

CAMPING

When Adventurers go camping, it should be as families. Families that know how to camp though are getting fewer and fewer. Giving them some guidelines may help avoid disaster. Work with the parents on what to take to camp in, what clothing is appropriate, and what equipment they will need. (Information is taken from this website. <http://www.lovetheoutdoors.com/camping/> More is available for family oriented camping.)

CAMPING WITH CHILDREN

Kids love to learn and kids love to be outdoors. Nature is one of the best places to teach children. There are so many amazing things to see and do. Imagine the excitement of a child when they spot a deer or other type of wildlife. Or their enthusiasm to locate various items on a hike or scavenger hunt. And how about the creativity they have with leaves, sticks, pinecones etc. when doing outdoor crafts. The list goes on and on. The outdoors is also a good place for them to learn life lessons such as team work, self confidence and self worth, awareness, innovation and the respect for nature and others to name a few. A lot of quality time can be spent with your children in the outdoors.

Camping with children can bring you back to the simplicity of nature. It increases your awareness of your surroundings and can refresh your appreciation for the many things that so often go unnoticed. Many things are learned and experienced for the first time during each day in the life of a child. Patience is almost unavoidable. It is so important to take the time to enjoy the journey of these new experiences with your child. In nature there are so many amazing things to discover. Camping can be a wonderful adventure. Just think--the birds and animals, the plants and trees, the rocks, the streams and ponds, the insects, the sounds, the weather, the wildflowers, and the many activities that can provide so much excitement. The possibilities are endless! By planning successful, enjoyable camping trips when your children are young, you will set them on the path to a lifetime of outdoor adventures.

Get the kids interested in the trip by getting them involved. Build their excitement and anticipation.

- Plan the camping trip together
 - Decide on places to go - consider interests, outdoor experience and children's ages.
 - Pick activities to do
 - Plan and shop for your meals
 - Prepare and pack the equipment and supplies

- Try a backyard campout before you go for the first time
 - Teach the kids how to set up a tent
 - Try some outdoor cooking
 - Experience a night outdoors in sleeping bags
 - Show them how to use some camping equipment
 - Plan a few activities
 - Search the sky for constellations
 - Listen to the many night sounds
 - Don't forget the special nighttime snacks

- Try to experience outdoor activities with your kids
 - Get them familiar with the outdoors in order to eliminate their fears
 - Teach them about safety and to respect nature
 - Teach outdoor skills and outdoor ethics
 - Camp chores are actually fun for kids. They love collecting firewood, filling water containers, hammering in tent stakes, camp cooking etc.
 - Make the camp chores extra fun -- have contests for gathering the most kindling, best camp cooking, most organized gear, fastest clean-up etc.
 - Take a small day hike in the woods at a local park
 - Visit a nature center

- Go fishing at a local pond or stream
- Take an evening walk
- Go on a picnic
- Read related books
- Have a [scavenger hunt](http://www.lovetheoutdoors.com/camping/kids/scavengerhunt.htm)
http://www.lovetheoutdoors.com/camping/kids/scavengerhunt.htm
- Go on a flashlight walk

Take the necessary gear and supplies

- Extra clothing and shoes--the kids will get wet and extremely dirty
- Warm clothing--it may get chilly especially in the evening/dress in layers
- Insect repellent--consider time-release formulas
- Sunscreen--they'll be outside all day
- First aid kit--for those little accidents
- Rain gear--keep them dry and warm
- Toys, games, activities, information to complete awards--you want to keep them busy
- Familiar bedtime items--pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, dolls etc
- Flashlight/glow sticks--to help relieve nighttime fears
- Snacks--all this activity is going to make them hungry
- Drinks--avoid dehydration due to heat and activity level

Create memories

- Bring a camera with plenty of film/flash/extra batteries
 - Disposable type are excellent for outdoor activities
 - Give each child their own disposable camera
- Keep a journal
 - Describe details about your trip and the activities you did
 - Document special moments
 - Include photos
 - Have each family member write about their experience
 - Save crafts etc.
- [Keeping an Outdoor Adventure Photo Journal](http://www.lovetheoutdoors.com/camping/outdoors/photos.htm)
http://www.lovetheoutdoors.com/camping/outdoors/photos.htm

Plan alternative activities

- For bad weather
- To avoid boredom during down times
- If they dislike a certain planned activity

Respect campground quiet hours

Make your travel fun

- Don't travel a great distance--stop frequently
- Make your trips short -- maybe two or three nights
- Take toys and activities to keep them busy
- Play car games--license plates, sign abc's, singing etc
- Take plenty of snacks
- Build their excitement and anticipation

A few tips on camping with an infant - Submitted by K. Molina

- Use jar baby food. It's easy to pack. Be sure to buy the smaller jars to cut down on leftovers or waste.
- Buy a brand of baby cereal that has the formula or whole milk already in it...just add a little bottled water.
- Portion out the cereal in small plastic ziplock bags...just add water.
- Buy formula ready-to-drink in cans... you don't have to add water.
- Buy 2% milk in tetra packs that don't need to be refrigerated until they're open