

# New Campers & Families



*We've been waiting for you!*

And we know you've been waiting for us!! From the moment we decided we couldn't open the gates to Camps Airy & Louise last summer, we've been working round-the-clock to do everything we can to greet you 'in-person' on our mountains this year. And now we're finally almost there. Just a few more finishing touches and we'll be able to stroll up-and-down our hills, celebrate Shabbat, laugh, play, grow and most of all, be together.

As we have always done at camp, we plan to encourage and support every member of our camp family to be fearless, brave, helpful, joyful, kind and especially for this summer, flexible. We are confident that we are doing everything we can to make camp safe, comfortable and fun and we can't wait to be there with you.

As soon as you step on the mountain, you'll become a member of our camp family. You'll be celebrating Shabbat, exploring nature, participating in campfires, swimming, arts and crafts, athletics, eating Rocky's pizza, sharing bunks with new friends, etc. and then of course we'll all be learning new things together: campers unpacking themselves, dining hall procedures, hand-washing stations, masks, lots of new tents, etc.

**Like you, we know how important it is to prepare your children with information.  
So here are some suggestions that might be helpful:**

## **Talking the Talk**

Young minds learn best when they are calm...pick a 'good' moment.

As a parent, you can often be best served by listening, reflecting and then sitting with it before responding. Sometimes waiting allows you to learn just a little bit more.

Don't try to fix everything, particularly difficult emotions.

Feel the feels but be careful about passing on your worries. Since you know that going back to camp is OK, that goes a long way in helping your camper feel the same confidence.

Acknowledge your own feelings and be careful not to pass on any anxieties to your child. Share your enthusiasm not your fear.

When talking to your child, remember to acknowledge their learning/listening style; some talk and some give 1-word responses...they're all good starting positions.

Help them name their emotions; and then address them step-by-step with objectives to enjoy autonomy, togetherness and belonging.

Discuss what you can predict and accept what you can't...so answer their questions honestly; and it's always OK to not know an answer.



Ask your child what THEY think they should do to be prepared.

Campers will be eager to see their friends, but at the same time they may also have understandable concerns. Listen. Support. Re-frame.

## Walking the Walk



**Encourage outdoor time away from screens.** One of the best parts of camp is the lack of screens and the opportunity for free outdoor play. Campers may be feeling more worried about parting with screens this year than in years past. Work with your child to start weaving non-screen time into the day. Take walks, go to the playground (wearing a mask!), ride bikes around the neighborhood etc.



**Look for ways to build independence.** Start purposefully looking for ways for your camper to have some autonomy. For instance, have them put away their own laundry, set the table, and make choices about non-screen leisure time.



**Establish or reestablish a daily routine.** Camp will bring the reintroduction to a daily consistent schedule. As camp gets closer, consider encouraging consistent meal times, healthy sleep habits, such as winding down at night with a quiet activity, and going to bed and waking up around the same time each day.



**Connect with new camp friends.** Either through Zoom, social media, writing letters, or through a socially distanced outdoor gathering, help your child get to know some other campers their age. Reach out to Marty or Alicia if you need help finding families in your area.

**The 4 Magic Words - *I need your help.***  
**Don't hesitate to come to us with difficult questions.**  
**Just ask, and we'll find the answer for you!**

**WE CAN'T WAIT TO BE ON THE MOUNTAIN TOGETHER!**

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