

MT EVELYN RECREATION CAMP

Pre-camp inclusion information for parents/guardians of autistic children and others

Mt Evelyn Recreation Camp is committed to ensuring that all children enjoy their stay on camp. Some children may feel very anxious or stressed leading up to and while on camp. Your child will be experiencing being away overnight from their home and family, having to sleep in an unfamiliar bed and share a bedroom with other children, having to follow an unfamiliar routine for meals and daily activities, being immersed in a totally new environment full of different noises, smells, and visual stimulation and will have loads of new information to process.

How to best prepare your child for camp will vary from child to child. In helping to prepare your child for their camp experience, you may find some of the following suggestions helpful:

Remember that every child is unique and as parents you know and understand your child best!

- ✓ Have your child practice sleeping overnight in a sleeping bag
- ✓ Have them sleep in another bed and/or in another room of your family home
- ✓ Organise a sleepover at your home with your child's friends
- ✓ Organise a sleepover for your child at their friend's house
- ✓ Have your child pack his/her clothes in a travel bag, then get out what they need in the morning, just like when camping
- ✓ Consult with school staff about any specific strategies or supports you are using with your child to reduce their anxiety and to help manage their sensory needs. Maybe they have noise cancelling headphones which could be helpful at mealtimes, a special object they use at transition times, sensory/fiddle objects. Discuss if these would be appropriate to bring.
- ✓ Discuss with school staff any logistics which may help your child, such as being first or last to line up at mealtimes, who your child rooms with, the location of their room (noise factor, high traffic areas, proximity to bathrooms)
- ✓ Ask your child's school for detailed information in advance about what is planned for each day for the students while on camp.
- ✓ Provide your child with camp information that will help familiarise them with the camp environment and experiences. Show them images of the camp's location, the camp facilities and program activities provided. Mt Evelyn Recreation Camp information is available here: <http://www.camps.ymca.org.au/locate/mt-evelyn.html>
- ✓ Arrange a visit to the camp to have a look at the location and facilities. Consider visiting when the camp is occupied, or at a quieter time, according to your child's needs.
- ✓ Read a social script with your child that has been developed on Mt Evelyn Recreation Camp. The link to this resource is <http://bit.ly/2OSnud4>
- ✓ Consider asking your child's teacher to read the social script to the class or smaller groups.
- ✓ If you would like further information about Mt Evelyn Recreation Camp or to arrange a visit to help prepare your child for their camp experience, contact the camp office on **(03) 9727 2228** or email mtevelyn@ymca.org.au

