

Pointers For Parents

Helping Kids Cut Their Losses At Camp

(NAPSA)—Preparing for summer camp can be as stressful as it is exciting, and—while it’s normal to worry about your kids—you don’t want to do the same about their stuff. iPods. Laptops. The latest running shoes. Add all those (and more) to the average \$1,000 cost of two weeks at camp, and you can see why it’s worth making sure your child’s expensive gear makes it back home.

Ah, but who has time these days to sew tags or even scribble names on things? Experts say not only is labeling easier, faster and more durable, it’s also mandatory in many camps. Which could help explain why four out of five North American camp directors recently surveyed by Bridge Global Strategies cited it as the best way to reduce the number of items that wind up in the lost and found at camp season’s close.

“They’re cool and they work,” says Kevin McLaughlin, the director of Ontario’s Hockey Opportunity Camp, about the distinctive labels from a company called Mabel’s Labels that he refers parents to. It offers a range of colorful labels that are personalized with a child’s name and chosen icon, including “Sticky Labels” that withstand showers, the pool and even the lake.

“Labels are like insurance policies,” says Julie Cole, the company’s founder and mother of six. “They let campers and counselors know whose stuff is whose.”

For labeling clothes, Cole suggests Iron-Ons and Tag-Mates that stick to clothing care tags. Parents can safeguard expensive boots and sneakers with a shoe label complete with a waterproof



Labels can help ensure campers return home with all their possessions.

overlay. There are also “Bag Tags” and other options to fit virtually everything from toothbrushes to goggles. Other tips from Cole include:

- **Pack as a parent/kid team.** Have kids do a mental inventory of what they’re bringing so they know what to pack when it’s time to come home.

- **Watch for stowaways.** Kids bring items to camp that they’re not supposed to, such as iPods and digital cameras. If your child owns something irreplaceable, be sure he doesn’t pack it.

- **Tell it like it is.** Let kids know their property is valuable and that you trust them to take care of their things while at camp.

As a final tip, you might send your camper off with a few Allergy Alert tags if he has any food sensitivities, and remember to label any medications—including inhalers—that he or she might need. For more hints and a handy packing checklist, visit www.mabel.ca.