

TIPS FOR KIDS HAVING ADVENTURES OUTSIDE

Information from Leaders of The Day, provider of Outdoor Survival sessions in Callander, September 2018.
<https://www.leadersoftheday.com/wilderness-survival-skills-training/>



1) Always tell an adult where you are going.

This helps people know where to start looking for you if you haven't returned home by the time that you agreed upon. Make sure you stick to your plan to help people find you if something were to go wrong.

2) Always pack some survival essentials when out adventuring.

Smart adventurers always carry a little day pack with a minimum of the following items *any* time they head somewhere "off the beaten track". Always have a whistle on a break-away lanyard around your neck and have something with you to eat and drink. Consider packing a toque and a giant sized orange leaf collection garbage bag that you can turn into a rain poncho/ weather shelter. The most dangerous part of a survival situation is avoiding exposure. Carry a glow stick or a lightweight flashlight. All these things are super light weight and can increase the chance of a happy ending.

For older kids: a pocket knife, a lighter and the know how to use each safely are also great additions.

3) If you get lost – stay where you are! Don't wander.

Often when lost, people panic and think they can find their way back if they just keep going. Sometimes this is true, but for kids this can often result in getting more thoroughly lost, and further from the point of origin which increases the search area for rescuers.

4) Make a "nest" in a safe place and stay dry and warm.

Make a good pile of leaves or evergreen boughs to get you up off of the cold ground. Build a simple structure or find a way to keep precipitation off of you and the wind from blowing on you. The garbage bag trick as mentioned above can help minimize your exposure to both.

5) Make it easier for people to find you.

Use the bright orange garbage bag to make yourself stand out in the landscape. Wave it around to signal search aircraft that may be circling overhead. If you make a survival shelter out of wood and debris, try to mark it with something that clearly stands out for those who might be searching nearby.

6) Use your whistle loudly and often. Answer the call of rescuers.

When used correctly, your whistle can be heard for a long way off and will attract the attention of other people in the area or your rescue party. Save your voice for when people are closer and answer the call of your rescuers. Children sometimes don't answer the calls of people shouting because shouting voices sound angry or upset and because they are sometimes worried that people will be mad. People are anxious to find you safe and sound.

7) Try and remain calm. This is when our best ideas come!

Taking some deep breaths (as simple as it sounds) helps to powerfully deal with stress hormones and adrenaline and helps to take us out of the fight or flight mode our human brain can get stuck in during what we perceive to be dangerous situations. When we return to a state of balance, our brain actually "shifts gears" allowing us to again access the higher reasoning areas of our brain where problem solving most effectively occurs.

8) Deepen and develop your wilderness skills.

Learn how to start a fire (regardless of the weather conditions). Learn how to build a simple shelter to minimize your exposure to the elements. Learn about First Aid and how to take care of yourself and others should an emergency arise. Learn what to wear when adventuring off the beaten track. Get in the habit of having essential survival gear in your pocket on every adventure (I never go into the bush without at least a pocket knife and a lighter). Learn how to make a compact survival kit with additional materials and then take it with you on all your adventures. Some of these simple items could save your life!

