



# THE DADS & KIDS CAMPING HANDBOOK

HOW TO ORGANIZE THE ULTIMATE  
GROUP CAMPING EXPERIENCE FOR  
DADS AND KIDS...  
AND GIVE MOMS A MUCH-  
DESERVED WEEKEND OFF

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## Foreword

Imagine a weekend away with no lawn to mow, no shrubs to trim, no 'honey-do' list, no social commitments, no unexpected in-law visits, and no kids' athletic events. Just two days of hanging out with the guys, sharing good conversation, breathing the fresh forest air and enjoying a few cocktails. Imagine, no one to tell you what to do ... or what not to do! In short, it's your weekend - probably the only one you'll get each year - to do whatever you please.

The only catch is that you have to remember that you've brought your kids along with you, so it's not all "college weekend" again. But, beyond getting a little food into them each day and ensuring they're not eaten by a big old raccoon, you're on vacation!

Since 1989 I have had the pleasure of spending a weekend with as many as 700 of my "closest friends" doing what guys do best: relaxing, talking sports, jobs, families, catching a few rays and doing some biking and hiking.

I say this somewhat jokingly because, as we all know, life is all about our kids and spending some quality time with them. And, when there are no distractions of everyday life to get in the way, you can really enjoy each other's company, whether doing "outdoor stuff" or just sitting around talking about whatever comes up.

This is what Dads & Kids Camping Weekend has meant to me. With the nonstop pace of what our lives have become, it represents a respite that I look forward to each and every year.

And, while I share my selfish reasons for organizing and participating in this event for the past three decades, you should also know that each year hundreds of dads, kids and moms likewise count down the fifty-one weeks between the occurrences of this annual event. Families literally block off the weekend after Memorial Day (our chosen time each year, and for a good reason that I'll share later) on their calendars and consider this a sacred happening not to be interfered with.



I should make clear at this time that, while the dads and kids are the actual participants in our No Moms weekend, the moms are perhaps the real winners. As all dads know, moms work extremely hard taking care of our kids and picking up the slack for us in so many ways. This weekend is one they cherish as well, as it provides a couple of days of peace and quiet, a chance to get away with friends or perhaps enjoy a day at the spa.

Dads & Kids Camping Weekend is more than just another weekend activity. It has become a tradition for hundreds of families and what it means to the kids, their dads and their moms is immeasurable. It is something that the kids anxiously await each year. It creates great memories that will remain with them for their entire lives and has resulted in friendships that they would otherwise not have made or maintained.

Most importantly, Dads & Kids Camping Weekend has taught our children how and why families do what they do and the importance of socialization and sharing. They have also learned both to become independent and to watch out for each other. Each year

they have an opportunity to participate in something that is truly unique and enriching.

If you are thinking at this point that this all sounds pretty cool but that it would be a lot of work to organize, here's more good news: I have written this how-to handbook (I was going to call it a "cookbook" but that does not sound "daddy" enough) in a format that even a dad can follow. It's a quick read and outlines step-by-step exactly what you need to do to ensure your own successful Dads & Kids Camping Weekend. Thirty years of experience is baked into this handbook and I have not missed a single ingredient (maybe I *should* have called it a cookbook). And the Appendix has an abbreviated version in the form of a checklist to make your job even easier.



Your initial event will almost certainly start off small, with perhaps five or ten families, so you can ease into it. Once you get the hang of it, my experience is that planning for 50 or 100 families is no more difficult and only a bit more time consuming. Much of the contents of this handbook refers to activities that are performed whether your group consists of 5 or 105 families. I also provide some pointers to help you as your event expands in size.

