

Charlottesville Family 

The Camp Mom's Survival Kit

Congratulations, you made it!

They're Gone. You're Free. Now What?

If you're reading this, congratulations! You survived: ✓ The packing ✓ The labeling (yes, even the socks) ✓ The drop-off ✓ The drive home with an empty car seat

Now you're home, and it's... quiet. Really quiet. Maybe too quiet?

STOP RIGHT THERE.

This is not the time for guilt. This is not the time to deep-clean their room while crying into their baby blanket. This is not the time to reorganize their closet "as a surprise."

THIS IS YOUR TIME.

"I spent the first hour wandering around the house not knowing what to do with myself. Then I remembered: I can do ANYTHING. So I watched trashy TV and ate ice cream for lunch. It was glorious."

-Recovered Camp Mom

First 24 Hours: The Adjustment Period

IT'S NORMAL TO:

- Feel weird about the quiet
- Check their room "just because"
- Look at camp photos online obsessively
- Talk to the dog more than usual
- Feel a mix of relief & missing them
- Wonder what they're doing
- Finish a thought without interruption & feel strange

WHAT HELPS:

- Text other camp parents (they get it!)
- Plan something for Day 2 (don't wing it)
- Resist the urge to "check in" with camp immediately
- Remember: They're having a blast. You can too.



Find the best camp parent resources:





The Camp Parent Bill of Rights

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

1. Enjoy the peace and quiet (You're not a bad parent for loving this!)
2. Sleep in without an alarm (Revolutionary concept!)
3. Eat whatever you want, whenever you want (Cereal for dinner counts as self-care)
4. Watch shows with swearing, violence, or adult themes (Remember those?!)
5. Leave the house without packing snacks, wipes, or extra clothes (Just grab your keys and GO!)
6. Have conversations that aren't interrupted 47 times (Complete sentences! Full thoughts!)
7. Not feel guilty about any of the above (This is healthy! This is good! You're modeling independence!)

TRUTH BOMB: Missing them AND enjoying the break can coexist.



Find the best camp parent resources:



How to Actually Use This Time

You have approximately 168 hours of (relative) freedom. Here's how to make them count:

Things you've been putting off

PROJECTS:

- Finish that book (or start it!)
- Organize photos from 2019
- Clean out garage/basement/that drawer
- Paint a room
- Learn to make sourdough
- Start (or finish!) that puzzle
- Plant the garden
- Frame those photos
- Fix the thing that's been broken
- Sort through clothes for donation

ERRANDS (Alone!):

- Grocery shop in peace
- Target without "Can we get this?"
- Return things you've had in the car for weeks
- Go to the post office
- Get haircut/color
- Doctor/dentist appointments
- Oil change (without bored kids in waiting room)
- Browse (actually browse!) at bookstore

Self-care Menu (pick at least 3)



BASIC:

- Take a bath
- Paint your nails
- Face mask
- Actually use that expensive moisturizer
- Sleep 8 hours

INTERMEDIATE:

- Massage/facial/pedicure
- Yoga class
- Go for a run without the stroller
- Read in the hammock
- Nap (gasp!) in the middle of the day

ADVANCED:

- Spa day with friends
- Weekend getaway (yes, really!)
- Face mask
- Take a class you've wanted to try
- Day trip somewhere kid-unfriendly
- Visit a museum (at YOUR pace)

Find the best camp parent resources:



How to Actually Use This Time

Continued...

Reconnecting with your partner

If you have a partner, this is YOUR camp too!

IDEAS:

- Actual date nights (multiple!)
- Sleep in together
- Have conversations after 8pm
- Go somewhere without consulting kid menu
- Take a day trip
- Cook a fancy meal together
- Watch movies that aren't animated
- Remember why you liked each other
- Talk about non-kid topics

PRO TIP: Schedule at least one date night mid-week. Don't save it all for the weekend—make the whole week special!



RECONNECT WITH:

- Friends you haven't seen in months
- Book club you keep missing
- Girls' night out
- Long lunch without checking the time
- Actually RSVP yes to that thing

"We did a 'camp parents' dinner and spent the whole time NOT talking about our kids. Just kidding—we lasted 15 minutes before showing camp photos. But it was a CHOICE."

— Camp Parent Veteran

Find the best camp parent resources:





THE DAILY PLANS

Your Week at a Glance

Not a planner? That's cool. But having SOME structure helps you not waste this precious time binge-watching true crime while eating cereal standing up at the counter. (Okay, maybe one night.)

DAY 1: DECOMPRESS

TODAY'S MANTRA: "I survived drop-off. I deserve this."

DO: ✓ Sleep in (for real!) ✓ Drink coffee while it's hot ✓ Don't rush ✓ Order takeout ✓ Watch whatever you want ✓ Go to bed early (or stay up late doing nothing!)

DON'T: ✗ Deep clean their room ✗ Call camp ✗ Start a major project ✗ Feel guilty

VICTORY: You made it through drop-off. Give yourself grace today.

DAY 2: GET MOVING

TODAY'S MANTRA: "I remember what exercise feels like!"

DO: ✓ Morning workout (no interruptions!)
✓ Yoga class you always skip
✓ Hike/bike ride at your own pace
✓ Walk somewhere without stroller
✓ Try that fitness class

BONUS: ✓ Post-workout brunch ✓ Actually shower and do your hair

VICTORY: Remember what it feels like to move your body for YOU.

