

UPDATE

June 2020

RESHAPING SUMMERTIME EXPERIENCES: *How to Talk to Your Kids About Canceled Summer Plans*

Like so many institutions, summer camps are facing uncertainty about whether they'll open and how they'll reinvent themselves if they do. Campers could face a very different experience from years past due to social distancing measures spurred by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nobody knows what the impact of coronavirus will be and what the timeline is. Whatever happens, the uncertainty and loss are palpable for both kids and their guardians. Supporting our youth during this difficult time begins with understanding that everyone's needs are different. For children of all ages, the greatest gift we can give as parents is to listen to them and provide validation. When they're uncomfortable or upset, kids need empathy more than anything else. Showing them that you feel for them and providing assurance that you will help them through this unprecedented time will help to get through times of uncertainty.

PARENTING ACCORDING TO YOUR CHILD'S AGE

For elementary school-aged children, Be in Charge and Direct:

Plan what to say and how to say it. Anticipate what questions your children might have and what responses you might give. Kids of this age need information shared with them with few words that are direct and to the point. Keep in mind that behavior is communication, and often, you can determine how a child is tolerating the information you've shared by watching their behavior both during and afterward.

For middle school-aged children, Lead and Listen:

You need to lead but can also change course, depending on your child's response and tolerance for the conversation. Teens and tweens need for information to be conveyed to them in an honest and frank manner. Teens may be interested in talking about the situation all at once or may need time to process and then revisit. At this age, peer relationships are also very important. You can help support their camp/program friendships – in the time they need them most – by suggesting they connect with their friends to talk about the situation.



Sgt. Noshoba Davis

For high school-aged children, Pass the Torch:

More is less with this age group, so share the information and then pass the torch to your children to let them lead the conversation while you listen.

Be observant. It's normal for kids to go through some changes as they mature, but pay attention if you notice changes to their mood, behavior, energy level, or appetite. Likewise, take note if they stop wanting to do things that used to make him happy, or if you notice them isolating. If you see a change in your child's daily ability to function, ask about it and be supportive (without being judgmental). They may need your help and it could be a sign she needs to talk to a mental health professional.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Four Winds Hospital is committed to serving our patients and providing the very best in mental health care. Please know that, as always, the health and safety of our patients and staff is our highest priority. We have implemented measures for the protection of those on our campus in response to the COVID-19 crisis, following the directions of both the CDC and DOH, and our own protocols. Please let us know if we can help.

**To Make A Referral, call: 1-914-763-8151 or 1-800-528-6624.
24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week.**