



Help Your Child Cope with the Cancellation of Summer Camp

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From our virtual Camper Care Tent to your homes - we are so sad not to be spending the summer together with your beautiful children. We will be together in spirit and thinking of you all through Kayitz 2020. This is an incredibly challenging time for all of us, so we thought we would offer some tips and suggestions for talking about the loss of camp with your children.

1 Check in with yourself. Take some time to self-reflect and process your own feelings first. Whether you do this on your own or by reaching out to someone for support, this is an important step that may help you more calmly manage your children's reactions and better help them process their feelings.

2 Listen and validate. After sharing the news about camp with your children, give them space to react, and spend some time just listening and simply echoing back their feelings, whatever they are (sadness, anger, disappointment, relief, etc.). It's very hard to see our children upset, but try to resist the urge to jump too quickly to alternative plans, why it will all be ok, how much fun you're going to have anyway, etc. The time for this will come, but first sit with them and their feelings. This part is so important.

3 Be open to your child's reaction. Different children will respond to this news in different ways. Your child's response might surprise you (e.g. anger rather than sadness, or relief rather than disappointment). Reaction timing might be different as well. For example, your child may initially have no reaction and seem not to mind at all that camp was cancelled, yet might have a reaction a week later. This is very normal and to be expected.

4 Let your child's curiosity (within reason) guide the information you share. Some children might have many questions and others will have fewer, or none. Take your children's cues on how much information to share and how long to continue the conversation.

5 Practice gratitude. Expressing gratitude has been shown to increase happiness, so challenge your children (and yourselves) to take a few minutes each day to express gratitude for the important (or silly) things that they have in their lives right now. Reflect with them on how doing this makes them feel.

6 Reset and reconnect. When you think the time is right (it could be within the same conversation or might be at another time), here are some ideas for what your children can do to cope with the loss of camp:

- Get in touch with camp friends
- Write/draw/share a memory from a prior summer
- Write/draw/tell a story of a favorite camp activity
- Blast some Migrash Music and dance!

7 Remember that children are incredibly resilient. They will need time and space to process the loss of camp and how long that processing will take can vary greatly among children. Be patient as your children go through this process. If at any point you become concerned that your child needs a higher level of support or is not coping well, please reach out to a mental health professional.