



#### Things to consider:

- Small lakes and rivers have significantly different hazards. Above all, be conservative!
- Thirty miles may be ambitious—or not—depending upon the speed of the current. Look for a river section that has multiple take-outs so you can shorten or lengthen the trip if necessary. Be aware of the diurnal wind speed and direction. Ideally you want a light breeze to keep the bugs down with no significant head wind.
- If the weather looks bad for the trip, consider alternatives. You want your child to enjoy the experience. Paddling or camping in the rain and wind is challenging for adults. Save this type of challenge for another time. If the weather unexpectedly turns bad for more than a few hours during the day, it's usually time to take out and go home.
- Choose a river section with multiple opportunities where you can stop and let the children play (side hikes, rock to climb on, side streams with water slides, etc.), and where camp sites are reasonably close to one another.
- Choose a time in the summer where the water is warm enough for comfortable swimming while in camp or in the event a canoe unexpectedly turns over. If the water is too cool or cold for comfortable swimming bring extra warm clothes and wet suits or cancel the trip. Discuss what to do if a canoe turns over accidentally (if you have correctly assessed your paddling skills, this should *not* happen). Consider playing rescue games with your children to ensure they know what to do if the canoe turns over. Even though you don't expect to turn a canoe over, rig your canoes so your gear will remain in place and dry should you encounter an accidental flip. Ensure your child will not become entrapped in lines or gear should the canoe turn over.
- Consider looking for another couple with a child similar in age to go on the trip with you. Two canoes are safer than one and the kids can play together while in camp making it more enjoyable for everyone. If you can find another interested couple, consider taking a short day trip with them to see if the children get along and that both families travel at the same pace and have the same comfort and ability paddling with a child in the center (or bow) of their canoe.
- Make sure everyone wears a properly adjusted life jacket while on the water or playing in eddies at camp (no horse collar jackets); the children's life jackets should have crotch straps. An adult should always be present when children are swimming in the water.
- If possible, choose camping spots that are exposed to light winds to minimize biting insects. Bring a netted kitchen tent/tarp where everyone can eat and play if the weather turns bad or the bugs come out in the evening. Make sure all bug nets have no-see-um netting and the tents can withstand an evening thunderstorm.