

## Minimizing Homesickness



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For many of our students, their week at The Mosaic Project's outdoor school marks the first time they have been away from home for an extended period of time. This is an extremely special and rewarding occasion!

Missing home, family, and even pets, is natural for children, especially when it is their first time away from home. Most students experience a short adjustment period to outdoor school. Soon, they get caught up in the excitement of new friends, activities, and adventures. Our staff is expert at supporting students as they adjust to life at The Mosaic Project. We are happy to say that after working with over 2,500 students, we have never had to send a student home because of homesickness. Often the secret ingredient in helping students to overcome a bout of homesickness is preparation by their parents. Here are some tips for how you can help your children adjust quickly and easily to being away from home:

- Start while your children are still at home and help them to be proud of being independent and ready for The Mosaic Project's outdoor school.
- Talk about what your children are looking forward to learning at Mosaic. Reinforce their interest in and excitement about the program and about meeting new friends.
- Share stories about your own first experience away from home (keeping the spin positive!).
- Point out what your children do well and how that will be an asset to the Mosaic community.
- Plan for your children to stay the whole session. **DO NOT** tell them that they can call home, come home, or that you will pick them up if they are homesick. It sets them up for failure instead of success. It prevents them from becoming fully integrated into the outdoor school and can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Have them "practice" things they'll do at Mosaic such as taking quick showers and writing letters home.
- Have them practice being away from home by having overnights with friends or family.
- Pack a favorite personal item and a family picture.
- While your children are at Mosaic, send them cheerful letters that focus on how much fun they are having and less on what they are missing from home. Let them know how proud of them you are for spending the week at Mosaic! (Be sure to post a letter one or two days before your children leave home.)

The Mosaic Project  
works towards a peaceful  
future by uniting children  
of diverse backgrounds,  
addressing issues  
of difference,  
and building self-esteem  
and community in our  
unique human-relations  
outdoor school.

It can also be difficult for parents to be away from their children for a week. Here are some tips to help you adjust quickly and easily to having your children away at outdoor school:

- Before your children leave, make a list of things you are going to accomplish while they are enjoying their Mosaic experience (things you have not gotten around to doing).
- Write to your children.
- Visit our website ([www.mosaicproject.org](http://www.mosaicproject.org)), watch our videos, and remind yourself of the growth, development, and independence you want for your children.
- Talk with other parents who have experienced the same feelings when their children left for the first time.
- Take time for yourself! Just like your children are trying new things and experiencing personal growth, be sure you do the same so you can be reenergized when they arrive home with all of their great Mosaic stories.