DAY 3: TACKLE THE LIST

TODAY'S MANTRA: "I'm getting stuff DONE!"

DO: ✓ One big project ✓ Annoying errands
✓ Returns/exchanges ✓ Organize that space
✓ Make appointments ✓ Adult stuff without kid interruptions

REWARD YOURSELF: Your favorite takeout + show you've been saving

VICTORY: Checked things off without anyone asking for snacks 47 times.

DAY 4: FRIEND DAY

TODAY'S MANTRA: "I am more than someone's mom!"

DO: ✓ Long lunch with friend ✓ Actually RSVP yes
Coffee date that lasts more than 20 minutes
✓ Girls' night ✓ Book club
✓ Be fully present (not distracted by pickup time)

BONUS: Spend money on yourself without justifying it

VICTORY: Had full conversations. Remembered what that feels like.





THE DAILY PLANS

Your Week at a Glance

Continued...

DAY 5: COUPLE TIME

TODAY'S MANTRA: "We're still a couple!"

DO: ✓ Date night (real one!) ✓ Sleep in together ✓ Leisurely breakfast ✓ Day trip for two ✓ Watch non-kid movie ✓ Reconnect

OR (if solo parent): ✓ Solo date with yourself at your favorite restaurant ✓ Movie you'd never take kids to ✓ Concert/show ✓ Fancy coffee + people watching

VICTORY: Remembered life beyond parenting

DAY 6: CREATIVE TIME

TODAY'S MANTRA: "I can create without cleanup crew!"

DO: ✓ That hobby you abandoned ✓ Art project ✓ Cooking experiment ✓ Write/journal ✓ Garden ✓ Crafts (for YOU, not Pinterest-perfect kid activity)

BONUS: Leave supplies out (gasp!) overnight

VICTORY: Made something. Didn't have to supervise anyone else's mess.

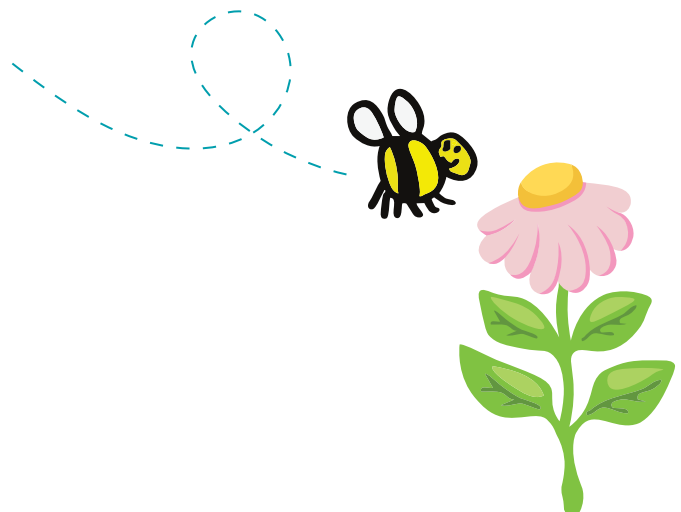
DAY 7: PREP & REFLECT

TODAY'S MANTRA: "I did good. They did good. We're all good."

DO: ✓ Light cleaning ✓ Get their room ready ✓ Stock fridge with favorites ✓ Prep for pickup ✓ Reflect on your week ✓ Feel proud

JOURNAL: What did you love about this week? What will you do differently next year? What did you learn about yourself?

VICTORY: You gave them camp. You gave yourself a break. Everyone grew



REAL TALK & RESOURCES

The Honest Truth About Camp Parent Life

Things No One Tells You

- 😬 **You'll check camp photos 47 times a day** (And panic if you don't see your kid in one. They're fine. They're probably just in the bathroom during photo time.)
- 😬 **You'll get weirdly emotional at random moments** (Their empty seat at dinner. Their unmade bed. Their favorite snack in the pantry. It's normal. Have the cry.)
- 😬 **The first night alone is WEIRD** (Too quiet. Too still. You'll probably check their room. Totally normal.)
- 📧 **You'll overthink every letter you send** (Is it too long? Too short? Too peppy? Should I mention the dog? Just write it. Send it. They'll love it.)
- 🌟 **By day 4, you'll hit your stride** (Suddenly you remember who you were before kids. It's nice.)
- 😬 **Pickup day will come too fast** (For them AND for you. That's the sweet spot.)

Your Camp Week Toolkit

📱 APPS TO DOWNLOAD:

- Headspace** (meditation - you have time now!)
- Libby** (free library books)
- OpenTable** (fancy reservations you can actually make)
- Meetup** (find local activities)

📺 **SHOWS TO BINGE:** The ones you can't watch with them home!

📖 BOOKS FOR YOUR BEACH CHAIR:

- That novel you started in 2019
- The one everyone's talking about
- Whatever you want (no board books!)

☕ SELF-CARE:

- Schedule massage NOW
- Book pedicure
- Plan coffee date
- Reserve date night spot

You've Got This, Camp Mom!

They're making memories. You're recharging. Everyone wins.

Find the best camp parent resources:

