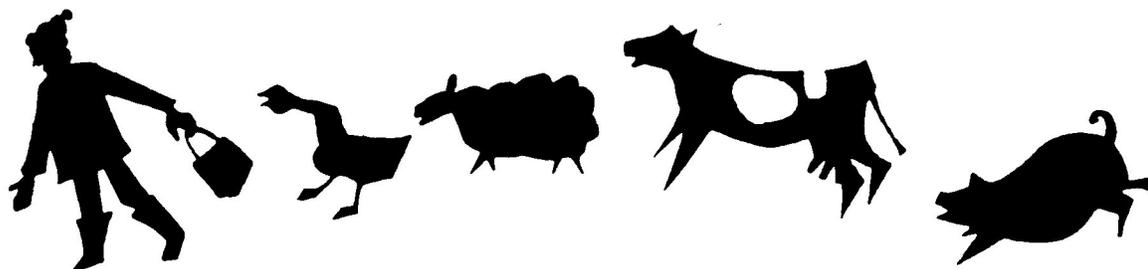


CAMP TREETOPS

Parent Handbook



Trees and fields; sun, rain, wind, cloud, and stars; soil, sand, grass, and flowers; chill and heat; sound of bird or leaves in wind; changes from light to dusk to dark —these can be more closely seen and more surely felt at camps than in city life or within solidly built walls anywhere.

—Helen Haskell, Treetops Director 1929-1969

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North Country School and Camp Treetops

Mission Statement

North Country School and Camp Treetops strive to create a community that gives children the self-confidence, knowledge, skills, and values to lead satisfying and productive lives while contributing to their world.

Values

- We believe that children become confident and resourceful individuals when they try new experiences and cultivate their skills toward mastery, with the guidance of caring adults.
- We believe that teaching and learning are most successful when intellectual activity is linked with practical experience.
- We are committed to simple and sustainable living, making responsible choices about our use of resources.
- We are committed to sustaining a diverse and nurturing community that supports individual growth and creativity, develops resilience, and promotes social responsibility.

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We hope that this booklet answers some questions about Treetops. We have included questions and concerns that come up often in correspondence or phone calls with parents.

Why Send A Child To Camp?

We all want the good life for our children. We wish youngsters to progress steadily towards independence, maturity and confident responsibility with a chance for unhurried individual growth, good health, and happiness along the way. The special emphasis of camp leadership at its best is that it attempts these goals in a community independent of the child's home circle and in an environment which gives back what city and suburb have taken away—farm animals to care for, sand and earth to dig in, trees to climb, grass to roll in, woods and fields to explore, flowers to pick or a garden to tend, wide stretches in which to play safely, a place to swim in the sun, to sleep out under stars.

- Helen Haskell, Treetops Director 1929-1969

Even the phrase *send a child to camp* brings forth in some of us feelings of guilt. “Why am I sending my child away from me?” Children grow from many different experiences, and camp can be one of them. For example, by living in a small peer group they learn the importance of cooperation and consideration. Not only are these behaviors expected, children also discover that they work. Children come away with a heightened sensitivity to other people’s feelings and a realization that, in order to get along, one must sometimes make compromises.

At camp children encounter a new set of friends, new expectations and challenges. The child begins with a clean slate. No longer does he define himself as being in a certain reading group, or as the youngest in the family. A child who may have had difficulty in school can experience success in hiking a mountain. The non-athlete may become involved in weaving or in caring for an animal at barn chores. The child who lives in a city comes to respect the natural world so that in the future he may choose to use the earth wisely. At camp a child is challenged rather than entertained, and in gaining new skills and new insights becomes a more self-confident person.

This growth occurs at many well-run camps, not just at Treetops. In reading what parents and children say about summer camp experiences throughout the country, one finds common threads of thought. Here are some insights that Treetops parents have had about their child’s summer away from home:

“Each year Sam returns from camp measurably more mature and responsible. This year has been no different but even more so. He’s showing much more diligence and commitment to his schoolwork. He’s showing more interest in keeping his room orderly. (Could he indeed be an alien clone substituted while our backs were turned?) The other day he overtly accused Treetops of being a major contributor to these newfound behaviors.”

