

# WOLF

DEN LEADER GUIDE



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®



Chief Scout Executive  
Michael Surbaugh

## The BSA's Commitment to Safety

We want you to know that the safety of our youth, volunteers, staff, and employees is an important part of the Scouting experience. Youth develop traits of citizenship, character, fitness, and leadership during age-appropriate events when challenged to move beyond their normal comfort level and discover their abilities. This is appropriate when risks are identified and mitigated.

The Scouting program, as contained in our handbooks and literature, integrates many safety features. However, no policy or procedure will replace the review and vigilance of trusted adults and leaders at the point of program execution.

Commit yourself to creating a safe and healthy environment by:

- ▶ Knowing and executing the BSA program as contained in our publications
- ▶ Planning tours, activities, and events with vigilance using the tools provided
- ▶ Setting the example for safe behavior and equipment use during program
- ▶ Engaging and educating all participants in discussions about hazards and risks
- ▶ Reporting incidents in a timely manner

Thank you for being part of Scouting and creating an exciting and safe experience for every participant.



**Prepared. For Life.®**

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BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

# BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA SCOUTER CODE OF CONDUCT

On my honor, I promise to do my best to comply with this Boy Scouts of America Scouter Code of Conduct while serving in my capacity as an adult leader:

1. I have completed or will complete my registration with the Boy Scouts of America, answering all questions truthfully and honestly.
2. I will do my best to live up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, obey all laws, and hold others in Scouting accountable to those standards. I will exercise sound judgment and demonstrate good leadership and use the Scouting program for its intended purpose consistent with the mission of the Boy Scouts of America.
3. I will make the protection of youth a personal priority. I will complete and remain current with Youth Protection training requirements. I will be familiar with and follow:
  - a. BSA Youth Protection policies and guidelines, including mandatory reporting: [www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/](http://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/)
  - b. *The Guide to Safe Scouting*: [www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss](http://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss)
  - c. The Sweet Sixteen of BSA Safety: [www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/resources/sweet16](http://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/resources/sweet16)
4. When transporting Scouts, I will obey all laws, comply with Youth Protection guidelines, and follow safe driving practices.
5. I will respect and abide by the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, BSA policies, and BSA-provided training, including but not limited to those relating to:
  - a. Unauthorized fundraising activities
  - b. Advocacy on social and political issues, including prohibited use of the BSA uniform and brand
  - c. Bullying, hazing, harassment, and unlawful discrimination of any kind
6. I will not discuss or engage in any form of sexual conduct while engaged in Scouting activities. I will refer Scouts with questions regarding these topics to talk to their parents or spiritual advisor.
7. I confirm that I have fully disclosed and will disclose in the future any of the following:
  - a. Any criminal suspicion, charges, or convictions of a crime or offense involving abuse, violence, sexual misconduct, or any misconduct involving minors or juveniles
  - b. Any investigation or court order involving domestic violence, child abuse, or similar matter
  - c. Any criminal charges or convictions for offenses involving controlled substances, driving while intoxicated, firearms, or dangerous weapons
8. I will not possess, distribute, transport, consume, or use any of the following items prohibited by law or in violation of any Scouting rules, regulations, and policies:
  - a. Alcoholic beverages or controlled substances, including marijuana
  - b. Concealed or unconcealed firearms, fireworks, or explosives
  - c. Pornography or materials containing words or images inconsistent with Scouting values
9. If I am taking prescription medications with the potential of impairing my functioning or judgment, I will not engage in activities that would put Scouts at risk, including driving or operating equipment.
10. I will take steps to prevent or report any violation of this code of conduct by others in connection with Scouting activities.

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# WELCOME

Welcome! You have chosen to make an important difference in the lives of the youth in your den and pack. With your guidance as their leader, the youth in your den will develop character, leadership skills, responsibility, fitness, and a love for fun while learning. Your role as a den leader is a critical one to a child's success and continued involvement in Cub Scouting. This guide is your key to leading a successful program.

## AN OVERVIEW OF CUB SCOUTING

### THE PURPOSES OF CUB SCOUTING

Cub Scouting is a year-round, family-oriented part of the Boy Scouts of America. The program is designed for youth who are in the year prior to first grade through fifth grade (or are 6–10 years of age). Parents, leaders, and organizations work together to achieve the 10 purposes of Cub Scouting:

- Character Development
- Spiritual Growth
- Good Citizenship
- Sportsmanship and Fitness
- Family Understanding
- Respectful Relationships
- Personal Achievement
- Friendly Service
- Fun and Adventure
- Preparation to join a Scout troop

All the activities leaders plan and Cub Scouts enjoy should relate to one or more of these purposes.



### CUB SCOUTS: A POSITIVE PLACE

The Boy Scouts of America emphasizes a positive place in Cub Scouting. Any Cub Scouting activity should take place in a positive atmosphere where children and other family members can feel emotionally secure and find support, not ridicule. Activities should be positive and meaningful and should help support the mission and purpose of the BSA.

# THE SCOUT OATH AND SCOUT LAW

Use of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in all Scouting programs is designed to help emphasize the unity of Scouting. This helps fulfill Scouting's mission and vision statements, both of which mention the Scout Oath and Scout Law:

**Vision Statement:** The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Scout Oath	Scout Law
On my honor I will do my best To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.	A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

## Age-Appropriate Expectations for Learning the Scout Oath and Scout Law

The concepts of the Scout Oath and Scout Law are difficult to master, but they are not so difficult that a Cub Scout cannot begin the journey. In the beginning of the Cub Scout's journey, don't expect memorization. The Scout Oath and Scout Law are printed on the back cover of the handbooks. Use the handbook or a poster as an aid to reciting.

You can also use older Scouts and adults as mentors to help bring your Cub Scouts along at a pace comfortable for their learning needs.

The following descriptions can help you explain the meaning of the Scout Oath and Scout Law to Cub Scouts:

### What the Scout Oath Means

*ON MY HONOR ...*

Saying "On my honor" is like saying "I promise."

*I WILL DO MY BEST ...*

This means that you will do your best to do what the Scout Oath says.

*TO DO MY DUTY ...*

A duty is something you are expected to do. At home, you might be expected to make up your bed or take out the trash. You also have duties to God and to your country.

*TO GOD ...*

You do your duty to God by following the teachings of your family and religious leaders.

*AND MY COUNTRY ...*

You do your duty to your country by being a good citizen and obeying the law.

*AND TO OBEY THE SCOUT LAW; ...*

You also promise to live by the 12 points of the Scout Law, which are described on the next page.

*TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES; ...*

Many people need help. A friendly smile and a helping hand make life easier for others. By helping other people, you are doing a Good Turn and making our world a better place.

*TO KEEP MYSELF PHYSICALLY STRONG, ...*



This part of the Scout Oath is about taking care of yourself. You stay physically strong when you eat the right foods and get plenty of exercise.

*MENTALLY AWAKE, ...*

You stay mentally awake when you work hard in school, learn all you can, and ask questions.

*AND MORALLY STRAIGHT.*

You stay morally straight when you do the right thing and live your life with honesty.

## **What the Scout Law Means**

The Scout Law has 12 points. Each one is a goal you should do your best to achieve.

A Scout is **TRUSTWORTHY.**

Tell the truth and keep your promises. People can depend on you.

A Scout is **LOYAL.**

Be true to your family, friends, Scout leaders, school, and country.

A Scout is **HELPFUL.**

Volunteer to help others without expecting a reward.

A Scout is **FRIENDLY.**

Be a friend to everyone, even people who are very different from you.

A Scout is **COURTEOUS.**

Be polite to everyone and always use good manners.

A Scout is **KIND.**

Treat others as you want to be treated. Never harm or kill any living thing without good reason.

A Scout is **OBEDIENT.**

Follow the rules of your family, school, and pack. Obey the laws of your community and country.

