

WEBELOS SCOUT TRANSITION TO BOY SCOUTING

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WEBELOS-TO-SCOUT TRANSITION

One of Scouting's greatest challenges is to make the next level of Scouting readily available for a youth once he meets the joining requirements. It is the goal of every Webelos den leader to graduate every Webelos Scout into a troop.

The key factor to Webelos transition is the ongoing working relationship of the leaders of a Cub Scout pack and a Boy Scout troop. Ideally, a community organization would have both a pack and a troop with leaders who work together to help move Webelos Scouts into a Boy Scout troop the same way schools move students from elementary school to middle school.

The Webelos-to-Scout transition should be seamless. Graduating Webelos Scouts into Boy Scouting is a cooperative effort between the pack and troop. It gives Webelos Scouts and their families an awareness of the troop program, troop leadership, and advancement and an appreciation for troop organization and relationships.

The Webelos-to-Scout transition helps boys by

- Introducing them to Boy Scouting skills and future advancement experiences
- Giving them the opportunity to see boy leadership at work in the troop and sense their own potential as junior leaders
- Allowing them to become more confident and enthusiastic about the patrol method
- Giving them the desire for troop membership as the result of this gradual exposure to troop-oriented activities.

The Webelos-to-Scout transition plan also helps leaders:

- **For the Webelos den leader**, it means fulfillment. He or she can see the time spent with a boy as productive because of the boy's desire to continue in Scouting. It also means direct help in advancement and on Webelos overnight campouts, as well as a pleasant association with the Boy Scout troop.
- **For the Cubmaster**, it means assurance of stable Webelos dens, more graduations, better ceremonies, easy access to den chiefs, and pack meetings that feature lively Webelos dens with Boy Scout troop guests.
- **For the troop leader**, it means more boys—boys already trained in the Boy Scout joining requirements and boys whose families have been supporting them in pack activities.

A pack and troop can work together in a number of ways to enhance the Scouting experience of their boys. Assuring a smooth transition requires cooperation among the Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, unit commissioner, and district Webelos transition chair.

Pack Responsibilities

- Develop a working relationship with the leadership of a Boy Scout troop or troops in the community. Most troops should have either an assistant Scoutmaster or a committee member assigned to new Scout transition. Your unit commissioner can help put you in contact with troop leaders.
- Compare calendars of troop and pack activities to coordinate activities. Community events can be done together, and planning can help prevent conflicts in the use of equipment and facilities.

- Work with troop leaders to secure den chiefs for each Webelos and Cub Scout den.
- Work with troop leaders to plan and conduct Webelos overnight activities.
- Work with troop leaders to plan visits to troop meetings. Never attend without first calling in advance.
- Invite the Scoutmaster and troop youth leaders to special pack activities. This will help create familiarity and a level of comfort for the Webelos Scouts and their parents or guardians as they ease into the troop.
- Plan a meaningful graduation ceremony at the pack's blue and gold banquet that includes the presence of troop leadership to accept the Webelos Scouts as they graduate to Boy Scouts.
- Webelos leaders should be strongly encouraged to move into the troop with the boys, either as assistant Scoutmasters or troop committee members. This will give the new Scouts a familiar face at troop meetings and a connecting link to the Boy Scout troop.
- If a troop doesn't exist in your neighborhood or community, discuss the possibility of organizing a troop with the head of the pack's chartered organization. A graduating Webelos den can form the nucleus of a new troop.