“I wasn’t sure if Jason would survive the whole summer, or if I would, but it turned out to be the best experience of his life. You remember how shy he was and the fact that we’d never been separated. Jason just started in a new school, and he keeps asking me why he made friends so quickly at camp, and why it’s so difficult at his new school . . . There are a number of reasons, but I think that the counselors and campers at Treetops are encouraged to be loving and caring of each other’s feelings.”

“I want you to know that Kelly had the most incredibly wonderful summer . . . she really did finally learn that she can make and keep good friends, and at long last this is happening at school too. She just seems so much happier and self-confident in every way.”

“Frank learned so much about the outdoors, woodworking, weaving, sailing, and he loves the mountains. But even more impressive was the knowledge he gained about himself. The opportunities to sail, weave, and to build a bookcase gave him a real sense of his own abilities and the chance to take some risks and try out some new things. His ‘growing up’ process certainly was enhanced by this wholesome experience with other children, nature, and the wonderful counselors who guided him in so many ways.”

Why We Have A Seven Week Season

Treetops has several goals for children. We seek to build a child's sense of independence, an ability to cope with challenges and fears, and a sense of confidence within a group. All this takes time. In addition, we strive to build a variety of skills and allow children to test these skills on trips away from camp. The level of competence required for a child to go on a three day canoe trip, to hike the Great Range, or to sail in a brisk wind on Lower Saranac Lake demands a good deal of practice. Traditionally, the first three weeks of camp stress the building of skills and physical strength that allow children to go on challenging trips during the remainder of the summer.

We also strive to build a sense of community at Treetops and to establish friendships and connections that will be lifelong sources of strength for a child. This takes time. We have devoted alumni; many campers return as counselors and send their own children to Treetops. In a world in which increasingly we lack roots, Treetops provides a continuity of tradition that many of our alumni cherish. This kind of allegiance and sense of community is much less likely to occur in a shorter camp season.

“My daughter had a fantastic time and made gains in health and independence. She kept saying how she could be herself at camp unlike the rest of her life at a pressurized academic school with very little free time. She was able to overcome her initial shyness and make new friends and learn new skills. A life-enhancing experience –she never stops talking about it!”

How To Prepare Your Child For A Summer At Camp

Make sure your child gets as much of a feeling for camp as possible before arrival. Sometimes children are quite shy about asking questions so if a camp person comes to your home, make sure you are told about things the child may want to know (even though she doesn't ask). Where will she sleep? What are the washhouses like? What do we eat for breakfast? How is a typical day structured?

Try not to color your child's expectations too much with what you want him to do or what might have been your own experiences at a summer camp. You might talk about general things. “I bet it will be neat the first time you sleep out on an overnight.” or “Doing barn chores sounds like an interesting experience.” Just because you were an avid hiker does not mean that your child will be, and it is respectful of his individuality to allow him to make his own choices. You may want very much that he climb twelve 46'ers or become proficient in tennis; he may want to learn about edible weeds and do synchronized swimming. Your child may discover a talent neither of you knew that he had.

If your child has never spent the night away from home, it would be a good idea to provide opportunities to sleep over at friends' houses before coming to camp.

Talk with your child about homesickness but be clear that she will stay the entire time that has been planned so that she will have an opportunity to adjust to camp and take advantage of all it can offer. (More on homesickness later.)

Make getting ready for camp a joint effort. Have the child see what she has from the clothing list and what you will need to get. Help her pack. When she goes to put in the lifesavers and hoop earrings, you can point plainly to our policies concerning jewelry and candy and make sure these items do not come to camp.

Most of all, make sure she knows that you are providing her with this experience because you love her.

The Camp Program

The Structure Of The Day

6:30	Children on garden harvest and barn chores wake up
7:00	Barn chores and Garden Harvest
7:15	All children get up and are checked through the washhouse
8:00	Breakfast, followed by tent clean up
9:00	Morning council
10:00	First activity period
11:00	Second activity period
12:15	Lunch, followed by an afternoon council and rest hour
2:45	Third activity period
3:45	Juice and crackers
4:00	Fourth activity period
5:00	Work jobs for everyone in camp
6:00	Supper, followed by a brief evening council and evening activities
8:30	Junior bedtimes
9:00	Senior bedtimes

Choice At Treetops

A typical day at Treetops is a mix of scheduled activities and those that are a matter of choice. Children are assigned to a daily swim class and a riding lesson that meets once a week. Children also have a workjob or barn chore that meets every day at 5:00 p.m. These are commitments. Children have a choice as to what they do during other activity periods. Activity offerings are presented at council, which is a meeting of all campers and counselors held three times a day. The counselors sit with the children during council to help them with their choices. They make sure that over the course of a summer a child's choices have provided both a continuity of experience in those activities of particular interest to the camper, and an exposure to a variety of new activities.

