

Child Survival - Lost in the Woods



Child Survival

This Child Survival program is presented to students, cubs scouts, boy scouts, girl scouts, guides, parents and interest groups across North America. The presentation which includes video, lecture and demonstration is about one hour and thirty minutes.



Discussing Feelings

Because children have fears, which can be more intense than those of an adult, they are discussed by the instructor during the Child Survival lecture. The following words are addressed to the students, and elaborated.

Talking about FEELINGS, and knowing how to deal with them, is very important.

Nobody likes being scared or frightened.

Help yourself keep calm by singing, whistling or even telling yourself jokes or stories. Do anything it takes to make yourself feel better. Try using your imagination to pretend you are somewhere else that you really enjoy.

You usually do not have to worry about wild animals. They do not like to be near people. If

they hear or smell you, they will usually run away.

A good rule is 'Answer a Noise with a Noise'. If you hear a noise in the woods, make a noise back. If it is an animal it will run away, if it is a searcher then you will be found.

The fear of dark can be easily overcome by memorizing your surroundings during daylight so that you can see with your memory when it gets dark. Nothing changes just because it gets dark. Try practicing in your bedroom.

There is no punishment for being lost and yet children have been known to hide or run away from searchers in fear of punishment. Children should not have any fear of returning home. Mom and Dad, or whoever is looking after you are going to be very happy to see you again. There will be NO punishment.

There are Friendly strangers who will help you when needed. Some of these are police officers, fire fighters, ambulance personnel and Search and Rescue teams. Generally, these Friendly strangers always work in groups.



Lost in the Woods - Child Survival Kit

During the presentation of this Child Survival lecture, the instructor would show the students each item and how it is made. For instance the reflector is tin foil pasted to cardboard (no sharp edges), and, the right and safe way to tear a face hole in the bright orange garbage bag is demonstrated.

Make an Emergency Survival Kit (and practice using it):

- A Zip Lock sandwich bag for the container (also used as a cup for drinking water)
- A snack of high energy trail mix (contained in its own zip lock bag)
- A whistle used for calling for help (three short blasts)
- A signal flag that can be cut from orange plastic garbage bag
- A reflector for sending signals (use soft, flexible material)
- A large, bright color garbage bag used as poncho (pre-tear slit for face opening - Do not "cut" hole)



The 9 Rules for Survival

PREPARE YOURSELF & YOUR CHILD

Child survival needs adult assistance. You can help children learn what to do if they get lost in the woods, by discussing and practicing the "Rules for Survival".

Nobody ever expects to get lost, but it happens. Hopefully, this information will insure a safe return of your child should this misfortune ever occur.

The Rules are presented in a way which children can understand.

A definition of Survival:

Staying WARM and DRY, while waiting to be found.



Stay Together, DO NOT Separate - if with a friend or pet.

The reason for this rule is body heat. Cuddling up to a large dog or friend will help keep you warm. If with a dog, do not let it run loose, it can help you more by staying close and providing heat and companionship.



Stay in one place or area. DO NOT WANDER!

This is the MOST important rule of them all. If you wander - We Can not Find You. One reason is that people looking for you move very slowly while searching for clues. If you are out front running along, we won't be able to catch up. Another reason for not wandering is the possibility of falling and hurting yourself while travelling. Being lost and hurt could be tragic.



Keep Warm.

This rule means to keep warm with the clothes you are wearing. NEVER take any clothes off. Cover up all the exposed skin you can. If you are wearing a sweater or jacket, do it up. Watch out for your shoe laces. Branches have a tricky way of undoing them. The most important part of your clothing is a hat or something that covers your head. Over 70% of all your body heat escapes through your head.



Find a Cozy Waiting Place, Not a Hiding Place.

A cozy waiting place means, a warm place out of the wind and rain but not a place where searchers can not see you. Under a large tree is a good place.



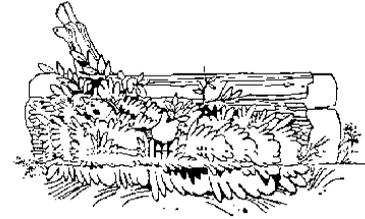
Put Out Something Bright.

Put out something bright or make something to tell people searching for you where you are. Make a flag using what you have, but do not take off any clothes to do so. Some suggestions are white paper, money, hair ribbons, a strip from an orange garbage bag, etc. Spell the word "HELP" or "SOS" on the ground using rocks and sticks or make a large arrow with them, pointing to where you are. Do anything to attract attention!



Look Bigger For Searchers.

If possible, your waiting place should be near an open space. When you hear someone coming or a helicopter overhead, move to the middle of the clearing and call. Do Not Run in the direction of the noise. If it is an aircraft you heard, lie down so the pilot has a bigger target to look at. Then wave with both your arms and legs, like making an angel in the snow. Stand up immediately after the aircraft has passed, as the ground can be very cold.



Do Not Lie on the Bare Ground.

The only exception to this rule is the one above. Laying on the cold ground for a very short period of time, attracting attention, is OK. Being in direct contact with the ground for any length of time is dangerous. The cold ground can rob precious body heat from you. Build a mattress using available materials such as branches, moss, leaves, etc. This mattress should be as thick as the mattress you sleep on at home! After the mattress is completed, gather the same amount or more, of the same material and use it for the blankets. This is called a survival bed.



Do Not Eat Anything you are not sure of.

Do Not eat any berries, mushrooms or anything else unless you are 100% sure what they are. Being hungry is not too bad of a feeling compared with being violently sick. And remember, there won't be anyone there to look after you. You can go without food for a long time, but you cannot go without water.



Stay Away from Large Rivers and Lakes.

You must have drinking water to survive, but be careful where you get it from. Do Not go near any large bodies of water. Instead, drink from a water supply that is smaller than you are, so you can not fall in. Another source of water can be found on leaves in the form of dew.