

# Camp Grandma

## Camp Grandma



When my children were growing up, many of their friends would be delivered to their grandparents' home for a week to play and explore new adventures with their grandparents. When they

returned from these mini vacations, they would rave for days about the many adventures they encountered on these treasured trips. Although my children did not have grandparents who traveled with their grandchildren, they were fortunate to share similar experiences with their friends' families.

## Vacations Without Parents

My children would love the opportunity to live a different life with a new family for several days. Once in high school, each daughter had a chance to live in Europe for several weeks during one summer with a different family. One daughter helped a family friend take care of their children in France. Another daughter was able to replicate this experience by participating as a Rotary Club Ambassador in Finland. Both of our daughters returned from this extended travel with more self-determination skills and confidence, as they each had encountered another country with a different

language and lived with another family. Both successfully overcame many challenges on their own with our loving encouragement by phone.

## Camp Grandma Trips

When I became a grandparent, I was determined to create a Camp Grandma experience for our grandchildren. We would convene a family meeting with our grandchildren on where we would take our vacation and plan our play activities. All participating grandchildren had to be at least age three and be prepared to challenge themselves in becoming more independent with their older cousins or siblings. We have had five Camp Grandmas to date and all have survived and relished the experiences of becoming junior rangers at a state park, surviving beach board walk carnival rides, and taking day trips biking, hiking, and exploring parks.

## Favorite Trip

The favorite trip to date has been staying at the beach for several days and exploring nature, surviving wild carnival rides, playing in the tide pools and ocean, swimming in a pool, sharing ice cream cone eating with their cousins, and eating out at a variety of restaurants. The grandkids earn an allowance for maintaining their belongings, taking care of younger siblings and cousins, and tutoring each other on the intricacies of building a Lego village, math facts, reading readiness, social study explorations, and science experimentations. The token allowance is received at the end of the trip and the grandkids can

select journal postcards to add to their collection of drawings and stories about their trip.

## What Kids Learn

Once the children are returned to their parents, they relive their adventures for weeks by telling their stories of achievements to their parents and to anyone else who will listen to them. After a trip to the Santa Cruz Beach boardwalk for four days, my four year old grandson raved about living in a hotel as this was a new adventure that he loved. My six year old granddaughter was finally tall enough to take a ride with grandpa on the Big Dipper roller coaster. The nine year old grandson raved about the gourmet seafood platter he fully consumed at a fancy restaurant that was ordered from the adult menu!

## Camp Grandma at Grandma's Home

In response to COVID challenges, we modified our Camp Grandma experiences this year to learning new skills and taking daily excursions from our home to many local tourist sites. These included learning how to sew, making puzzles, watercolor painting, bike rides, ocean play, walking across the Golden Gate Bridge, visiting San Francisco tourist sites, and eating desserts at the Half Moon Bay Harbor. We also took each grandkid school shopping for clothes which all parents appreciated this year.

# Our Favorite Camp Grandma Trips

Now that we have completed many Camp Grandma vacations, the grandkids continue to discuss the family traditions that they have established with us on these great adventures. So far, the beach vacation has won as the ideal vacation destination. The kids rave about their walk to the ice cream shop with their cousins at night. They brag about staying out until it is dark at the boardwalk to see the bright lights of the carnival rides.

These adventures will stay with them throughout their lives until they become parents themselves some day and initiate new family traditions. I feel fortunate that I am young enough as a grandma to share in these exuberant adventures. I am also mature enough that I can safely deliver the grandchildren back to their parents so that I can rest up for the next great adventure in grand parenting.

Happy fun adventures with your children and family!

Warm regards,

Mary Ann

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