Webelos Den Leader Responsibilities

The Webelos den leader can help improve the transition of Webelos Scouts into a Boy Scout troop by doing the following:

- Work to develop a den relationship with one or more Boy Scout troops. Troops should appoint a troop Webelos resource person who is a liaison between the troop and the Webelos den or dens in a pack. This Webelos resource person can help the Webelos den leader with special den events, help secure equipment for campouts, work with the Webelos den leader to plan the graduation ceremony, provide information about the troop calendar of events and summer plans, as well as other responsibilities that may arise during the year.
- Ensure that Webelos Scouts have ample opportunities to work on Webelos badge and Arrow of Light requirements. Use the Scout Oath and Law during ceremonies in the den.
- Plan joint events with the troop by working with the troop Webelos resource person. (See "Joint Webelos Scout and Boy Scout Activities" on page 22-3.) Personal invitations to a troop Eagle Scout court of honor for each member of the den will give the Webelos Scouts and their families an indication of the strength of the troop and provide inspiration for a long-term goal for the Webelos Scouts.

- Work with the Scoutmaster or troop Webelos resource person to plan a meaningful graduation ceremony. This ceremony will probably take place at the pack's blue and gold banquet in February. This graduation ceremony is the final highlight for Webelos Scouts and their entry into the adventures of Boy Scouting.

PACK AND TROOP PARTNERSHIP

A strong partnership between a Boy Scout troop and Cub Scout pack can be a healthy, ongoing relationship that ensures that almost all of the Webelos Scouts will progress to the troop. To establish and maintain this partnership and to help the boys make their transition, the following steps are recommended:

1. Den-Troop Partnership

With the help of the unit commissioner, make a list of nearby troops—with leaders' names, addresses, and phone numbers.

The unit commissioner can help bring together the Webelos den leader, Cubmaster, and Scoutmaster for their first meeting. If a commissioner isn't available, either the Cubmaster or the Webelos den leader will need to take the initiative to get things going.

The purpose of this first meeting is to get acquainted, define responsibilities in the Webelos-to-Scout transition plan, discuss leadership needs, and make plans to recruit the necessary leaders. It is also a time to talk about opportunities for joint Webelos den–troop activities.

Develop a plan for regular communication among key leaders in the Webelos-to-Scout transition plan to keep everyone informed of graduations, joint activities, needs, and opportunities.

Set up a tentative calendar of joint Webelos den–troop activities for Webelos Scouts. Hold the Webelos annual program planning meeting, incorporating the joint activities in the annual plan.

Share the Webelos-to-Scout transition plan with the chartered organization representative and chartered organization and let them know how they can help.

2. Fourth-Grade Webelos Scout Parent Orientation

This orientation for Webelos Scouts and their parents or guardians should be held at the beginning of the Webelos Scouts' fourth-grade year. It is presented by the Webelos den leader, the Scoutmaster, and the assistant Scoutmaster assigned to the boys' Webelos den.

The goal of the orientation is to let the Webelos Scouts and their parents know how Webelos Scouting is different from Cub Scouting, and how Webelos Scouting will prepare boys for the adventures of Boy Scouting. It sets the stage for a continuation of boys moving toward the Boy Scout troop.

The troop leaders are introduced and future joint activities announced, such as the parent-son campout and the Webelos den-Scout troop campout.

3. Webelos Parent-Son Campout or Daytime Event

The Scout troop should host a Webelos parent-son campout or daytime event in the spring for fourth-grade Webelos Scouts. The troop can best be of service by providing a few knowledgeable Scouts and leaders to give logistical and teaching support at the event.

This joint activity will build a level of comfort between the Webelos Scouts and their parents and the Scouts and adults in the troop. When the time comes for boys to move into a Boy Scout troop, it will not be a leap into the unknown for them but an easy passage into a familiar and friendly situation.

4. Fifth-Grade Webelos Scout Parent Orientation

A second orientation should be held in the fall of the fifth-grade year. This conference reinforces the den-troop partnership as well as provides further information to Webelos Scouts and their parents on upcoming troop programs, including summer camp, and preparation for graduation.

5. Webelos Den-Boy Scout Troop Campout

An invitation from the troop to the fifth-grade Webelos den to go on a fall campout will further strengthen the relationship between the Webelos Scouts and their parents and the Boy Scouts troop. This one-night outing will help Webelos Scouts and their parents see what to expect in future camping experiences. The troop should cook and camp by patrol, using patrol skills and activities in which each Webelos Scout can participate.

