TIPS FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CAMP

Welcome to the Downtown Jewish Camp!
The first day of school or camp is an exciting milestone in your child's life. Your child is embarking on a journey that will lead them on many roads of discovery and learning. As wonderful as this new experience may be, it can also be quite stressful for the young child. New situations and change can at times be unsettling for all of us. For many children this may be their first experience of separation from parents or caregivers at home. It is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious the first day of camp.
We have provided a few suggestions for assisting your child during this time.

- Prepare your child for the new experience by explaining what to expect. Answer all questions directly and honestly.

- Convey a positive attitude. Young children are aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure the child that camp can be a fun and exciting place.

- Establish a routine involving both the night before a camp day as well as morning preparation. Rituals and routines will add predictability and are comforting in unfamiliar situations.

- Bring something from home. This is acceptable and often reassuring in helping the child with the initial adjustment to camp. This item may be a treasured blanky or even a photo from home. {See supply list}

- Clearly state to your child where you will be and when you will return. It may also be helpful to discuss what will happen when you are reunited.

- Maintain a clear good-bye routine. This may include warning the child you are leaving in 3 minutes, a kiss and hug, or a wave from the window.
Once you tell your child you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the good-bye with, "Ok, just one more kiss, and then I really have to go" tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Avoid sneaking out, as this seems to encourage children to become less trusting and makes the second day of camp even harder.

Remember, the staff is always here to provide support and assistance, making your child's first days happy days.