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Facing Fears at Summer Camp by Jasina

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Summer camp is a great place for kids to try new things and face their fears. At camp, children often have the opportunity to experience something that they donâ€™t normally do at home, whether itâ€™ sharing their living space, trying new foods, or climbing up a real rock face. Camps provide a supportive community where everyone is encouraged to move beyond their comfort zone, and because it becomes a part of everyday life it can be a great place to conquer fears.

Summer Camps Teach Kids Healthy Independence

Among many, the most distinctive difference between camp and home is that a camperâ€™s family isnâ€™ there with him or her. While it may seem that a child would be more likely to try new things while around a familiar group of people, thatâ€™s not always true. Kids often come to camp without knowing anyone else and they get to be themselves. Being around a group of new people means that nobody has preconceived notions of a camperâ€™s personality and behaviors. In that situation, campers can feel liberated to act differently and take on new challenges without the typical expectations they face at home. Being in a new community can be scary, but with new friends and great mentors they might find the perfect environment to do something they wouldnâ€™t normally dream of at home â€“ maybe itâ€™s completing a section of a ropes course fifty feet high, canoeing a new river o riding a horse for the first time.

Summer Camps Teach Social Skills for Kids of All Ages

The community at summer camp is especially unique in that kids of all ages interact with each other and are guided by a group of counselors who have everyoneâ€™s best interest at heart. As campers grow older they transition from being new, nervous and unfamiliar to experiencing advanced skill progression and becoming leaders in their community. Older and more experienced campers begin to act as role models for younger campers and help build the supportive environment that everyone needs, while still facing fears of their own. When new or younger campers participate in activities with those older campers, they can envision themselves in that position later down the road. Campers become inspired by their peersâ€™ encouragement and they take on new challenges, big and small, scary and exciting.

Summer Camp is a Chance for Children to Learn, Grow and Explore Inside and Out

Campers have a great opportunity to face their fears at camp because they are constantly encouraged to broaden their comfort zone. Challenge by Choice, a philosophy adopted by many traditional camps, is a belief that campers are always in charge of their own level of participation and personal challenge. It is the counselorâ€™s role to help campers step outside of their comfort zones and have those new experiences. However, when a camper becomes uncomfortable or reaches their limit for an activity, itâ€™s also the counselorâ€™s responsibility to create innovative ways to keep the camper involved with the group. Completing challenges and new activities often leads into a group debrief where kids have the chance to discuss their experiences. They share their favorite and most intimidating moments, assess their goals and talk about the things that they learned.

Doing something new becomes a part of everyday life at camp. While some parts come easily for campers to adjust to, others can be scary or uncomfortable. Campâ€™s supportive environment and inclusive community gives each camper the opportunity to dive into those new experiences and enjoy them. Learning to set goals and face fears is one of the greatest aspects of camp in helping kids gain independence, become more confident and experience personal growth.

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