6. A New-Scout Conference for Webelos Scouts

The new-Scout conference for a Webelos Scout should be held a month or two before the boy receives his Arrow of Light Award. The conference is conducted by the Scoutmaster or the assistant Scoutmaster assigned to the new-Scout patrol. It should be informal and, following BSA Youth Protection guidelines, be in view of at least one other adult. (See Chapter 27, "Youth Protection," for more information on BSA Youth Protection guidelines.)

This new-Scout conference is one of the requirements for earning the Arrow of Light Award. The Webelos Scout should be encouraged to set both short- and long-term goals for himself. A short-term goal might be to attain the rank of Tenderfoot; a long-term goal could be to serve as patrol leader.

Here are a few suggested discussion points:

- The meaning of the Scout Oath and Law
- The advancement program
- Troop camping
- The patrol method
- Summer camp

The second part of the new-Scout conference should include the parents or guardian. This meeting gives family members an opportunity to ask questions or express concerns about their son's future involvement in Scouting. They can also learn about ways that they can be involved in the troop and continue to be a partner in their son's Scouting success.

JOINT WEBELOS SCOUT AND BOY SCOUT ACTIVITIES

It is a good idea to plan quarterly joint Webelos den-troop activities for Webelos Scouts. Here are some suggestions:

- The Webelos den visits a troop court of honor.
- The troop and Webelos den go on an overnight campout. (See Chapter 21, "The Webelos Scout Program," for more information on Webelos overnight campouts.)
- The Scoutmaster and junior leaders join in a Webelos den meeting or activity.
- The Webelos den and troop share an evening campfire.
- The Webelos den and troop attend Scout Sunday or Sabbath services together in February.
- The pack and troop join in a community Good Turn or a Good Turn for the chartered organization.
- The Webelos den takes a day hike with the troop.
- The Webelos den and troop hold a field day.
- The troop leaders help during a Webelos den overnight campout.
- The Webelos den visits a troop "skill-o-ree."

When a Webelos den participates in a troop activity or campout, all health and safety and age-appropriate guidelines for Cub Scouts still apply. For example, a Webelos den may not use axes or participate in a troop archery activity. See "Age-Appropriate Activities" in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

ARROW OF LIGHT AWARD

When he completes the Arrow of Light Award, a Webelos Scout has learned everything he needs to know to join a troop and can be presented with the Boy Scout badge upon joining the troop. By earning the Arrow of Light, a seamless transition is built between the Webelos Scout and the Boy Scout troop of his choice.

Part of the final requirement of the Arrow of Light is to have a conference with the Scoutmaster.

Note: Although a Webelos Scout reaching age 11 or completing fifth grade and at least 10 years old is eligible to become a Boy Scout, he may remain in the pack for six months after his 11th birthday or until he completes fifth grade, whichever is later. Webelos dens usually graduate together and form a new patrol in the troop. Grade-based Webelos dens should graduate in February of the fifth-grade year.

GRADUATION INTO A BOY SCOUT TROOP

Planning for Webelos graduation should begin in the fall. The Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Webelos den leader, and unit commissioner all have important parts in the planning process.

The graduation ceremony is often held in February at the pack's blue and gold banquet. The pack should extend invitations to Scoutmasters of troops that will be receiving Webelos Scouts, as well as several junior leaders (Boy Scouts). This should include the Webelos den chief who has worked with the Webelos Scouts.

Some troops present the new Boy Scout with the *Boy Scout Handbook*. Others present a troop neckerchief, T-shirt, or other token from the troop.

If the Arrow of Light Award ceremony is also taking place at the blue and gold banquet, hold it early in the program. The Arrow of Light is the highest award a Cub Scout can earn and should have a meaningful ceremony of its own. See *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs* for ideas for Arrow of Light and graduation ceremonies.