A Scout is **CHEERFUL.**

Look for the bright side of life. Cheerfully do tasks that come your way. Try to help others be happy.

A Scout is **THRIFTY.**

Work to pay your own way. Try not to be wasteful. Use time, food, supplies, and natural resources wisely.

A Scout is **BRAVE.**

Face difficult situations even when you feel afraid. Do what you think is right despite what others might be doing or saying.

A Scout is **CLEAN.**

Keep your body and mind fit. Help keep your home and community clean.

A Scout is **REVERENT.**

Be reverent toward God. Be faithful in your religious duties. Respect the beliefs of others.

# DELIVERING THE CUB SCOUTING PROGRAM

Cub Scouting can be extremely rewarding for every member of the family—children and adults alike. Taking the time to review this information and using the den meeting plans in this den leader guide is the first and best step toward ensuring that you can deliver the fun that families want as easily as possible.

The den is where Cub Scouting takes place. The majority of dens meet two to four times a month with the average meeting lasting 60 to 90 minutes. The following are some considerations to make things even smoother.

## SAFETY FIRST

In conducting activities, Cub Scout den leaders must maintain adequate supervision and assure the proper use of materials. Be careful, and remember: Safety must always come first!

Refer to the latest printing of the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, No. 34416, for information on policies relating to the many activities in which your den may participate.

The *Guide to Safe Scouting* is available on the National Council website at [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org), or you can find it at your local council service center. **The online version of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* will always have the most current information.**

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN CUB SCOUTING

Parents and other caring adults support Cub Scouting through a variety of ways. Some adults take on a role with the pack committee and provide support through finance, record keeping, or other administrative tasks to make it easier for den leaders to provide the program.

### DEN LEADER

Cub Scout den leaders work directly with Cub Scouts and their parents/guardians to execute the Cub Scouting program in the den. Cub Scout dens are gender-specific and are either all boys or all girls.

Dens may have a den leader and assistant den leader or two co-den leaders. In all situations, den leaders work with parents as a team to deliver the program.

**Qualifications:** Is at least 21 years old, and should be an experienced leader and is usually a parent or guardian of a child in the den. Recommended by the Cubmaster after consultation with the parents and guardians of the Cub Scouts involved, and approved by the pack committee and chartered organization. Registered as an adult leader of BSA and current with Youth Protection training.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Den leaders are to carry out the activities listed for each rank adventure in the handbook in order for the Scouts in the den to earn their badge of rank.
- Plan, prepare for, and conduct den meetings with the assistant den leader and den chief (if Wolf, Bear, or Webelos den leaders) or adult partners (if Lion or Tiger den leaders).
- Attend the monthly pack committee meetings.
- Lead the den at pack activities.
- Ensure the transition of Cub Scouts to a den of the next rank (or to a troop if Webelos/Arrow of Light Scouts) at the end of the year.

Lion and Tiger den leaders should do the following:

- Coordinate shared leadership among the adult partners in the den.
- Ensure that each child and their adult partner have the opportunity to be the host team, planning and executing the den activities. Rotate responsibilities monthly.

Cub Scout den leaders should keep in mind the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that their den chief attends den chief training, and guide them in working with Cub Scouts. Attend Den Chief Training with them and see that they receive recognition for their efforts at den and pack meetings.
- Provide meaningful responsibilities for the denner and assistant denner so that they can learn responsibility and gain satisfaction from their efforts.

The Webelos den leader should remember the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that their den chief attends den chief training, and guide them in leading Webelos Scouts. Attend Den Chief Training with them, and see that the den chief's efforts receive recognition at den and pack meetings.
- Provide worthwhile tasks for a Webelos Scout serving as denner so that they can assume some responsibility and gain satisfaction from their efforts.
- Along with the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmaster, plan and conduct meaningful joint activities.
- Plan and carry out overnight campouts and other outdoor activities.

### ◆ ASSISTANT DEN LEADER

The assistant Cub Scout den leader shares the responsibilities of the Cub Scout den leader and may be called upon to serve as a family contact or record keeper, or to handle other details of den operation. Each den should have at least one assistant den leader, and more if needed.

**Qualifications:** Is at least 21 years old, and is recommended by the Cubmaster after consultation with the den leader, parents, and guardians of the Cub Scouts involved, and approved by the pack committee and chartered organization. Is registered as an adult leader of the BSA and current with Youth Protection training.

### ◆ PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILIES

Cub Scouting seeks to support the family, whatever that looks like. When we speak of parents or families, we are not referring to any particular family structure. Some Cub Scouts in your den may live with two parents, some with one parent, some with foster parents, and some with other relatives or guardians. Whomever Cub Scouts call their family is their family in Cub Scouting.

Our focus is on helping build strong families as we build stronger children. Don't try to carry the load yourself. Involve parents or guardians and encourage them to lend expertise to the program in their areas of interest. Each parent has something to contribute. Invite them to participate and use their skills. Use "two-deep leadership," which means that two adults are required for all outings or activities. Review the "Youth Protection" section in the *Cub Scout Leader Book* for more information on how parents can help.

### ◆ DENNER AND ASSISTANT DENNER

The denner position is for Wolf, Bear, and Webelos dens. The denner is a den member selected to be a youth leader for a short period of time—anywhere from one week to several months. It is a good practice for the den leader to rotate the position of denner throughout the den so that all Cub Scouts have the opportunity to experience the leadership position. The den leader and den chief determine the denner's responsibilities, which might include leading the opening flag ceremony; helping to set up and clean up the den meeting place; helping with games, ceremonies, tricks, and puzzles; leading a song; or acting as den cheerleader. Denners should be given meaningful responsibilities and recognition to help them learn how to be leaders. The denner wears a shoulder cord on the left shoulder. Some dens also have assistant denners who assist the denner and may move up to the denner position after their term is over.

## ◆ DEN CHIEF

The den chief is an older Scout from a troop, a Venturer, or a Sea Scout who serves as an activities assistant at Wolf, Bear, or Webelos Scout den meetings. The den chief can serve as a positive role model for Cub Scouts as they look toward the continuation of their Scouting experience. The Scoutmaster from a local troop, the Advisor from a Venturing crew, or the Skipper from a Sea Scout ship may be able to help identify a den chief. A den chief that has been approved by their unit leadership and by the pack leadership may serve either an all-boy den or all-girl den regardless of their gender.

## THE ROLE OF TRAINING

Core to succeeding with these responsibilities is the concept that every Cub Scout deserves a trained leader. Being a trained leader helps you deliver the program in a way that is effective and efficient with a focus on the core objectives of Scouting. Becoming a trained leader requires completion of the following training:

- Youth Protection
- Leader Position-Specific

Both trainings are available online at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) and as an in-person training through your local council service center. Leaders who have completed these two trainings qualify to wear the Trained Leader emblem.

## RESOURCES

This den leader guide is designed to be self-contained, including all the information you will need to run your den meetings. However, there are additional resources that may be helpful to the Cub Scout leader's experience. As you gain more experience you should consider having the following in your personal Cub Scouting library. Many packs have pack libraries as well for sharing among their pack leadership.

- *Cub Scout Leader Book*
- *Cub Scout Leader How-To Book*
- *Wolf Handbook*
- *Group Meeting Sparklers*
- *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs*
- *Cub Scout Songbook*

## THE CUBMASTER

You will work closely with the Cubmaster to deliver the Cub Scouting program to the families in your den. The Cubmaster works as the program leader for the pack. In addition to working with den leaders, he or she will lead the pack program at your monthly pack meeting. Some of the ways you and the Cubmaster will collaborate include the following:

- Work together to plan and help carry out the Cub Scouting program in the pack according to the policies of the BSA. This includes leading the monthly pack meeting with the help of other leaders.
- With the pack committee, develop and execute a year-round recruitment plan for recruiting new families into Cub Scouting.
- Acquire and use the appropriate and available Scouting literature, including the den leader guide for each program level.
- See that the pack program, leaders, and Cub Scouts positively reflect the interests and objectives of the chartered organization and the BSA.

