it is a thankless job. Taking even one day off

means more work for days to come. Moms pick up the same toys, wash the same dishes, and do the same laundry over and over again. Not only do moms

maintain the housework but they also hold a mental inventory of all items in the

home. Most moms can recall the location of the baby's favorite stuffed animal, the toddler's missing shoe, the library books, the stapler, and any other random item a family member may request at any given time. I appreciate the example of steadfastness that my mom gave me for maintaining our home.

For managing

As moms, we often feel like we live in our minivans. Moms don't just transport kids from one activity to the next. They also maintain the family calendar, make appointments, and make sure everyone is in the right place at the right time with the right gear (musical instrument, snacks, sports gear, sunscreen, backpack, and the list goes on). Juggling school and activities in itself is a full time job that my mom (and most moms) manage



with ease. I appreciate my mom for being the social planner, taxi driver, and personal assistant to our whole family as we grew up.

For enduring

The first time I dropped my son off at a babysitter's and watched him cry and reach for me in the window my heart broke. As moms, we endure heartache often as we watch our children learn and grow, succeed and fail, and endure illnesses, hurt feelings, and disappointment. Our heart soars when they meet their goals and sinks when things don't work out. Motherhood is a roller coaster of emotions that us moms withstand without complaint. I appreciate my mom for her strong support of me even when she was hurting too.

For the unseen

There are things moms do everyday that go unnoticed. Moms make sure the football jersey is clean before the next game, check in on a sick kid during the night, drop off a forgotten lunchbox, put puzzle pieces back where they belong, replace toothbrushes, clean out the pantry, email teachers with concerns, volunteer, cook, shop, and so many little things that keep a family going every day. The little things that don't seem to matter, that most won't notice, that no one asks for, that moms do just because they want to show their love for their family. I appreciate my mom for all the things she has done that I never thought to thank her for.

For loving me anyway

Moms love their kids through tantrums, potty training, back talk, and rebellion. There is no doubt that raising kids is trying on the patience but moms have a way of letting us know that no matter what mistakes we make, they will be there to catch us when we fall. I appreciate my mom for loving me even when I was unlovable.

For letting me go

When you become a mother, you are the center of your child's world. You feed them, change them, and comfort them. The more they grow, the more independent they become. While this is something to celebrate, it can be heart wrenching to loosen the grip on a child and trust them to manage life and all of its challenges alone. It's scary and new and feels more like a loss of control than anything else, but as you watch your child take on life's challenges it can be a great sense of pride as well. I appreciate my mom for letting me go, grow, and experience life in my own way.

This Mother's Day, take notice of the hard work moms do every day. Acknowledge the little things they do, thank them for always being there, and hug them tight before you leave.



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10 Surprising Things I Learned After Sending My Kids to Camp

Story by
Rebecca Hastings

I knew certain things about sending my kids to camp. I knew they would spend a lot of time outside and they would try new things. I was thrilled they would meet new people and learn more about something they love. They would swim and laugh and stay up way too late. These are the things I knew.

But after they got home, I realized there were other things, things I couldn't have imagined would be true. Despite having gone to camp as a kid, I somehow forgot or didn't look at it through the same lens. And now, as a mom, I couldn't hide my surprise at some of what I discovered when they got back.

Beyond the fun and the lousy food. After the bonfire stories

and the silly games they played, these are the things I didn't see coming. And I'm starting with the hardest one.

1. They struggled, but it's worth it. I know this isn't what we want for them, but it's actually a good thing. Think about a time you had to work really hard for something. A time you failed and tried again. What happened? You learned. You persevered. You became stronger. So, yes, at camp there was struggle. Maybe they didn't get the top bunk as they wanted or they weren't able to stand up on the water skis. Maybe they missed home. A lot. But they made a friend that helped them feel less lonely. Whatever the struggle, it was an opportunity for growth they

would not have had at home. And that makes the struggle worth it.

2. Speaking of growing, they grew. They left looking like your baby, and somehow they come home looking more grown-up. It doesn't matter if they were gone the whole summer or two days. Independence makes them grow. (Side note: they will still be your baby.)

3. That last hug and first hug are the best you have had in a long time, especially if you have tweens or teens. The hug right before they leave might feel harder than you imagined, so you hug tight. And when they get back, the simple act of having your arms around them again, well, that's just magic. Except...



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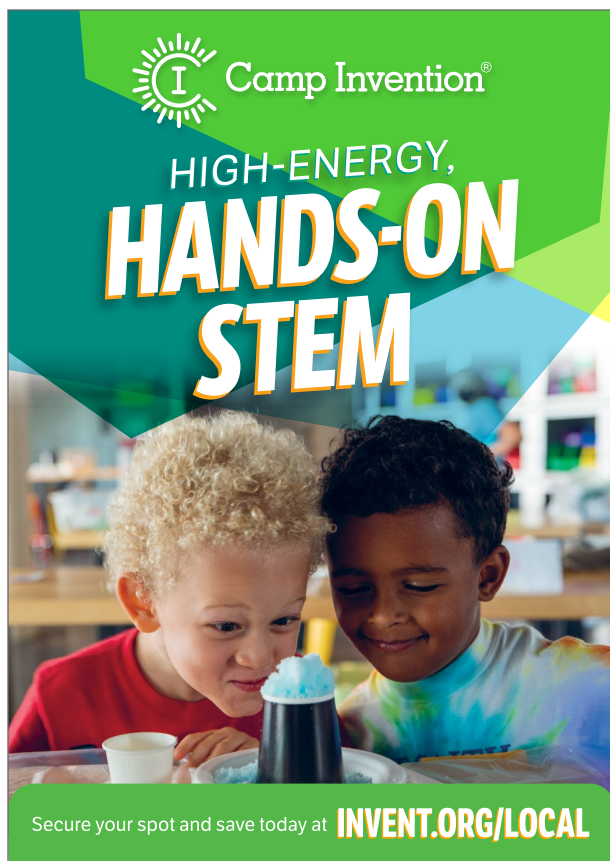
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4. They stink. It doesn't matter if they went to day camp or three weeks in a cabin. Hygiene is different at camp. Let's be real: it's non-existent. But they survived and you can send them right to the shower when they get home.

5. The laundry will surprise you. Somehow all the clothes will smell like damp gym shoes left in a garbage can for a week. This is odd considering the reality that they wore the same clothes most of the time and didn't bother to change. General rule: if it went to camp it gets washed. Clothes, sleeping bags, people. It all gets washed.

6. They need sleep. You're going to want to hear all about it. And they will be excited to tell you.

For exactly fifteen minutes. And then they will fall into a deep sleep, perhaps even sleeping through dinner straight until the next day. There is nothing wrong, they are simply exhausted from their adventures. It's okay though because you'll go in and check on them like you did when they were little, brushing back their hair and kissing their forehead.

7. They have friends you don't know. They met people. They made new friendships. They'll talk about these people as if you know them. Just play along. It's easier on everyone.

8. Camp store money was the best. And yes, they spent it all on candy. They'll be fine.

9. Your letters/emails/texts

meant more to you than they did to them. And it's okay. If they don't remember what you wrote or barely toss a thank you nod your way, they served their purpose: they reminded them you are always there for them and they let you feel more connected. Win-win.

10. Even if it was "THE BEST WEEK EVER" they are glad to be home. They spent the whole week being go-go-go. Now, they are back to where they are safe and loved and can relax. And that feels pretty great for both of you.

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