**14 of the Seriously BEST Ways to Help Prevent Homesickness**

Courtesy of the January edition of Pediatrics by Thurber and Walton.

* Talk with kids about the upcoming separation.
* Tell kids that it's normal to feel homesick.
* Talk with kids about coping with homesickness (see Camper Packet).
* Involve kids in the decision to spend time away from home.
* Send kids on a "practice" trip, such as few days at a friend's or relative's house.
* Have kids practice writing letters before leaving.
* If possible, help kids meet at least one person (adult or child) from the new setting before leaving.
* Encourage kids to make friends and seek support from trusted adults when they're gone.
* Be enthusiastic and optimistic about your child's away-from-home experience.
* Nix negativity. Don't say things like, "I hope you'll be OK."
* Give kids pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes and notebook paper when they leave.
* Don't make a deal with kids to get them if they don't like being away.
* Don't use the experience as a drug holiday for kids on medications.
* If kids have special needs, confirm in advance that those needs will be met. (Fill out your forms completely, honestly and with details)

**7 Ways to Cope With Homesickness**

Thurber and Walton recommend these seven ways for kids to cope with homesickness:

* Do something fun, like playing with friends.
* Do something to feel closer to home, like writing a letter home.
* Go see someone who can talk with you to help you feel better.
* Look at the bright side, such as activities and friends in the new setting.
* Think that the time away is short.
* Don't dwell on home.
* Think about what a loved one would say to make you feel better.

What about calling home?

During short separations, "old-fashioned letters may be the best way to maintain contact with home," write Thurber and Walton.

They note that writing letters tends to be less emotional and requires more personal reflection than calling home.