

What are the secrets of a happy camper?

It’s summertime, and that means sending the kids off to sleep-away camp. Many who would have spent a few hours close to home in a day camp a generation ago are being packed off for two, four, six and even eight weeks away from home. How does a parent deal with homesickness and other emotional issues? Take this quiz and see if you can tell what makes the difference between a happy camper and a sad one.

1. Even the most well-adjusted child can suffer from homesickness at camp.

True () False ()
2. Homesickness will begin to subside about a week into the sleep-away-camp experience.

True () False ()
3. You should ask your camper to call you every day so you know she’s OK.

True () False ()
4. Packing reminders of home is just an unnecessary crutch.

True () False ()
5. Sending an insecure, introverted child to camp might not toughen her up.

True () False ()
6. The best way to make friends is to find a camp focused on your child’s talent or interest.

True () False ()
7. Bringing a best friend to camp is always a good idea.

True () False ()
ANSWERS:

1. **True.** There really is no predicting which child will suffer from homesickness and which will take the change of environment in stride. But sensitive, shy or fearful children are sometimes more likely to rely on the cocoonlike atmosphere of home to make them feel secure. Even if they’ve had sleepovers, most young kids today are used to very frequent cell-phone contact with parents as they find their way to independence.

2. **True.** If the child can make it through that first week, he should begin to feel better.

If communication is not allowed until then, he will have a chance to turn to other campers or camp instructors for comfort. Many close bonds can be formed this way.

3. **False.** Her successful adjustment to the sleep-away camp depends on being able to set home aside for a little while, emotionally, so that she can fully partake of this new experience. Asking her to call



Dr. Joyce Brothers

- Ask Dr. Brothers

every day because of your own anxiety won’t do anything to make her feel more secure. Arrange for a weekly phone call home, and ask the staff to alert you to any serious problems in between. Now you can enjoy your child’s vacation!

4. **False.** Even when college kids go off to school, they bring their old favorite stuffed animal or the posters that got them through tough times in high school. So (assuming camp regulations permit) let your child pack a few special items that will stand for home in his mind when he’s bunking with strangers. A picture of siblings or a pet, some favorite CDs or a couple of good mystery books can serve as ice-breakers for talking with new friends and bunkmates, who will want to know everything about him as fast as they can.

5. **True.** While there certainly is a chance that your little shy youngster will return home sporting a banner proclaiming her Miss Popularity, you shouldn’t count on it.

Trying to change a child’s basic personality is futile, and if you send her off with false expectations, it will only show her that you don’t care much for her the way she is. A goal of making one or two friends, learning a new skill and having fun would be a great success for her to be proud of.

6. **False.** Sometimes sports camps, acting or dancing camps or other competitive venues pit children against one another so that jealousies stand in the way of friendships. A camp with shared adventures might be best for bonding.

7. **False.** If the best friend becomes more popular, or makes different friends than your child at camp, their own friendship will be put to the test.

Let your child try out being a “new” person this summer on his own, and see his growth!

If you answered six of the eight questions correctly, you have a good idea of how to avoid the homesickness blues.

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Photo by Chris Leiker and Lyle Herrman

Touch and go

A tornado touched down 10 miles east of Hoxie at about 1:30 p.m., Tuesday. Sheridan County residents were given warning of the possibility for tornadoes by the National Weather Service Office in Goodland earlier in the day. Chris Leiker and Lyle Herrman, both of Hoxie, caught the event on film.

For the Record

The following arrests or incidents have been provided by either the Thomas County Sheriff’s office or the Colby Police Department.

All suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The Thomas County Jail is used by the towns of Colby and Oakley and Logan and Thomas counties.

Thomas County Sheriff Friday, May 18

• **Trespass:** Tyson Allen Plumisto, 20, of Colby was arrested at 7:30 a.m. by the Colby Police Department in the 600 block of North Sterling. Charges pending criminal trespass and reckless driving.

• **Failure to Appear:** Lucas Alexander Moore, 21, of Colby was arrested at 2:19 p.m. by the Colby Police Department in the 1100 block of South Franklin.

Charges pending include five failures to appear for registration, proof of insurance and three for driving with revoked license.

Saturday, May 19

• **Domestic:** Michele Marie Brockman, 36, and Richard Dean Brockman, 40, of Denver were arrested at 8:30 p.m. by the Logan County Sheriff’s Office in the 300 block of Miles Street, Winona.

Charges include disorderly conduct, and two failures to appear for driving with a revoked license.

• **Domestic:** Dee Petty, 46, of Brewster was arrested at 11:39 p.m. by the Colby Police Department in the 700 block of South Franklin. Charges pending include battery, disorderly conduct and probation violation.

Sunday, May 20

• **Disorderly conduct:** Michelle Ann O’Brien, 29, of Denver, Colo., was arrested at 12:47 a.m. by the Colby Police Department in the 700 block of South Franklin. A charge for disorderly conduct is pending.

Monday, May 21

• **Failure to appear:** Douglas Emerson Bennett, 24, of Logan, Ohio, was arrested at 9:49 a.m. by the Colby Police Department in the 1100 block of South Franklin.

Charges pending included two failures to appear on telephone harassment.

Tuesday, May 22

• **Failure to pay:** Michael Jordan Ackerson, 18, of Santa Fe, NM, was arrested at 1:43 p.m. by the Colby Police Department in the 2200 block of South Range. Charges pending include failure to pay, driving while suspended.

Wednesday, May 23

• **Failure to appear:** Jaime Javier Gonzalez-Barraza of Mexico was arrested at 11:07 a.m. by the Thomas County Sheriff’s Office in Shawnee county. Charges pending include failure to appear, possession of marijuana.

Thursday, May 24

• **Worthless check:** Michelle Renea Lane, 19, of Garden City, was arrested at 2 p.m. by the Thomas County Sheriff’s Office at the Law Enforcement Building. Charges pending include giving worthless check.

• **Driving under influence:** Danny Alan Peck, 50, of Scottsbluff, Neb., was arrested at 11:23 p.m. by the Colby Police Department in the 100 block of East Third Street. Charges pending include driving under the influence.

Friday, May 25

• **Disorderly conduct:** Carolyn Sue Rouse, 47, of Poplar Bluff, Mo., was arrested at 10:08 p.m. by the police in the 1900 block of South Range. Charges pending include disorderly conduct.

• **Failure to appear:** Albino Gamez, 45, of Kansas City, Mo., was arrested at 1:15 p.m. by the Thomas County Sheriff’s Office at the 100 block of East Fifth Street. Charges pending include failure to appear contempt of court.

• **Probation violation** Timothy Eugene Sutton, 19, of Denver, Colo., was arrested at 8:30 a.m. by the Thomas County Sheriff’s Office at the Court House. Charges pending include probation of violation in theft.

Saturday, May 26

• **Disorderly conduct:** James Howard Toms, Jr., 32, of Manhattan was arrested at 2:16 p.m. by the Colby police in the 1700 block of West Fourth Street. Charges pending include disorderly conduct.