We also make sure that children understand the prerequisites for participating in certain activities and for going on certain trips so that they can avail themselves of opportunities to build the needed skills. For instance, in order to go on a canoe trip, one must pass a swim test, learn about canoe safety, and receive instruction in paddling. Some choice activities may last only one period, and others may entail a time commitment of many periods over several days: completing a weaving, making a canoe paddle, putting on a play. By giving children choices, we allow them to pursue their interests and help them develop decision-making skills.

Keeping Track

If a child raises his hand for an activity, he is expected to attend it. Counselors keep track of this and ask children where they were if they do not show up. We also keep track in more formal ways. Each child has an "activity card." Counselors fill out these cards with information and observations about a child's accomplishments in an activity or on a trip. The craft counselor may list the projects completed and the child's attitude about clean up or care with materials. The riding counselor may comment that although Sally is a beginner, she is not afraid. Even the table counselors comment on these cards.

A child's group counselor also sits down with her during the summer to fill out an observation sheet which records what she has done thus far in the summer and what she hopes to do before summer ends. These aspirations are communicated to activity counselors. If Sally wants to climb Giant more than anything in the world, we do our best to make it happen.

The Work Program

“Even small camp children can do many jobs. They can make their beds, sweep a cabin floor, and hang up their clothes. Work for the community can spring from individual interests: enthusiastic tennis players can be appointed to roll courts, swimmers to arrange paddles, horse lovers to mend a bridge on a bridle path . . . As children increasingly understand what makes their place go and see themselves part of its functioning, they develop pride and self-confidence.

If the camp is not too formal or polished, tinkering and fixing can be done by children. The child from city apartment or neat suburbia can make that old hideout he could not construct at home. If his fishing rod pokes a hole in a tent, there is an adult with time enough to show him how to repair the damage. He can help fix and paint a boat. Thus he has opportunity to identify himself with an adult working on a job and can share his pride in well-ordered equipment. The place becomes ‘ours.’”

- Helen Haskell, Treetops Director 1929-1969

The work program is an important part of life at Treetops. Not only are children responsible for keeping their own quarters neat and for helping set and clear tables, they also have a weekly job that meets daily at 5:00 pm. and if it is a barn chore or garden harvest job, at 7:00 a. m. as well. These jobs are not make-work. They are vital to the smooth running of our community. Some children may have to sweep the shop areas; others supply wash houses with toilet paper and soap; some work in the hike house setting out gear for upcoming trips; older children help in the kitchen. There are many different jobs, and children sign up for three choices on a weekly basis. All jobs are supervised by an adult who works along with the children. Not only is this a time for work, but a teaching time too. Children learn about the reason for mulch, what makes the best firewood, how to care for a sailboat or a horse. Children derive satisfaction from knowing that the lettuce they helped pick and wash that morning is in the evening dinner salad. In addition to the daily workjob, each camp gathers for about forty minutes once a week to do a large-scale job. This might be a bucket brigade to spread compost on the flowerbed, or a mass bean harvest. By all working together we demonstrate that many hands make light work.

Tent Groups

We try to place children in tent groups in which we think they will be compatible. Particular care is taken in the placement of new campers. It is our policy not to place returning campers with the children they lived with the year before, thereby preventing the formation of exclusive groups within a tent. If a child has a specific request about a tentmate, he or she must write to the Director, who will consider the request. Occasionally, as in any family situation, conflicts arise within the tent group. But, just as at home when siblings fight they do not get to change families, so at camp we do not switch children in tents merely because there are moments of disagreement. A tent group works through problems with its counselor just the way siblings work out problems with the help of their parents. You may receive a letter telling about a “fight” with Mary, and by the time the letter reaches you, the incident has been long forgotten. Part of what we are trying to teach children is how to get along with others even though they may not be their best friends. Occasionally if the chemistry of a group is really volatile, we will make changes, but it is rare that a counselor can’t help the group work things out.