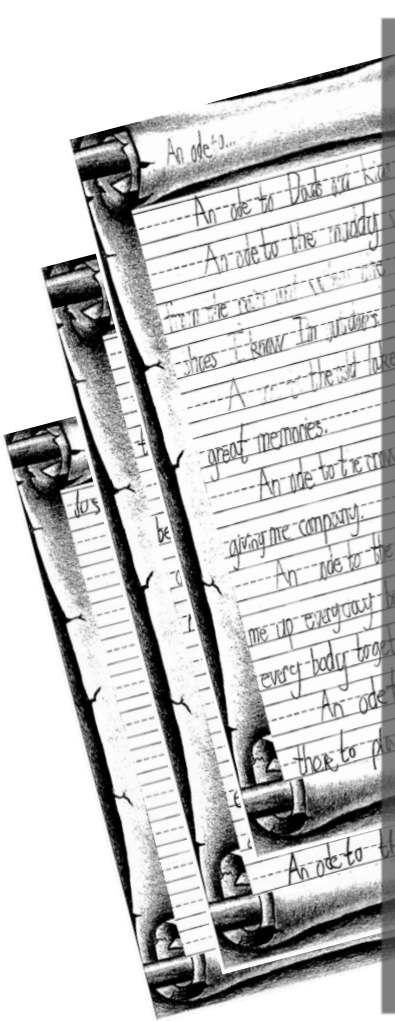
From a cost standpoint, there is nothing you could do with your kids that offers more "bang for the buck." The cost of a Dads & Kids Camping Weekend for an entire family, excluding food, is around \$90. This includes the campsite and the entertainment and souvenir t-shirts I provide.

If you have never camped before, you should know that campers are some of the most friendly and helpful people on the planet. Families share equipment, food and tasks. Don't let your lack of experience in the art of camping deter you.

So, as the Nike slogan goes, Just Do It! You will be making possible a terrific experience for many dads, kids and their moms. You'll create lifelong memories. And the personal satisfaction you will derive from bringing some good to others is all the motivation you'll need to repeat the performance the following year and for many years thereafter.

Following are some of the sentiments I have received over the years. Among them—and perhaps the one that means the most to me—is an ode written recently by the eight-year-old son of a close friend. His third-grade teacher asked each student to write about something very special in their lives and he chose our annual Dads & Kids Camping Weekend. If you have any hesitation about organizing this event, the expressions of appreciation that follow will convince you that it is a must-do.

I welcome your stories and pictures of your Dads & Kids Camping experiences, as well as any questions or comments you may have. Be sure to visit us at [www.dadsandkidscamping.com](http://www.dadsandkidscamping.com) and [www.facebook.com/DadsandKidsCamping](https://www.facebook.com/DadsandKidsCamping) to talk with your new friends, ask questions or share your thoughts, photos and recommendations.



An ode to Dads and Kids camping.

An ode to the muddy wet ground from the rain and when the mud gets on my shoes I know I'm outdoors.

An ode to the cold lake that brings me great memories.

An ode to the crowded camp that's always giving me company.

An ode to the drop of rain that wakes me up every day before everybody to get ready for the day.

An ode to all the nice people there to play and make good food for me.

An ode to all the beautiful triangular and any size shapes and color tents.

An ode to dads and kids campground because every time I go I bond with my dad and cherish memories when I also remember some memories.

An ode to get away from home, but it's only for two days.

An ode to how it reminds me of everything me and my dad did and everything he gave me.

An ode to the feeling of joy not just in the outside but in the inside.



I forgot to mention in my e-mail how much we appreciate you doing this — again, and again, and again ... it's really a wonderful event.

Sam is committed to not breaking his record of attendance (this event is one of his best memories growing up - and it means a lot to him).  
I can't thank you enough!!!

I've just relocated to Phoenix, AZ for a new job. However I plan to coordinate a trip back so I can attend this great event. Keep up the good work!

*Thanks for organizing this wonderful event!  
From a Mother who benefits from your efforts!*

YAY!!!  
Congratulations on making it THIRTY YEARS!!!  
  
The kids in this house can't wait. Therefore, we would like to make a reservation for [6 kids, 2 Dads]  
  
Thanks for all your hard work.

...once again a great time had by all in our group. My three boys had a blast and are now seasoned vets of dads and kids camping trip, this being their second year. Thanks for your time organizing such an awesome event!