- Encourage the continuation of Scouting by establishing and maintaining good relationships with local troops; this is especially important for Webelos den leaders. Your pack may have an assistant Cubmaster whose primary responsibility is to support transition from Cub Scouting into a troop.
- Together, maintain good relationships with parents and guardians. Seek their support, and include them in activities.
- Work collaboratively to ensure that Cub Scouts receive a quality, year-round program filled with fun and activities that qualify the dens and pack for the National Summertime Pack Award.
- Participate with the Cubmaster and the pack committee chair in the pack's annual program planning conference and the monthly committee meetings.
- Work as a team with the pack committee chair to cultivate, educate, and motivate all pack leaders and parents or guardians in Cub Scouting.
- Work together to conduct impressive advancement, recognition, and graduation ceremonies. For Webelos ceremonies, involve Scoutmasters and other Scout leaders.
- Bring families together at joint activities.
- Support the policies of the BSA.

In addition to supporting den leaders, the Cubmaster will help coordinate activities that take place during the pack meeting. Many of the advancement requirements that are related to outdoor adventure, such as camping, and leadership development require the members of each den to work with each other during pack meetings. The Cubmaster will help to organize those activities. Camping activities can only be conducted as pack overnights, council-organized family camps, or Webelos den overnights.

## RESPONSIBILITIES TO CUB SCOUTS

All Cub Scout leaders have certain responsibilities to the Cub Scouts. Each leader should:

- Respect each child's rights as individuals and treat them as such. In addition to common-sense approaches this means that all parents/guardians should have reviewed *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide*, and all youth leaders must have taken the BSA's Youth Protection training.
- See that Cub Scouts find the excitement, fun, and adventure that they expected when they joined Cub Scouting.
- Provide enthusiasm, encouragement, and praise for Cub Scouts' efforts and achievements.
- Develop among the Cub Scouts a feeling of togetherness and team spirit that gives them security and pride.
- Provide opportunities for Cub Scouts to experience new dimensions in their world.
- Become a fully trained Cub Scout leader.

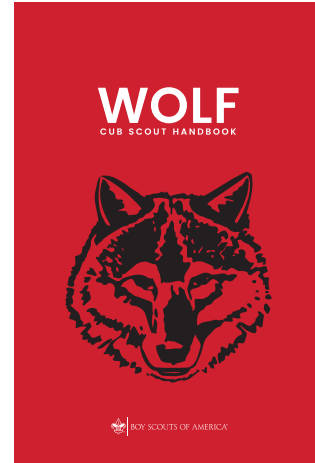
# THE CUB SCOUT RANKS AND HANDBOOKS



A child who is 6 years old or is in the year prior to first grade is a Lion. Related adventures are found in the *Lion Handbook*.



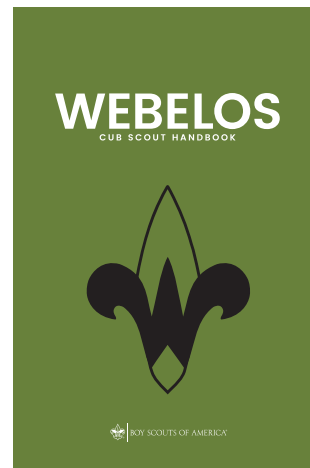
A child who is 7 years old or is in the first grade is a Tiger. Related adventures are found in the *Tiger Handbook*.



A child who is 8 years old or is in the second grade is a Wolf. Related adventures are found in the *Wolf Handbook*.



A child who is 9 years old or is in the third grade is a Bear. Related adventures are found in the *Bear Handbook*.



A child who is 10 to 11 years old or is in the fourth or fifth grade is a Webelos Scout. Related adventures are found in the *Webelos Handbook*.

The den meeting plans are written to help Cub Scouts complete the adventure requirements in their handbook. A den leader is strongly encouraged to have the handbook for the den he or she is leading as well, to be able to follow along and review for den meeting planning.

# ADVANCEMENT

## ◆ CUB SCOUT ADVANCEMENT FOR RANK BADGE

Advancement is the word used to describe the progress Cub Scouts make toward their rank. It is one of the methods we use to achieve Scouting's aims and its desired outcomes. As Scouts earn the ranks of Lion, Bobcat, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and the Arrow of Light, they achieve important goals in developing skills and favorable dispositions related to personal fitness, good character, participatory citizenship, outdoor skills and awareness, and leadership development. Each level of the program is designed to achieve these goals through a series of developmentally appropriate and fun adventures.

## ◆ RECOGNITION PROCESS

No Cub Scout wants to wait several months to be recognized for hard work. The Cub Scouting program recognizes completion of intermediate steps leading to rank advancement by awarding immediate recognition.

Each adventure for Lion through Bear has a metal adventure loop that is designed to be worn on the Cub Scout's belt. To purchase adventure loops at the Scout shop, an advancement report is not required. This allows for the den leader or other pack leadership to purchase adventure loops ahead of time and have them ready to present once a Cub Scout has completed the adventure. Adventure loops are color-coded to each rank. Required adventure loops have full-color logos, and elective adventure loops have single-color logos.

Advancement gives Scouts a means of measuring their progress. Credit is given to the Cub Scout for each requirement when the den leader is satisfied that the Scout has done their best.

Ensuring that Cub Scouts are recognized immediately and publicly for their efforts is an important part of the advancement process. **No Scout should have to wait for more than two weeks to receive a device and be recognized for their accomplishments.** Your pack may approach this in a variety of ways:

- The den leader may provide the belt loop or adventure pin at the final meeting when the Cub Scouts complete the adventure. At the following pack meeting, the Scouts would then receive a certificate during a brief ceremony.
- The pack may provide certificates for den leaders to award when Scouts complete the adventure and then present the adventure loops and pins at the next pack meeting.

Packs are encouraged to find a method that works well for the families in the pack, guided by principles that recognition is both *immediate* to encourage the Cub Scouts and *public* to celebrate their success.

Advancement provides a satisfying means of recognizing Cub Scouts for their progress. Cub Scouts have a ladder to climb, with recognition at each step. Presenting awards in meaningful ceremonies to recognize their accomplishments is a principle of advancement. Advancement is not competition. Each Cub Scout is encouraged to advance steadily and purposefully, setting their own goals with guidance from family and leaders. Measurement for satisfying requirements is "Do Your Best," and that level can be different for each Cub Scout.



## ◆ HOW THE ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM WORKS

The success of the advancement program depends entirely on how Cub Scout leaders and parents apply it. Careful research has gone into developing the advancement program, but den and pack leaders and families make advancement work in the dens, in the home, and with pack activities.

### Goals of the Advancement Program

When implemented correctly, the advancement program will:

- Help build a Cub Scout's self-esteem.
- Help build self-reliance as each Cub Scout discovers they are now old enough to assume certain responsibilities toward other people.
- Give each Cub Scout the positive recognition they need.
- Bring families closer through the advancement activities that each family enjoys with their Cub Scout.

### The Den Leader

The den leader has the following responsibilities related to advancement.

1. Work on advancement requirements in den meetings using the handbook and den leader guide for the appropriate rank.
2. Plan meetings that support the advancement program. Other parents with specific skills, the den chief, or local troop leaders can help.
3. Help parents and adult partners understand the advancement plan and their role in promoting advancement. Make sure returning parents understand how the advancement process works at each age level.
4. Keep accurate records of requirements that Cub Scouts complete. Promptly provide the pack leadership with the advancement records so Scouts can be recognized at the next pack meeting. The use of Scoutbook and the Scouting mobile app provides the easiest way to keep leaders and parents up to date on advancement.
5. With advancement being completed in the den meeting, a Scout's absence should be the only reason for failure to advance. Work with the Scout and their family to complete activities missed due to absence.
6. Provide reinforcement for and recognition of advancement at den meetings. These can include advancement charts, den doodles, and immediate recognition items.
7. Make sure that impressive advancement ceremonies and graduation ceremonies are conducted at the pack meeting. For the Arrow of Light rank, involve the Scoutmaster and the troop's youth leaders.