Homesickness

Every summer some children are homesick, a few acutely. Invariably they weather this pain and return year after year to Treetops with a new found sense of strength. There is no rule as to who is afflicted. A seven year old may not be homesick at all while a twelve year old who is “grown-up” in other ways may be very sad. Homesickness is not something to be taken lightly, as the pain is very real. On the other hand it does not last the whole summer. Most children get over being homesick in a week’s time. Intense cases may last three weeks. During that time the child is usually saddest at meals, bedtime, and rest hour. Because children are allowed to write at rest hour, you may get sorrowful letters when a child is feeling low even though he just spent the morning happily engaged in activities. You may call your child’s counselor or the program

directors when you get an upsetting letter. Often by the time you call, the crisis will have passed, but if it has not, together we can help your child make the adjustment to being away from home. At camp we help children deal with homesickness by making sure they become involved in activities, by giving them T.L.C., by listening and acknowledging their feelings, and by assuring them that homesickness does go away.

Saying to a child that if he is homesick he can come home at Parents' Weekend makes him feel unsettled and undermines his confidence that homesickness is a challenge that can be met. Furthermore, this places an incredible burden on a child, as the entire focus of his time at camp becomes the decision of whether he should stay or go home. We have seen children struggle with this decision to the point where they are unable to derive any enjoyment from the camp program—practically guaranteeing they will be unable to overcome their homesickness. A better tack is to discuss going away in a positive manner. "Camp is a friendly place where you can learn lots of things. You may be homesick, and that is okay. Lots of kids are homesick their first time away. Talk to a counselor if you are homesick and he will help you." Acknowledge the reality of homesickness and assure the child that it is nothing to be ashamed of, but also express faith in the child's ability to overcome these feelings of sadness. The following words of advice come from the mother of a child who was acutely homesick:

Send along a small 'bonding' item that will make his new home his own. This can be his own pillow and pillowcase, a stuffed animal, a calendar, a picture of the family.

All children love to get mail from home and frequent letters help a child feel less homesick. It is not helpful if these letters say how terribly you miss your child, how lonely the dog is without her, or what exciting things you are doing in her absence. What is helpful is your asking about what she is doing in camp and responding in a positive and encouraging manner to her letters home.

We are also aware that a child's first time at camp can be very difficult on parents too. We know how hard it is when you get a tear-stained letter. (One child we know circled the drops so that his mother was sure not to miss them.) Feelings of guilt, of "What have I done? Have I made a huge mistake?" can obscure why you wanted your child to come to camp in the first place. In a conversation with one mother, she talked about how upset she was when her son told her that he didn't really think he liked this place. In letters to him she kept asking what he was doing, thereby accentuating the positive aspect of being at camp. He survived and after a week of tears was enthusiastic and happy. This camper spent many happy summers at Treetops.

"This was our daughter's first summer away and it was potentially going to be really challenging. She stayed for four weeks and wanted more. She is going for the whole summer. She learned that she could be happy without her parents for a long stretch of time, able to make good friends, handle challenging situations by using her own resources and seeking out others when help was needed. She felt confident and loved. She had great support from the staff."

Phone Calls

Our policy is that children not call home and that you not call your child, except on your child's birthday.

We encourage children to become self-reliant, turn to their counselor or another caring adult on the staff for help in problem solving, and be independent of parents for seven weeks. Time and again parents comment on how much their children seem to have "grown" when they return, so our efforts seem to work. For a homesick child, phone calls often exacerbate the situation, and they may even trigger bouts of homesickness in children who have not been homesick before.

Practically speaking, we are not set up for children to make phone calls. We have a very limited number of phones that must serve the kitchens and administrative offices of camp and school. Children are allowed to receive phone calls only on their birthdays. Even these calls need to be arranged with the administration ahead of time to make sure that the child is near a phone. If you have concerns, we encourage you to call and speak to the director, the program directors, or your child's counselor. In the event of any problem or emergency, we will be certain to call you.

Mail And Packages

Whereas a telephone call is gone the minute you hang up the phone, letters endure and serve as wonderful mementos of an age that passes too quickly. Children are required to write home every Sunday except for Parents' Visiting Weekend. They may also write at rest hour. Children tend to write more often at the beginning of the summer. Children love receiving letters or postcards, so please write often.

