

Minimizing Homesickness

For many of our students, their week at The Mosaic Project's Outdoor Project marks the first time they have been away from home for an extended period of time. This is an extremely special and rewarding occasion!

Missing home, family, and even pets is natural for children, especially when it is their first time away from home. Most students experience a short adjustment period to Outdoor Project. Soon, they get caught up in the excitement of new friends, activities, and adventures. Our staff is expert at supporting students as they adjust to life at The Mosaic Project. We are happy to say that after working with thousands of students, we have very rarely had a student go home because of homesickness. Often the secret ingredient in helping students to overcome a bout of homesickness is preparation by their parents. **Here are some tips for how you can help your children adjust quickly and easily to being away from home:**

- Start while your children are still at home and help them to be proud of being independent and ready for The Mosaic Project's Outdoor Project.
- Talk about what your children are looking forward to learning at Mosaic. Reinforce their interest in and excitement about the program and about meeting new friends.
- Share stories about your own first experience away from home (keeping the spin positive!).
- Point out what your children do well and how that will be an asset to the Mosaic community.
- Plan for your child to stay the whole session. **DO NOT** tell them that they can call home, come home, or that you will pick them up if they are homesick. It sets them up for failure instead of success. It prevents them from becoming fully integrated into the Outdoor Project and can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Remind your child that there are many supportive, loving adults at The Mosaic Project's Outdoor Project, and they can—and should!—go to any of them if they are feeling homesick or dealing with any other concern or issue that may arise.
- Have them practice being away from home by having overnights with friends or family.
- Pack a favorite personal item and a family picture.
- Let them know how proud you are of them for taking on the challenge of spending the week at Mosaic!
- Remind your child that homesickness is actually a very beautiful thing—it means that they love their family and their home, and missing them is a reminder of your love. Consider it a gift that allows you to appreciate all you have back at home. It can also be difficult for parents to be away from their children for a week.

Here are some tips to help you adjust quickly and easily to having your children away at our Outdoor Project:

- Before your children leave, make a list of things you are going to accomplish while they are enjoying their Mosaic experience (things you have not gotten around to doing).
- Visit our website (www.mosaicproject.org), watch our videos, and remind yourself of the growth, development, and independence you want for your children.
- Talk with other parents who have experienced the same feelings when their children left for the first time.
- Take time for yourself! Just like your children are trying new things and experiencing personal growth, we encourage you to do the same. Rest and recharge so you can be energized when they come home with all of their great Mosaic stories.