Girl Scout Camping:

Janet Piehl's Suggestions from the Field

1. Plan ahead so that meal preparation and clean-up does not occupy your entire weekend
   1. First meal: have the girls bring from home
      1. if you arrive Friday evening, each girl brings a sack dinner
      2. if you arrive Saturday, each girl eats breakfast at home and brings sack lunch
   2. precook part or all of a meal at an earlier troop meeting so the girls do the work, then freeze and reheat at camp, examples:
      1. lasagna or homemade mac & cheese if staying in an indoor unit with an oven
      2. foil dinners cooked in the fire (a personal favorite as each girl assembles her own which accounts for picky eaters)
         1. precook chicken chunks, onions, potatoes, vegetables
         2. grate cheese
         3. once at camp, allow to thaw, then assemble above ingredients plus pesto or other flavoring in a piece of foil then fold into a packet and cook in the coals.
2. First camping trip
   1. The goal is that the girls have a successful trip, so they want to come again. It's easy to put pressure on yourself that it has to be perfect, but it doesn't. Just positive.
   2. The other goal is that the leader has a positive experience and wants to come again. :-)
   3. Saturday arrival is a great option.
      1. some girls may never have spent the night away from parents
      2. some girls may never have spent a night outside
      3. fewer meals (see suggestions in #1)
   4. Have a packing party at the meeting before the camping trip,
      1. each girl brings all of her gear packed as she will for the camping trip
      2. have each girl unpack, show you all of her things, then repack
      3. good opportunity to teach and guide girls and parents (and helps you plan for #3)
   5. For the youngest girls, *consider* having a parent attend with each girl
      1. not for every leader, so don't feel any pressure at all
      2. pros:
         1. helps shy/nervous girls feel ok about going to camp
         2. helps shy/nervous adults feel ok about daughters going to camp
         3. helps adults not raised in scouts understand and appreciate what this experience is about
         4. good way to increase parent engagement and volunteerism
      3. cons:
         1. big group
         2. management of adult personalities
      4. I suggest creating an adult Kaper chart a few weeks before and having the adults sign up
         1. one job for each adult, including grocery shopping, storage and packing of food, supervision of meal prep and clean-up, etc
         2. set clear expectations for which adult is responsible for the group and when, which helps avoid having too many or too few in charge
3. Bring extra stuff
   1. extra warm sleeping bag and blankets
   2. extra warm clothes, raingear, boots, etc
   3. Best scenario: it will just sit in your car the whole time.
4. Other food advice
   1. Have something (like pb &j) as an option for girls who get hungry outside of meal times.
   2. Girls are always hungry right when they wake up, so have something for girls to eat while breakfast is cooking, such as fruit.
   3. Consider baking muffins for breakfast in a box oven during dinner the night before. The girls still do the work, but it eases the logistics of feeding hungry girls in the morning.
   4. S'mores are a great afternoon treat. Consider having fruit and cheese for bedtime snack, not sugar, unless you want them all riled up before bed.
5. Plan activities and crafts, but don't be surprised if you don't do many of them.

Camp provides many opportunities for unstructured play time, which is a gift in our busy lives.