We encourage you to keep packages to a minimum. In practical terms children have a limited amount of storage space for their belongings. Many items that they may request (shampoo etc.) we can get on town trip, and some items may not be necessary. Please limit packages to the absolutely vital—the forgotten favorite stuffed animal or wool hat, etc. Our address is 4382 Cascade Road, Lake Placid, NY 12946.

A note on Federal Express. If you do choose to send something Federal Express, please include the child's name inside the packet. We have had instances when the carbon copy was completely illegible and no one knew whom the package was for.

Communications With Camp

Communication between camp and parents is vital for a successful and smooth-running summer. We encourage you to share with us concerns or special needs that your child might have. Does your child wet the bed? Has he been exposed to lice at school? Does he have nightmares? Is his grandmother very ill? If there has been an upsetting occurrence in the family situation, let the Director know so that we can provide support for your child while he is away from you.

Early in the season you will receive a brief letter from your child's counselor introducing herself and letting you know how your child has settled into camp. If a child spends a night in the infirmary or sees a doctor in town for any reason, the camp nurse will notify you promptly. After camp is over you will receive a much longer letter from the counselor describing your child's summer. Prior to and during the camp season you will receive a number of mailings concerning travel to and from camp and visiting day. Included will be forms to complete indicating your plans for these days. Promptly returning these forms will save us considerable time on the telephone.

As is true in any camp, the Treetops administrative staff spends a great deal of time in the direct supervision of counselors and children, and we are not always immediately able to come to the telephone. Phone calls often must be returned. While we don't encourage you to phone regularly simply to check on your child's summer, we do want you to feel free to contact us with concerns or problems throughout the camp season.

Birthdays At Treetops

We always sing to a camper on his or her birthday and usually the tent group does something special together on that day. The actual party with cake and decorations is held with other children who have also had birthdays that month—a group celebration. If you indicate that a package is a birthday present, we will make sure that it isn't given out until the actual day. We encourage you to send gifts that your child can use while at camp. (Writing paper, sketchpad, colored pencils, Frisbee, books, a stuffed animal, baseball mitt, etc. Make sure they are all marked.) Sometimes parents send small gifts and then re-celebrate the child's birthday after camp.

Reading Matter

Children who at home may balk at reading a book because of the lure of more exciting electronic entertainment often discover the joys of reading while at camp. We have a rest hour each day during which time campers may either rest, read, draw, or write letters. There is also often time in the evenings to curl up with a book. We have libraries in each division, but we encourage you to pack books with your child's belongings. Having books of one's own is special. You might consult with your child's teacher as to suggestions for good books for summer reading. We ask that you think about the kind of reading material you

allow your child to bring to camp. We consider comics and magazines, which promote violence, electronic games, and commercialism not in keeping with our camp philosophy, and we will use our discretion in deciding if any material should be packed away to be returned to your child at the end of camp. This may seem an old-fashioned stance, but in many ways we are trying to help children discover in themselves resources that may have been obscured in the hurly burly of the outside world.

Kindles and other e-readers can be terrific at home, but are impractical at camp where children live in canvas tents and there are few electrical outlets. An e-reader could easily get wet, fall outside the tent, or get lost, so please leave e-readers at home.

Clothing And Equipment

You will receive a detailed clothing list in the mail. Please do not send too much clothing, as it will not fit in the child's storage space. If a child arrives with too many pairs of something or with inappropriate items (jewelry, make-up, I-pods, electronic games, etc.) we will pack it with the child's luggage to be stored until the end of camp. Some of the items on the clothing list may be puzzling or hard to get, so what follows are some explanations and a list of places to find things that may not be available in your local stores.

What Kind Of Clothing Is Appropriate For Treetops

We are situated at 2,000 feet and we hike mountains well above 4,000 feet. Even on hot days, the top of a 4,000-foot peak can be a cold place. Layering is the key to dressing in this climate. Please send children with a wool or polar fleece sweater and a nylon shell windbreaker. Sweatshirts are okay for around camp but will not do for day or overnight trips. A lightweight wool or polar fleece hat is also necessary as one loses a lot of heat from a bare head. A baseball hat will keep strong sun off the face on a canoe trip. Rain gear must be light and durable. Inexpensive, plastic rain gear will not hold up to the rigors of camp life. Wool or Smart Wool socks are necessary for hiking as they keep feet warm even when wet and are less likely to cause blisters than cotton or synthetic socks. Polypropylene long underwear, while not a must, is particularly useful.