### The Cubmaster

The Cubmaster has these responsibilities related to advancement.

1. Provide a quality year-round program full of action and fun that appeals to the Cub Scouts and their families. See that den and pack activities are planned so that completing required and elective adventures for all levels is a natural outcome.
2. Guide den leaders in the use of the den leader guide to help organize and deliver each meeting's program for each level of programming.
3. Work with den leaders to coordinate den activities at pack meetings that support the use of the Cub Scout adventure program materials.
4. Provide advancement reinforcement at the pack meeting, such as colorful and exciting induction, advancement, and graduation ceremonies. Encourage displays of advancement charts and den doodles at pack meetings.
5. Ensure that Cub Scouts in each den who have earned awards receive them at the next pack meeting. Don't let Cub Scouts and family members get discouraged by having to wait for recognition.





6. Make sure that den leaders are trained and know how to use the advancement program effectively.
7. See that advancement standards are maintained. All Cub Scouts should do their best to complete the requirements as presented in the program.
8. Coordinate with the pack committee to ensure that accurate advancement records are kept.

### The Pack Committee

Pack committee members have these responsibilities related to advancement.

1. Help train leaders and adult partners or family members in the proper use of the advancement program.
2. Ensure that den leaders have program resource materials such as den leader guides and advancement charts to support program delivery.
3. Collect den advancement reports monthly. Purchase awards from the local council service center. See that badges are presented at the next pack meeting. Use of Scoutbook and the Scouting mobile app makes each of these responsibilities easy to manage with an online tool that reduces the use of paper reporting.
4. Help plan advancement and graduation ceremonies for the pack meeting.
5. Help build or secure equipment for use in meaningful advancement ceremonies.



### How Fast Should a Den Advance?

A Cub Scout's approach to advancement progress will depend on two factors:

- Their own motivation for learning new skills, the encouragement and help they get from family, and their need for recognition
- The den leader's preparation for and presentation of advancement activities in the den meetings

The den meeting plans outlined in the den leader guide provide program opportunities that are generally delivered as two den meetings and an outing. This will provide opportunities for the Cub Scouts in your den to advance. A year-round program is composed of required adventures (that will lead to rank advancement) and elective adventures (which contribute to rank advancement and provide program enrichment).

If a Cub Scout cannot attend all meetings, the den leader should help the Cub Scout and their family complete the missed activities.

**The length it takes for the den to earn their rank is completely up to the den leader and the families in the den. Dens meet as frequently as they like. Although many packs target their blue and gold banquet for awarding the new badge of rank, there is no requirement to advance by an arbitrary date such as a blue and gold banquet.**

#### Advancement Checklist

- Do the Cubmaster and pack committee give den leaders and families guidance in using the advancement program effectively?
- Do family members understand their part in the advancement program? Are they using required adventures and elective adventures to suggest activities for the Scout's free time?
- Do den leaders talk to parents about children who are missing den meetings and therefore missing opportunities to advance?
- Do den leaders implement the required den meeting plans leading to advancement as outlined in the den leader guide and, when necessary, have advancement work completed at home?
- Are accurate advancement records kept in the dens and the pack?
- Do Cub Scouts receive prompt recognition?
- Do pack advancement ceremonies create an incentive for advancement?
- Are wall charts and den doodles used in den and pack meetings?
- Does the pack have an advancement ladder or chart?

## BOBCAT

Regardless of what age or grade a Cub Scout is in, the Bobcat rank must be earned before earning any other rank, except Lion. Lion Scouts earn the Lion rank first. When they complete kindergarten, they may begin work on the Bobcat badge. The Bobcat requirements focus on the fundamentals of Cub Scouting that every Cub Scout must know.

You as the den leader can help! Practice the requirements in your den meetings, and encourage Cub Scouts to work on the requirements with their families also. Requirement 7 is a home-based requirement. The requirements are found in each of the youth handbooks as well as listed below:

### Bobcat Requirements

1. Learn and say the Scout Oath, with help if needed.
2. Learn and say the Scout Law, with help if needed.
3. Show the Cub Scout sign. Tell what it means.
4. Show the Cub Scout handshake. Tell what it means.
5. Say the Cub Scout motto. Tell what it means.
6. Show the Cub Scout salute. Tell what it means.
7. With your parent or guardian, complete the exercises in the pamphlet *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide*.



## WOLF ADVANCEMENT

Wolf Scouts work toward the Wolf rank. The Wolf badge is earned by completing six required adventures and one elective adventure as described below.

1. Complete each of the six required adventures:
  - Call of the Wild
  - Council Fire (Duty to Country)
  - Duty to God Footsteps
  - Howling at the Moon
  - Paws on the Path
  - Running With the Pack
2. In addition to the six required adventures listed above, complete at least one elective adventure of your den's or family's choosing.
3. With your parent, guardian, or other caring adult, complete the exercises in the pamphlet *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide*.
4. Earn the Cyber Chip award for your age. (The Cyber Chip requirement may be waived by your parent or guardian if you do not have access to the internet.)



For each adventure, the Wolf Scout must complete the requirements as outlined in the *Wolf Handbook*.

Requirement 7 of Bobcat and requirement 3 of Wolf are identical. Cub Scouts earning the Bobcat rank during the same year they begin working on the Wolf rank will need to complete the requirement only one time.




The den leader signs each Scout's handbook (Den Leader's OK) and records progress in the den's advancement records. The Wolf Scouts also keep track of their own advancement using the Adventure Tracking section in the back of their handbooks, and under the guidance of the den leader, they can also keep a record of their individual progress on a den advancement chart and den doodle. For requirements completed at home, the parent or other caring adult who worked with the Cub Scout on the requirement notifies the den leader, and the den leader signs off on the requirement.











The pack should encourage each den to deliver a year-round program, drawing from both required adventures to support rank advancement and elective adventures to support program enrichment. Elective adventures

may be earned during den activities, by a Scout with participation of the Scout's family, and during council- and district-sponsored program opportunities. There is no required order in which adventures must be earned. The sequence is left to the discretion of the den leader.

After Cub Scouts earn the Wolf badge, they will continue to meet with their den, working on elective adventures until they complete second grade (or turn 9 years old) and become Bear Scouts.

	Adventure Loop	Wolf
Required		*Call of the Wild
Required		Council Fire (Duty to Country)
Required		Duty to God Footsteps
Required		Howling at the Moon
Required		Paws on the Path
Required		*Running With the Pack
Scout or Den Choice		(1) Elective adventure of choice

	Adventure Loop	Wolf
Elective		Adventures in Coins
Elective		Air of the Wolf
Elective		Code of the Wolf

	Adventure Loop	Wolf
Elective		Collections and Hobbies
Elective		Cubs Who Care
Elective		Digging in the Past
Elective		Finding Your Way
Elective		Germs Alive!
Elective		Grow Something
Elective		Hometown Heroes
Elective		Motor Away
Elective		Paws of Skill
Elective		Spirit of the Water

\*Seasonal considerations

After a Scout has completed all the requirements for the Wolf rank, they should receive the Wolf badge at the next pack meeting. This is an important milestone, so the ceremony should be suitably impressive. The Wolf badge is sewn on the left pocket of the uniform shirt in the Scout's right position.

Scouts may complete as many elective adventures as their ambition and time available allow. They are entitled to wear each of the adventure loops on their official Cub Scout belt.

