

Homesickness Tips

Before TSBVI Attendance (Prevention)

1. When packing, bring a little bit of home with you (favorite stuffed animal, blanket, pillow).
2. Educate children that almost everyone misses something about home, it's normal.
3. Practice being away from home (such as overnight visits with family or friends).
4. Practice corresponding (emails provide an opportunity to feel closer to home).
5. Learn about the new environment with your child. For example, if you can't tour the campus in person, visit the TSBVI website, Facebook and You Tube sites.
6. Get to know the staff and your child's team in the new environment.
7. Encourage your child to make new friends.
8. Refrain from expressing your own anxiety about the time away from home to your child (parents can share their own separation anxiety with other adults).
9. Use a calendar with your child to maintain objectivity about their real length of time away from home.
10. Tell your child you want them to have fun. Be enthusiastic and optimistic about your child's away from home experience.



Remedies for Homesickness while at TSBVI

1. Do something fun, such as play with friends, to forget about homesick feelings.
2. Do something to feel closer to home (write an email, look at family photos, write a family experience story).
3. Talk to someone who can help you feel better (counselor, teacher, social worker, friend).
4. Think about the fun things you will be doing at TSBVI, the things you enjoy.

5. Remember your time away from home is pretty short, Sunday-Friday. Use a calendar to count down the days you get on the bus to spend the weekend with family.
6. Think about what your loved ones would say to you to help you feel better.
7. Keep busy (you'll have less time to feel homesick if you keep busy with friends and activities).
8. Don't dwell on home and loved ones at the times of the day when you might be or feel the most alone (bedtime, quiet time).

Do's (and maybe a couple of don'ts)

1. Do tell your child that you believe in their ability to stay the full week. This will increase your child's possibility of success!

Demonstrate your confidence in the child's ability to cope with being away from family.

Do not give the child the idea of escaping or leaving if they miss home at school.

Explore coping strategies, you can brainstorm ideas with residential staff.

Do not tell your child they can come home early if they don't like it. Engaging your child's coping skills will help them with the adjustment!

2. Do speak to your child by phone prior to a fun activity instead of right before bed when they will feel the most alone. The TSBVI residential instructor can help you find the perfect time.
3. Do remember that *talking about homesickness prior to departure does not cause homesickness*. Preparation is the key to success!
4. Do speak to staff if you are having concerns about your child's homesickness and give them time to intervene.
5. Do remember that this time away from home is not a good opportunity for a medication holiday for your child. All regular medications should continue while at school.