Clothes get hard wear at camp. Children get dirty doing barn chores and on trips. Do not send expensive clothes. There is no need to spend a lot of money on hiking boots. The new lightweight varieties are fine as are the old-fashioned leather work boots still available in some shoe stores or in army navy or discount stores. Children will need some sort of footwear for canoe trips where their feet will get wet and muddy. Inexpensive, slip-on canvas sneakers or TEVA type sandals are quite adequate. They will also need boots with a small heel for horseback riding. This can be a hiking or work boot with a heel or a boot specifically made for riding.

Swimwear

Please send appropriate swim suits for your camper. Boys should come with traditional swim trunks. Girls should bring **one-piece** swimsuits or "tankinis". Please do not send bikinis for your child.

Pajamas

Pajamas really are necessary. It gets cold at night. Routinely, we have nine and ten year old boys who come to camp without pajamas because they say they do not wear them at home. They would much prefer to wear sweat pants and a sweatshirt to bed. In order to make sure that the clothes worn to bed are not those that were just on barn chores, we require that children bring pajamas. (We know they won't wear pajamas to the barn!) We also know that flannel pajamas are hard to find in April and so have included sources for cotton long underwear or ski pajamas that are warm and comfortable.

Earrings And Make-Up

If your daughter wears earrings, please have her leave dangling ones at home and bring only inexpensive studs to camp. Dangling earrings are a potential danger, and we cannot allow them even at square dances. We are also aware that some of the older girls may have worn make-up to school, but we ask it not be brought to camp. Make-up attempts to recreate the healthy glow, which she will get naturally at Treetops.

Electronic Equipment

At Treetops, we strive for a simpler lifestyle and children have the opportunity to learn what they can create using their hands and imaginations. They have time to explore their natural environment and we encourage them to create their own music, drama, games, and art. Therefore, we ask that you keep all electronic equipment at home. This includes radios, Kindles and e-readers, I-pods, cell phones, electronic games, MP3 players, and computers. Children are welcome to bring musical instruments to camp. We will store them in the music room or the camp office, so they will be safe from the weather, but accessible to your child.

Cameras

We want the campers to be able to take pictures and to document their experiences at Treetops. We recommend disposable cameras for use at camp. They are less expensive and if a disposable camera is lost or broken, your child will only lose one roll of film instead of a more valuable item. The use of digital cameras presents a challenge because much of their technology goes against our philosophy of simple living, disconnected from the outside world. We have limited the use of digital cameras to senior campers only. If a senior camper would like to bring a digital camera to camp, the camera must run on disposable batteries only because we have limited ability for recharging batteries. Cameras with internet access will not be allowed. We have a digital camera use policy, which will be explained to all senior campers who bring digital cameras to camp.

Riding Gear

We provide riding helmets for all children. If children want to bring their own, they must meet ASTM F1163 standards and bear a "SEI Approved" label or else, by law, we cannot allow them to be used. Children will need boots they can ride in. It is not necessary to buy riding boots, but if they do intend to use their hiking boots for riding, the boot must have a heel on it. (This prevents the entire foot from sliding through the stirrup.) This is a NYS Department of Health regulation. Children will not be able to ride without appropriate footgear.

Sleeping Bags

We supply children with all items they need for day and overnight trips, and so there is no need for children to bring their own gear. We have very good, warm sleeping bags with liners that are washed after each use. If your child wants to bring her own sleeping bag, make sure it is lightweight and compact. (She will be carrying it in a pack on her back along with other gear.) Down is light and compactable but expensive, and it loses its insulating value when wet. If you feel you want to send a sleeping bag, consider getting one filled with compressible and non-absorbent insulation, like Hallofil or LiteLoft. A rating of 30 degrees is adequate. L.L. Bean, REI, Eastern Mountain Sports, or Campmor are good sources for sleeping bags and are very helpful on the phone. Make sure to get a stuff sack and mark both the bag and the stuff sack clearly with the child's name so that it does not get mixed up with camp bags.

Knives And Flashlights

Please do not send children with sheath knives or folding knives with large blades. We have camp knives that have the absolutely necessary blade for mumblety-peg (a game at which our campers become proficient), which is really a leather awl. If your child is a returning camper, have her bring her knife from last year. We can help her oil and sharpen it if it has become rusty or dull over the winter. Your child needs a flashlight or headlamp that can be carried on trips. Make sure it is durable. We have extra batteries at camp.

Mumblety-Peg rule #19, Tony Chestnut - Starting at the toe, place the point of the blade on the end of the shoe and snap away from the topper; repeat this at the knee, then at the chest, then from the front of the head. When snapping from the toe, the toe may be elevated, and the point placed against the thumb.
-The Complete Book of Games - 1940

Mail And Internet Order Sources For Camp Gear

The following places provide durable clothing if you cannot find what you need in your local stores.

Campmor — 810 Route 17 North, P.O. Box 997-P, Paramus, NJ 07653-0997 (1-800-526-4784) – www.campmor.com - wool socks, rain gear (Children's PVC Rain Suit), wool hats, hiking boots, and children's outdoor clothing. Inexpensive and good quality.

Eastern Mountain Sports — 51 Main St., Lake Placid, NY 12946 (518-523-2505) – www.ems.com . EMS has many other outlets in the Northeast; the Lake Placid store will gladly look up a number for your nearest outlet.

Lands' End — 1 Lands End Lane, Dodgeville, WI 53595. (1-800-356-4444) – www.Landsend.com - fleece bathrobes, knit ski pajamas, rain gear, durable clothes.

L.L. Bean, Inc. — Freeport, ME 04033 (1-800-221-4221) – www.llbean.com - A good source for general outdoor clothing, boots, wool hats, rain gear, wetsuits (called wave bodysuit), etc.

R.E.I. — Sumner, WA 98352-0001 (1-800-426-4840) – www.REI.com - R.E.I. is a cooperative so you pay a one-time \$10 fee. Based on the amount of your purchases, you get a dividend check at the end of the year. Good source for inexpensive kids' rain gear, polar fleece in kids' sizes, as well as things like wool hats.

Warm Belly Wetsuits – (1-800-927-6543) – www.warmbelly.com - good source for adjustable Neoprene wetsuits for children up to 12 years old.

Labeling Things

Label everything. That means books, combs (try red nail polish), musical instruments, duffels, tennis rackets — everything! Sanford Sharpie permanent markers work well on sneakers and raincoats, but nothing can beat sewn on nametapes for permanence. (Iron-on ones come off in the first wash.) Sew nametapes at the neck or back waist of things and doubled over (like a tab) at the tops of socks. We encourage you to involve your child if possible in sewing nametapes. There is nothing like an investment of time to encourage responsibility towards one's belongings. We have also heard from parents that having children's clothing clearly marked pays off in the school year with mislaid items being returned.

Where To Get Nametapes

A good source for nametapes is listed below. A veteran of many nametape sessions tells us that these woven ones are a bit more expensive (\$13.00 per hundred) but that they are much easier to sew on.

Name Maker, Inc., P.O. Box 43821, Atlanta, GA 30378 (1-800-241-2890) – www.namemaker.com

Toiletries

Children have very small cubbies in which to keep their toiletries. A giant size bottle of shampoo won't fit and is not necessary. A 9 oz. bottle is probably plenty. Send children with the minimum: toothpaste, a toothbrush, floss, shampoo, cream rinse for girls with long hair, a hairbrush or comb. Mosquitoes seem to be attracted to scented things, so if possible choose unscented products. We will supply soap. Do not send aerosol spray containers of anything. We have supplies of bug repellent. While we keep sunscreen available at the waterfront, if your child uses sunscreen regularly, we encourage you to send your own supply.

Money

Do not send money with your child. We have no camp store in the traditional sense. If a child needs a toothbrush, shampoo, film, batteries, etc., he lets his counselor know. We deliver the item to him and charge your account. We are quite careful about not allowing children to get unnecessary items. If we feel he is going through too much film or too many batteries, we will let you know before we charge any more.

Food

Our philosophy promotes the eating of nutritious food. In the dining room we serve well-balanced and varied meals. The main course is accompanied by fresh vegetables from our garden and homemade bread. Children get plenty to eat although they may have a period of adjustment as they get used to new food. As a rule, children who are thin gain weight, while children who could shed some extra pounds do so.

Please do not send or pack with your child any gum, candy, or food, even homemade cookies. Candy, in particular, sets up a situation of haves and have-nots among the campers. Because of its scarcity it becomes a kind of currency in the campers' world. Additional problems include litter and the very real concern about attracting forest animals.