## ◆ PLANNING YOUR MEETINGS

As you plan your den's program for the year, there are a few important points to consider.

- **Required adventures.** These adventures are required to advance from rank to rank.
- **Elective adventures.** These add to the fun and adventure of Cub Scouting. One elective adventure is required for each rank.
- **Coordinating your planning.** Some of the adventures require coordination with other dens. A pack meeting is an ideal place to do this. There are some suggestions made in the *Cub Scout Leader Book*, but however your dens and pack wish to do this, work together with the other leaders in your pack to build this into your annual program. For example, Lion, Tiger, Wolf, and Bear dens may not go camping as a den. They may only participate in pack overnights or council-organized family camps. When working out your annual program plan, seek to deliver an entire year of fun programming. It is important to seek input from the Cub Scouts in the den to find out which adventures they would like to explore with the members of the den. Elective adventures that are not selected may be earned by Cub Scouts at home, working with their families.
- **Audience for requirements.** Many of the requirements state that a Scout should demonstrate a new skill or share something they have learned with others during a den meeting. We all need to recognize that not all Scouts are able to make each meeting. While we recognize that the best approach is to carry out sharing tasks in a den setting, it may be necessary to allow Cub Scouts to share what they have learned while working on Cub Scout advancement requirements in other settings, such as in front of their family.
- The duty to God adventures are primarily done with the family and, for some dens, may not be included as part of the den meeting planning. If that is the case, notify families that they will need to help their Cub Scouts complete the adventure at home and then notify the den leader when those requirements are completed. See page 29 for more information regarding the duty to God adventures.

Read through the Wolf adventures, and give some thought to which adventures will work the best for your location and climate. Write in the adventures you will use and the corresponding month that will work best. Check with your Cubmaster to see if some adventures need to be coordinated with other dens or for upcoming pack meetings.

Important: When planning, keep in mind that six required adventures and one elective adventure are required for Wolf advancement. Adventure loops may be awarded at any time within the Scout's rank year by age or grade. Once Cub Scouts have moved (graduated) to their next level den, THEY MAY NOT EARN THE RANK OF THEIR PREVIOUS DEN LEVEL.

**DEN ANNUAL ADVENTURE PLAN**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Adventure</b>
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	
July	

# DEN MEETINGS

The den meeting is critical to the Cub Scout's success and enjoyment of the Scouting program. It is in and through the den that youth develop character and learn life skills through completion of the adventure activities. Along the way, they make social connections and enjoy exploring a wide variety of ideas. Den meetings that are fun, organized, and interesting provide a great experience for youth.

The structured, but fun nature of den meetings sets the tone for a Cub Scout experience in which youth thrive. Each den meeting consists of five basic elements: Gathering, Opening, Talk Time, Activities, and Closing.

## DEN MEETINGS AT A GLANCE

### PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

Use this section of the den meeting plan to determine the materials you will need to lead the den meeting and to know when to make arrangements in advance, such as scheduling a meeting with a guest or arranging the logistics for an outing.

Read the pages in the youth handbook for each new adventure before you start to work on it. The handbook provides background information, instructions, or suggestions for many activities. Encourage Scouts to bring their handbooks to each meeting.

### GATHERING (5 TO 15 MINUTES BEFORE MEETING)

- Designed to provide constructive welcoming activities for early arrivals while they wait for the meeting to start
- Suggested gathering activities range from active games to quiet pastimes, depending on children's needs (energy release or settling down), time of day, and the meeting venue
- Should not include activities essential to the meeting, as not everyone will be part of the gathering experience

Use a formal, time-consuming gathering activity only if youth arrive at different times and there is considerable time before everyone is present. Be sure to begin the meeting itself on time. Sometimes a nutritious snack is substituted for a gathering activity. The gathering activity sets the tone for the den meeting.

### OPENING (5+ MINUTES)

- Pledge of Allegiance (may be part of larger flag ceremony)
- Recite the Scout Oath and Law together
- Sometimes additional inspiring message or reflection
- May include Outdoor Code or Leave No Trace ideas related to preparation for an outing

Youth and adults stand respectfully for the opening, which often takes place with Scouts in a horseshoe or circle at the front of the room. The opening may be a longer ceremony for special occasions.

### TALK TIME (5+ MINUTES)

- Overview of meeting and den member roles (what to expect)
- Dues collection (only if needed and not collected otherwise)
- General announcements and updates
- Quick discussion (or extensive planning) for coming events
- May include youth sharing ideas or accomplishments related to adventure requirements
- May introduce a new adventure or set groundwork for future advancement

Expand the meeting time to accommodate in-depth discussion or planning if needed.

## ACTIVITIES (30+ MINUTES)

- The heart, or core, of the den meeting, where most of the fun and learning (adventure requirements) take place
- Two to three projects, games, or discussions chosen from requirement activities in the meeting plan

Note that many of the activities for requirements include a reflection at the end. (See “Closing” below.) Make sure that someone is taking notes on parts of requirements each youth completes.

## CLOSING (5+ MINUTES)

- A ceremonial moment wrapping up the meeting
- Often led by the denner, the youth leader of the den

Closing should be a quiet time. It usually works best to have youth stand in a circle or horseshoe with adults standing behind.

## AFTER THE MEETING

- Assign roles and provide opportunities for teamwork.
- Ensure protocols in place for continued supervision and parental pickup.
- Review the general success of the meeting, such as group dynamics and accomplishments.
- Record Scouts’ individual requirement completions in their advancement reports, either on paper or electronically.
- Plan for following up with additional parts of requirements or to make arrangements for coming events.
- Communicate with parents via email or a note given to the child to take home. Include a review of the Scouts’ accomplishments and reminders of future events and arrangements.

Use this Den Meetings at a Glance guide when preparing for meetings and following through after meetings. Key how-to and ideas for these important considerations are included in the meeting plans throughout this guide. The appendix includes great ideas for generic parts of the meeting, and adventure-specific ideas are highlighted in this chapter.

## WHAT ARE DEN MEETING PLANS, AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

The den meeting plans are your guide to bringing the adventures of advancement to life for your den. These plans will, if followed, help Cub Scouts advance in rank as they experience all the fun of Cub Scouting. Take time to read through and prepare for each den meeting.

The plans are developed around the following:

- Two to three den meetings per month in addition to the pack meeting or other pack activities.
- If a plan consists of three den meetings, one of those meetings is usually designed to be an outing. The outing may take place at the beginning, middle, or end of the adventure, so be sure to read through each of the den meeting plans for each adventure before beginning. Outings are very important to the Scouting experience.
- The plans follow the parts of the den meeting structure listed above.

## CHARACTER COMPASS



In the den meeting plans, you will notice this icon. The adventures you are planning for the monthly meetings have an association with one or more points of the Scout Law. As you read through the plans and the youth handbook for the adventure, be aware of the point of the Law emphasis and how you may be able to help teach it. These points are to be brought about naturally and subtly within the adventure and are by no means meant to be “drilled” into your meeting plan. That’s one of the wonderful things that happens in Scouting—we teach character development through our adventures and advancement.

## DO-AT-HOME PROJECTS



Do-at-Home Projects are activities completed outside den meetings. Projects should be assigned (usually during the Closing). They may be assignments in preparation for the next den meeting plan, or they may be part of a requirement that you will need to then verify at the next den meeting as having been completed.

## YOUR FIRST DEN MEETING

You are going to be a great den leader! Use your first den meeting as a chance to get to know each Cub Scout and their family. Take time to hand out the Family Talent Survey or email the link to the PDF form and ask each adult to complete it and return it to you. (The form is available at [www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/leaders/forms](http://www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/leaders/forms).) Below are some tips for your first meeting. This will help set a positive atmosphere for everyone.

