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IN THE WILD WITH YOUR CHILD?

Whether you're sending your kids off to camp or taking them out in the great wide world on a family campout, it always helps to prepare them for the experience. Take some time to share with your kids some of these delightful books on camping in the great outdoors—whether it's the back yard or the back country.

SLEEPING IN A SACK: CAMPING ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS by Linda White (\$9.95, Gibbs Smith) has hundreds of great tips on basics like tents, sleeping bags, other gear, even a discussion of backwoods sanitation as well as fun activities including knot tying, star-watching. **THE KIDS CAMPFIRE BOOK** by Jane Drake (\$10.95, Kids Can Press) is chock full of similar activities and even includes spooky stories and tips to make your first campout successful and enjoyable. **KIDS CAMP!** By Laurie Carlson (\$12.95, A Capella Books) has over a hundred ideas for activities to get ready to camp and be in the wilds. Mercer Mayer's *Little Critter* is the star of **JUST ME AND MY DAD** (\$3.29, Golden) and **JUST CAMPING OUT** (\$1.79, Golden) with just the right amount of ineptness to reassure first time campers that they will survive their first camping trip. **AMELIA BEDELIA GOES CAMPING** by Peggy Parish (\$3.99, Camelot) teaches campers how to improperly hit the trail and pitch that tent, among Amelia's other mangled if obedient adventures. It is a shame there was never a **STUPIDS CAMP OUT** in the series by Harry Allard. (It would be fun to write your own version, though. Every kid can draw

the Stupid Family and enjoy putting them in predicaments they'll be able to get out of hilariously.)

If your kids are like most, when outdoors they will be ravenously hungry about six times a day, so *COOKING ON A STICK: CAMPFIRE RECIPES FOR KIDS* by Linda White (\$8.95, Gibbs Smith) with its simple, nutritious and kid-oriented recipes for outdoor meals and snacks is going to be well-used. Read it ahead of time to use it to best advantage. *FISHING IN A BROOK: ANGLER ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS* by Lawson Drinkard (\$9.95, Gibbs Smith) teaches kids all the basics of outsmarting fish and what to do with them once caught. *TREKKING ON A TRAIL: HIKING ADVENTURES FOR KIDS* by Linda White (\$9.95 Gibbs Smith) has some inventive projects to do ahead of time like making a journal, bug jar and emergency kit as well as all-ages ideas for things to do along the hike.

No matter how much readiness you do, the kids are bound to have memorable adventures that deserve to be written down. To spark their creativity, read *THREE DAYS ON A RIVER IN A RED CANOE* by Vera Williams (\$5.95, Greenwillow) and whip out those colored pencils to record your own adventures! If you're taking the family dog with you, it's always a great way to start a book from the canine point of view and shift to the child's voice explaining to the puzzled dog how things "work in the wilderness." Preserving your young camper's first adventures and impressions is a sure-fire way to inspire your next camping trip!

Gwynne Spencer (author of *RECIPES FOR READING*, \$15.95, Linworth) has survived many camping trips with her kids, one of whom caught a very large fish using a carrot on a safety pin using dental floss and a stick, and another who pitched the tent in the dark right over a snake's front door.