Many well-meaning camp parents have sent a care package of food to their child completely unaware of the problem it creates at camp. As mentioned above, our staff have been instructed to take away any candy or food. This situation inevitably places the camper and counselor in an adversarial position and undermines the efforts that have gone into establishing a positive relationship.

In case you fear that your child's sweet tooth will be totally neglected, rest assured that the weekly ice cream cone, home baked pies, cookies, and other desserts do not force him to go completely cold turkey.

Parents' Weekend

You will receive mailings concerning the dates of Parents' Weekend. The following are some general guidelines. If you have further questions, please contact the Director.

It is our policy that children not be taken off camp property. Parents' Weekend is a time to see what your child has been doing at camp, to meet his tent mates, his counselor and to let him be your guide for a day.

We cannot accommodate the parents of 160 children for two days and therefore ask that you choose either Saturday or Sunday to visit your child. The only exceptions to this are parents who have two children at camp.

Please do not bring dogs to camp. We know it is difficult to leave the family pet behind, but please realize we have many visitors, this is a farm with animals that are not accustomed to strange dogs, and the parking area for your cars is in the direct sun.

Your greatest gifts to your child will be yourself, the time you spend really looking at what she has accomplished, and listening to her adventures at camp.

We know how hard it is to say good-bye. There may be tears on both sides at the end of the afternoon. We expect this. Children go immediately to work jobs when you leave and thence to dinner and a special evening activity. Any homesickness that may follow Parents' Weekend lasts no more than a day.

ACA Accreditation

In order to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA), a camp must meet stringent standards covering all areas of camp life: programs, administration, personnel, site, and health care. At three-year intervals we are visited by a trained team of volunteers who evaluate the camp in over two hundred different areas. This process makes us self-evaluate on a regular basis and assures that we remain current with changes and innovations in the camping field. Treetops has always had superior marks on the ACA evaluation.

Staff

"Each year my daughter has formed a deep bond with her camp counselor, camp leaders, staff and whomever else is around. She brings them up in conversation. She knows where they go to college and of their achievements aside from Camp Treetops. I feel her world has opened due to having these relationships and it seems that nothing is beyond her scope of what one can do in the world. She has been given excellent guidance and a picture of what a healthy young adult person looks like."

We are fortunate at Treetops to be able to attract a mature and highly competent staff. We do not have Junior Counselors or Counselors in Training. Our youngest counselors have a year of college behind them. Usually, about 75% of our staff are over the age of 21 and 33% are over 30. Most of our staff have certifications in Wilderness First Aid, Lifeguard Training, and Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation in case of emergencies. We have staff that return year after year and some have been on staff for more than 20 years. They offer diverse areas of expertise and, because of our small adult to child ratio of 1:3, they can really get children involved at camp.

Health Forms

Although this item is last in the handbook, it is very important. We cannot stress it enough.

You will receive a health form, which must be filled out, signed by a physician and signed by you. By New York State Law, enforced by the New York State Department of Health, your child cannot be at camp without a signed health form. We must adhere strictly to this law or risk losing our license to operate. Please set up an appointment for your child to have a physical as soon as you receive the health form. Don't forget to sign the "Parent's Authorization" portion of the form. Send us the completed form prior to the opening of camp.

Medications

Please be sure that all medications (prescription and non-prescription) are listed on the Health Form signed by your physician and in original containers. Upon arrival at camp, all medications should be delivered to the nurse.

We hope that this handbook answers some questions that you may have about camp. If you have friends who are tentative about the camp experience for their child, we will gladly send you an extra copy of this handbook to pass on to them.

In closing, we share with you the following from a former camp parent:

“My three children, who are as different as it is possible to be, each had wonderful and unique experiences at camp. Jeff as a camper and counselor, Sarah as camper and perennial Friends’ Weekend attendee, and Paul, having conned himself into Junior Camp before his eighth birthday, as a camper. Camp encouraged each of them not only to follow their natural propensities, but provided them with opportunities and encouragement to reach beyond what they knew and what they thought they could do.

The Treetops experience was not theirs alone. From watching my children and from taking part in Friends’ Weekend, I came under the spell of the place, school as well as camp. I was a Trustee for several years and still come back in the summer when I can. The place not only nourished and inspired me, it created in me an awareness of and a hunger for a different kind of life and kindled in me the confidence to go out and create it. Not many camps or schools have that kind of power.”