- Wear your adult uniform to all meetings, and remind Scouts to wear their uniforms.
- Be completely organized before the start of the meeting.
- If you are new to running meetings like this, it is easier to think of it as seven short activities rather than a single long event. (See the Den Meetings at a Glance section earlier in this chapter.)
- Explain clearly to the Scouts the behavioral expectations. You may wish to use the “conduct candle” approach (see this guide’s appendix), and develop a den code of conduct. This can be handwritten on poster board, or a den code of conduct poster, No. 32068, may be purchased at your local Scout shop. Be consistent and friendly but firm.
- Explain that Scouts should bring their handbooks to each meeting.
- Remember to set high expectations so the Cub Scouts in your den can learn how to achieve. Setting low expectations will lower everyone’s performance and not meet the expectations families have of the program.

If you are a new den leader, ask the assistant den leader(s) to arrive at least 15 minutes before the starting time of the meeting. They can help you with final preparations before everyone else arrives. It is a good idea to have something constructive for those who arrive early to do (known as the “Gathering” part of the den meeting plan) while you are making final preparation for den meetings; you might even have them help set up some parts of the meeting.

A snack at den meetings is optional. If you do serve a snack, offer fruits or vegetables to set an example of healthy eating. Be aware of any food allergies of den members and communicate these to parents who may be assisting with the snacks.





To encourage healthy snacks at meetings, you can work toward the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award as a den! Earn the award by following three healthy meeting practices, including providing fruits and/or vegetables for snacks (if snacks are served). Learn more about this award in the appendix, under “Awards Cub Scouts Can Earn.”

One best practice to facilitate communication and involvement is to distribute a family information letter at the conclusion of each meeting. The letter tells families what was completed at each meeting and provides information on upcoming den and pack meetings and activities.

## DEN OUTINGS

Den outings are an important part of the Cub Scout experience. They are a time not only for fun but for learning. And they are critical steps in the Cub Scouts in your den earning their badge of rank. It is important that you plan in advance for these den outings. Planning should include the following, at a minimum:

- Arrange for the visit with the point of contact at your destination (if needed).
- Work with the parents or guardians in the den to arrange transportation, or get an adult to carry out the planning.

There is an activity consent form available to use at the den level for outings. This is a permission slip the parents sign for their child to attend the outing. The activity consent form is also available at [www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/leaders/forms](http://www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/leaders/forms).

## UNDERSTANDING CUB SCOUT-AGE CHILDREN

Scouting is designed to help children develop character, citizenship, personal fitness, and leadership. To understand where we want them to go, we need to understand where they are.

The Cub Scout years are a time of rapid development for children, falling between the total dependence of early childhood and the relative independence of early adolescence. Cub Scout-age children are becoming more competent, and they need to be able to demonstrate what they can do. Eager to prove themselves to their friends, themselves, and their parent(s) or other caring adults, they show off what they can do, sometimes forgetting to plan ahead and forgoing safety.

Cub Scouting activities are designed for children who are in the normal range of development, but the program is flexible enough to adapt to the needs of those who are developing faster or slower than their peers or who face physical, mental, or emotional challenges.

Cub Scout leaders who understand and recognize the developmental changes of these years will have a much better Cub Scouting experience.

### ◆ DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Although typical behavior patterns exist for any age group, every child is unique. For example, some 10-year-olds are already experiencing the growth spurts associated with puberty, while others still resemble 8-year-olds. It's important not to confuse physical size with psychological maturity. Minds and bodies often develop at different rates.

## Physical Development

**Children are full of energy.** They need a way to burn it off, especially if they've been sitting in a classroom for a long time. They can be noisy and boisterous, and they need to romp and play.

**Children are steadily growing.** Young children are often quite thin and lack muscle mass. Second graders are losing baby teeth and tend to have an "all teeth and ears" look. By fifth grade, they are taller and heavier, have more stamina, and are capable of more sustained effort.

**Children are becoming better coordinated.** Children at this age may be clumsy and accident prone, but they gradually become more coordinated. By fifth grade, most children have achieved much better control and increased their mastery of large-muscle activities.

**Children are impatient with aspects of personal hygiene.** Tasks like brushing their teeth and combing their hair seem unimportant. Self-care routines can be a source of conflict. Few children of Cub Scout age appreciate the importance of cleanliness.

## Mental Development

**Children are concrete thinkers and take things very literally.** Subtleties and humor frequently escape them, and they often interpret "what if" and "maybe" as promises to be kept. However, they are beginning to build concepts out of their concrete experiences and can use these ideas to imagine possibilities and solve problems.

**Children are beginning to understand that behavior involves motivation and consequences.** By first and second grade, they are likely to try to explain away bad outcomes by saying, "I didn't mean it." Fifth-graders are better at planning ahead to predict possible consequences. They are better at communicating with others because they can begin to see others' points of view.

**Children enjoy activities that are distinct from their school-day experiences.** By second grade, most children have begun to read on their own with varying success and interest. Cub Scouting often stimulates interest in reading and learning because the activities create a desire to know more. Cub Scouting activities don't have the association with failure that formal schoolwork has for some children; those who have problems at school might turn out remarkable Cub Scout projects.

**Children have different learning styles.** Some of them learn best visually, and some learn best by listening. Children and adults learn best when lessons are fun and hands-on. Cub Scouting's emphasis on learning by doing gives everyone a chance to shine.

**Children are curious and adventurous.** For Cub Scouts, the world is still new and waiting to be discovered. First- and second-graders are eager to meet life head-on—often with a willingness to take risks that may outrun their abilities.

**Children can be highly imaginative.** Children are ready to picture themselves in all kinds of roles and situations. Their ability to pretend lets them explore new ideas and feelings and their relationships with other people. Cub Scouting plays an important role in keeping curiosity alive by letting children do and learn things that interest them.

**Children are collectors.** Cub Scouts seem to accumulate things indiscriminately, and they're more concerned with quantity than quality. Fifth-graders retain their interest in collecting but often settle down to a more serious focus on one or two kinds of items. They are likely to spend more time counting, sorting, and arranging collections.

**Children have short attention spans.** First- and second-graders throw themselves into activities with great enthusiasm but might be ready to move on to something else in a remarkably short time. However, when something really interests them, Cub Scouts can stick with it longer. They also like to return again and again to favorite activities.

**Children are still developing a sense of time.** Many first- and second-graders can tell time with a clock, but they might have little sense of what time means. They express interest in planning and particularly like to know what is coming next. By age 10, most children have improved their time-management skills. They enjoy making rather elaborate plans and can generally get to where they want to be pretty much on schedule.

## Building Relationships

**Children have a strong need for adult/family support.** Although they may be willing to try new things on their own or with peers, children still need family members and adults they look up to whom they can trust and with whom they can share their experiences. By fifth grade, they are ready for greater independence and responsibility. They resent being treated like “little kids,” although they still want their parents to be there for them.

**Children are learning to interact within groups.** Generally, they understand the importance of friends, and many appear anxious about whether others approve of them. Still immature, they often view life mainly from their own perspective.

**Children are becoming genuinely devoted and committed to their friends.** They usually engage with enthusiasm in group activities. Many youngsters of this age also form spontaneous clubs and other fluid, though often short-lived, peer groups.

**Children prefer dynamic group games.** Young Cub Scouts love to succeed, and they have a great desire to win every time. They have difficulty understanding and mastering intricate rules of games and may lay blame on their opponents. Fifth-graders, on the other hand, usually have a sharp sense of rules. They can make a distinction between intentional and accidental rule violation.

**Children need acknowledgment for their performance.** Sometimes children avoid trying innovative endeavors because they are afraid that others might see them perform inadequately. Fifth-graders thrive on praise, too, but they prefer not to be singled out in front of others.

## Learning Values

**Children are developing ideas about right and wrong.** By second grade, many of them do what is right because they’ve progressed in their moral development and learned important values. Others may do what is right primarily to avoid punishment.

**Children are beginning to see the value of trying to get along with others.** By age 10, most children have begun to relate conformity to rules with self-interest. They are interested in the benefits they receive when they follow the rules. This age is also a time of much bargaining. They are beginning to understand that others have rights, too.

**Children have a growing appreciation for fairness.** Some psychologists believe that sensitivity to the feelings of others is the beginning of a moral sense. The young Cub Scout takes a fairly rigid stand on issues of fairness.

**Children are beginning to see that values are important.** Some of them begin to realize that the ideas expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law are values that American society feels are important. Modern American culture requires children to be able to experience moral issues in terms of obedience to rules and to explore them within networks of relationships.

**Children like being helpful.** At this age they are not too young to do things for others. Children enjoy helping others, especially if they can see that their service actually meets a need. At the end of a service project, it’s important to have time for discussion so that your Cub Scouts can understand their experience, learn from it, and grow.

See Appendix 2 for additional information and specific ideas for working with Cub Scouts, creating den spirit, and tracking behavior.

## ◆ PROVIDING ENCOURAGEMENT

- Reward more than you criticize, in order to build self-esteem.
- Praise immediately any and all good behavior and performance.
- Change rewards if they are not effective in motivating behavioral improvement when needed.
- Find ways to encourage the Scout.
- Teach Scouts to reward themselves. This encourages them to think positively about themselves.
- Emphasize and recognize accomplishments.



## ◆ PROVIDING SUPERVISION AND DISCIPLINE

- As a leader, you must be a number of things to each Cub Scout in your den: friend, authority figure, reviewer, resource, and teacher.
- Listening is an important technique that means giving Scouts an opportunity to express themselves. Whether as a part of the group or in private conversation, be patient, be understanding, and take seriously what the Scout has to say. Keep yourself attuned to what they are saying; use phrases like, “You really feel that way?” or “If I understand you right. . . .”
- Be on the lookout for signs that a Scout may need redirection, and be ready to intervene before a situation escalates.
- Avoid ridicule and criticism. Remember, all children have difficulty staying in control.
- Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the Scout.
- Develop a plan for appropriate and consistent consequences for particular types of misbehavior.
- When a Scout is behaving in an unacceptable manner, try the “time out” strategy or redirect their behavior.
- Administer consequences immediately, and monitor proper behavior frequently.
- Make sure the discipline fits the offense and is not unduly harsh.
- Enforce den rules consistently.
- Do not reward inappropriate behavior. Offer praise when the Scout exerts real effort, even if unsuccessful, and/or when you see improvement over a previous performance. Never praise falsely.
- Do not accept blaming others as an excuse for poor performance. Make it clear that you expect all Scouts to answer for their own behavior. Behavior is a form of communication. Look for what the behavior is saying (i.e., does the Scout want attention?).

## WORKING WITH CUB SCOUTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

We are all aware that every individual is different and unique in their own way. All children have different ways they learn and different abilities. When we read or hear the term “disability,” we more commonly think of visible forms of disability and not necessarily those that are not visible. It’s obvious that a Scout in a wheelchair may have challenges fulfilling a hiking requirement, but it might not be so obvious when it comes to the Scout with a learning disability.

Since its founding in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America has had fully participating members with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. The basic premise of Scouting for youth with disabilities is that every child wants to participate fully and be treated and respected like every other member of the Cub Scout pack. Children with cognitive, physical, or emotional disabilities should be encouraged to participate in Scouting to the extent their abilities will allow. Many Scouts with disabilities can accomplish the basic skills of Scouting but may require extra time to learn them. Working with these youth will require patience and understanding.

Begin with the Cub Scout and the child's parents or guardians; seek guidance from them on how best to work with the Scout with special needs. The parents or guardians can help you to understand the Scout's medical history, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses as well as how they can support you as the den leader. This will help you become aware of special needs that might arise at meetings, field trips, and campouts with the parents. To the fullest extent possible, Scouts with disabilities should be given opportunities to camp, hike, and take part in all activities.

The best guide to working with Scouts who have disabilities is to use good common sense, to trust your instincts, and to focus on all the potential that Cub Scouts with disabilities do have. It's important to try to remember that Cub Scouts are first and foremost children, whether they have a disability or not.

Below are some helpful tips for working with Scouts with special needs and disabilities:

### ◆ LEADERSHIP TECHNIQUES

- Wise leaders expect challenges but do not consider them overwhelming. All children have different needs. The wise leader will recognize this and be prepared to help.
- Leaders should meet the parents and the new Scout with a disability to learn about the Scout, any physical or cognitive limitations, and their abilities and preferences. Some young people with disabilities will try to do more than they are capable of doing, just to “fit in” with others, which could result in unnecessary frustration.
- Many youths with disabilities have special physical or health needs. Parents, visiting nurses, special education teachers, physical therapists, doctors, and other agencies can help make you more familiar with the nature of a disability that a Cub Scout in your den has.
- Accept the Scout as a person, and give them the same respect that you expect from them. This will be much easier if you know the Scout, their family, their background, and their likes and dislikes. Remember, any behavior that presents difficulties is a force that can be redirected into more acceptable pathways.
- All Cub Scouts use the “buddy system.” For children with special needs, the buddy system can take on a whole new meaning. Some disabilities might be too extensive for one Cub Scout to assist their buddy with all the time. In those cases, provide a rotation system of buddies. Just remember that if you find a buddy system that is working and everyone is happy with, don't feel like you have to change it for the sake of changing it. If it is appropriate for the new Cub Scout, explain the system to the den. Each week, a different den member will be responsible for helping the new Cub Scout during the meeting. Emphasize that the important factor is to “Do Your Best” and that the Cub Scout who is helping must be patient—not only because of the special needs of their buddy but because the buddy is new to Cub Scouting.
- Example is a wonderful tool. Demonstrate personal discipline with respect, punctuality, accuracy, conscientiousness, dignity, and dependability.
- Become involved with the Scout in your care. Let them know you care. A small word of praise or a pat on the back for a job well done can mean a lot. Judge accomplishment by what the Scout can do, not by what someone says they must do or by what you think they cannot do.
- Rewarding achievement will likely cause that behavior to be repeated. Focus rewards on proper behavior and achievement.
- Do not let the Scout or parents use the disability as an excuse for not trying. Expect Scouts to give their best effort.

### ◆ GIVING INSTRUCTION TO YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Accept the child, offering patience, understanding, and respect. Try not to overprotect or under-assist, rather encourage independence and self-advocacy. Self-advocacy—the process of knowing and being able to communicate personal needs and abilities—is important for any youth to learn.

- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction, except when the Scout's culture finds this inappropriate.
- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with instructions.
- Help the Scout feel comfortable with seeking assistance.

- If there is a learning disability:
  - Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.
  - Make sure the Scout comprehends the instructions before beginning the task.
  - Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.

## ◆ **ADVANCEMENT GUIDELINES FOR CUB SCOUTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES**

The current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America programs. Section 10 deals with advancement for members with special needs. Topic 10.2.1.0 addresses issues specific to Cub Scouting.

Advancement is so flexible that, with guidance, most Cub Scouts with disabilities can complete requirements. The standard is, “Have they done their best?” It may take them longer to attempt requirements and demonstrate this, but the accomplishments will be rewarding to the Cub Scouts, their parents, and their leaders.

Include parents to help determine what “best” means for each child. Develop the potential of each Cub Scout to the fullest of their ability through the advancement program. Adaptations are permitted in teaching the skills or activities for the advancement requirements.

There could be times, however, when a Cub Scout’s “best” isn’t enough even to get a start. For example, a Cub Scout in a wheelchair cannot pass requirements calling for walking or running. In these cases, Cubmasters and pack committees may jointly determine appropriate substitutions that are consistent with Cub Scouts showing they can “do their best.” For example, elective requirements could take the place of those required. Or in consultation with a parent or guardian, other minor adjustments representing similar challenges could be made.

## **HELPFUL HINTS FOR DEN LEADERS**

Prepare yourself to “do your best” as a den leader by focusing on the leader materials and training you should have to best serve your Cub Scouts.

The following are some hints that will help you better plan and execute your den meetings.

## **PLANNING YOUR MEETINGS IN ADVANCE**

Plan your meetings ahead of time with emphasis on the flow of activities. Pay special attention to the “Notes to Den Leader” section at the start of the adventure as well as the “After the Meeting” sections of den meeting plans for preparation and materials needed for the next meeting. You will want to alternate between quiet and more vigorous activities; the den meeting plans are designed with this approach in mind. Be sure you have an active game or other activity to help keep the meetings fun and exciting. In addition to the Gathering activity, there are additional games in the appendix to this guide that will help you keep everyone on track and having fun. Dens that incorporate regular physical activity and other healthy practices into their meetings can earn the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award. Encourage your Scouts to participate in physical activity at the den meeting and help them earn this award (more information can be found in the appendix). Plan on investing 45–60 minutes to read through the den meeting plans and prepare for the den meeting. The time invested in planning and preparing will ensure that your meeting runs well and is fun for the Scouts.

## DEN RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

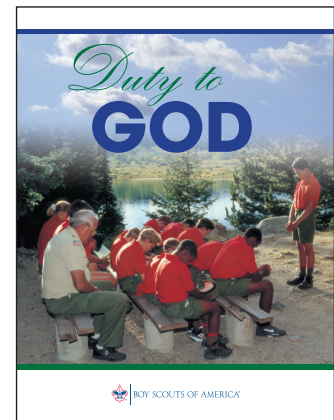
At the beginning of the year, establish the rules that the den will follow and the consequences for breaking those rules. The Cub Scouts in your den should participate in the decision-making process. By helping decide what can and can't happen in the den, Cub Scouts will feel a sense of responsibility toward how the den is run. They will feel that the den is "theirs." Have them design and then sign a poster on which the code of conduct is written and display it at your meeting place. You can find this poster along with posters of the Scout Oath and Scout Law at [www.scoutshop.org](http://www.scoutshop.org).

## DUTY TO GOD ADVENTURES

The BSA maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God; the BSA supports all faiths and faith practices equally, whether the youth and their family are members of an organized religious body or not. All Scouts show this by being faithful in their duty to God as their family practices their faith and by understanding the 12th point of the Scout Law: "Reverent."

The duty to God adventures in the Cub Scout rank requirements encourage Cub Scouts to work with their families to develop an awareness of their own personal beliefs in relation to their duty to God. These adventures are primarily home-based adventures. As the den leader, you should let parents know they need to help their Cub Scout complete the duty to God adventure. Parents or guardians should let the den leader know when the duty to God adventure requirements have been satisfied. If all members of your den share the same faith, you may choose to incorporate the duty to God adventures into your annual den meeting plans, working with the families in the den to achieve these adventures.

The religious emblems program is mentioned in each rank's duty to God adventures. The emblem for a faith can be earned by the Scout by completing the specific program requirements. You may also want to check with your Cubmaster or the pack committee chair for the program materials if you are chartered by a faith-based organization.



Additional information for taking part in the religious emblems program is available at [www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards](http://www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards) or [www.praypub.org](http://www.praypub.org); your religious education leaders may also have information on these recognitions.

## CEREMONIES

Ceremonies are important for marking the beginning and end of each meeting. They are also a time for reinforcing the aims and purposes of Scouting, marking important events, and bringing the families in your den together. As Cub Scouts finish adventures toward their badges, simple ceremonies during the den meeting will serve to congratulate them on their accomplishments. You will find suggested ceremonies in the appendix of this guide or in the resource *Ceremonies for Dens and Packs* available at your local Scout shop. Some packs maintain a library of resources; check with your Cubmaster to see if these materials are available within your pack.

Den ceremonies should be short—no longer than two or three minutes—and varied. The same opening and closing each week will become boring. Occasionally, the Cub Scouts should have a chance to help plan and lead den ceremonies. Here are some types of den ceremonies to consider using in your den meetings:

- An opening ceremony, often a flag ceremony, signals the beginning of the den meeting.
- A progress toward ranks ceremony can acknowledge a Cub Scout's progress toward rank advancement.
- A denner installation ceremony recognizes a youth leader and the importance of this position in Cub Scout and Webelos dens.

- Special recognition ceremonies can mark special events such as birthdays and holidays.
- Closing ceremonies can emphasize Cub Scouting’s ideals and bring a quiet, inspirational end to the den meeting.

## IMMEDIATE RECOGNITION

A den doodle is an object for the Cub Scouts in your den to use to show off their accomplishments and achievements. In the appendix of this guide, there are ideas for den doodles. Your den members can design and create their own den doodle as a den meeting activity at the start of the year. Use the den doodle to keep a visual reminder of activities the den has completed and shared.

Adventure loops can also be awarded at the den level or at the pack level. Awarding an adventure loop at the pack level lets all the pack know of the Scout’s achievement during an advancement ceremony. Check with your Cubmaster and pack leadership for the practices your pack follows. No Cub Scout should be required to wait more than two weeks to receive an award.

## MISSED MEETINGS

Circumstances occur when Cub Scouts may miss one or more of the den meetings you’ve planned. Transportation issues, illness, or sports and school activities may require Scouts to miss meetings. Do your best to communicate the requirements or activities that were missed to their parents or guardians. Determine if you have program materials you can share, such as activity items or notes on the outing, that a family can use to achieve what was missed. Sharing the content of this book can be a great help as well. It is not the expectation that you alone need to help them make up the missed work. It is a combined effort between you as the den leader, the Cub Scout, and the Cub Scout’s family. The Cubmaster is a good resource as well for you to consult if Scouts consistently miss meetings.

## SNACKS/TREATS

Healthy snacks and water at meetings help set an example of healthy eating habits. If a snack is served during meetings, have fruits or vegetables and save the treats for a special occasion. Offering fruits or vegetables can also help you avoid concerns with common food allergies; however, it’s best to discuss allergies with families before the first meeting. You can motivate Cub Scouts to try healthy foods by working toward the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award as a den, which requires fruits and/or vegetables as snacks during meetings. Learn tips to get started and more about this award on in the appendix under “Awards Cub Scouts Can Earn.”





## DEN SCRAPBOOK

A great idea for the families in your den is to create a scrapbook early in the program year. Fill the scrapbook with sample artwork that the Cub Scouts create as den activities, stories about their adventures, and pictures taken of Scouts with their completed projects. Whether electronic or paper, the den scrapbook will become a treasured memento.

## TRACKING THE ADVENTURE

It is important to keep track of what has been accomplished by the Scouts as they advance through the adventures and meet the requirements for each rank. Families will keep track of adventure requirements completed at home in each Scout's handbook. Coach parents in the value of recording accomplishments regularly in their child's handbook.

For ease in keeping track of advancement requirements, advancement posters are available at your local Scout shop (Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos). On a regular basis, transfer requirements completed at home to this form. Keeping track of completed requirements in a single place will also help you share accomplishments with your pack's advancement coordinator, who will order awards each month. The awards will be presented monthly at the pack meeting.

## SUCCESS

Leadership is learned and developed. You can become an effective den leader if you complete basic training, plan interesting den meetings, and take the time to understand the children and families in your den. Become familiar with the Cub Scout handbook, and provide opportunities for advancement. One of your best resources is your district's monthly Cub Scout leader roundtable, where you can exchange ideas with other den leaders. Remember to be flexible in your planning. Have fun in the program. Be thankful for the opportunity you have to work with the youth in your community and influence their lives. There is great satisfaction in helping children learn good values and worthy skills along their way to becoming adults.

