

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

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CUB SCOUTING IS A FAMILY PROGRAM

Families are the basis of our society. In the family, children learn about love, values, and social interactions while they prepare for today's world. The family is vital to the future of our communities and our nation. The Boy Scouts of America has a great interest in the strength of the family.

Cub Scouting is a family program. Family involvement is vital to Cub Scouting's success. When we talk about "family" in Cub Scouting, we might be referring to several different types of groups of people. Many Cub Scouts do not come from traditional two-parent homes. Some boys live with a single parent or other relatives or guardians. *Cub Scouting considers a boy's family to be the people with whom he lives.*

The family is probably the most effective mutual-help organization to be found. Family life has its good times and bad times, but, above all, it is people giving strength to one another when needed, people caring and letting it show, people leaning on one another, and people feeling loyal to one another. It's worth the effort to keep a family strong.

Scouting aims to develop its youth into participating citizens of good character who are physically, spiritually, and mentally fit. The organization recognizes that it is the responsibility of parents and family to teach their children. Scouting is an available resource that can help families accomplish worthy goals while building and strengthening relationships among family members.

THE FAMILY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Cub Scouting gives families an opportunity to spend quality time together. It is your role as a leader to provide interest,

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skill, and time in developing a good program. The family provides help and support for the den and pack.

Here are some examples of family involvement:

- Working with their Cub Scout on advancement projects and activities
- Attending pack meetings with their Cub Scout
- Presenting advancement awards to their Cub Scout at pack meetings
- Becoming a leader
- Providing ways for their Cub Scout to earn money he needs for den dues
- Helping at an occasional den meeting on a specific project or activity badge
- Providing refreshments
- Providing transportation
- Assisting with den outings
- Telephoning
- Helping teach a Webelos activity badge
- Attending a council-organized family campout with their Cub Scout
- Attending a pack overnigher

FAMILY AND ADVANCEMENT

The advancement program is part of the fun of Cub Scouting. It is an excellent opportunity for families to get to know

their sons better, and both family members and boys will get much satisfaction from it.

Parents and guardians should read the "Parent Guide" in their boy's handbook so that they will understand the advancement program. Den leaders should discuss achievements and electives or activity badge areas with families so that they fully understand the importance of following the requirements. Emphasize that the boy won't be able to accomplish some of the achievements without his family's help.

Advancement Helps for the Family

1. Review and explain the boy's handbook with his parent or guardian. Tell families where they can buy the handbook.
2. Ask each adult participant to read the "Parent Guide."
3. Explain that the boys should always bring their handbooks to den meetings so that their advancement progress can be recorded.
4. Discuss the advancement plan, including badges, ranks, and the Arrow of Light Award. Review how the requirements help the boy advance.
5. Explain the family's role in working with the boy and approving projects. Note that the Webelos den leader or activity badge counselor approves requirements for Webelos Scouts rather than a family member.
6. Emphasize that "Do Your Best" is the boys' criterion for completing requirements, electives, or badges.
7. Explain what modifications might be necessary to help boys with special needs.
8. Explain how recognition methods will be used to reinforce the boy's advancement.
9. Explain how awards are presented at pack meetings and how families may participate.

Den leaders should discuss advancement with parents at a den adults' meeting. (See Chapters 19–21, "The Tiger Cub Program," "The Wolf and Bear Programs," and "The Webelos Scout Program.") They can also help families keep a happy balance between expecting too much and expecting too little as their sons work on advancement projects and activities. If a family is too critical, a boy is likely to lose confidence in himself and lose interest in Cub Scouting. On the other hand, some families are inclined to be too easy on boys. Boys are great testers, and if families let them get by with less than their best, they might be influencing character development in the wrong direction.

It is important not to measure a boy's efforts by an adult's yardstick, but to encourage him to do his best at all times.

PACK RESPONSIBILITIES

Cub Scout pack leaders must be sensitive to family situations. Although the costs involved in Cub Scouting are not excessive, some families have limited budgets. Take care not to embarrass any Cub Scout because of a lack of funds required for uniforming or den or pack activities.

Be sensitive about using specific words or phrases when referring to family situations. Many boys do not live in a traditional two-parent family. Begin notes with "Dear family," and tell each boy to be sure to "bring your family." Children can be hurt by references to parents that may not be a part of their lives.

Cub Scout leaders need to be creative and understanding in helping all types of families participate as fully as possible in the program. Leaders must recognize that not all families can participate equally or in the same way. Be considerate of economic, health, and other factors that can affect a family's participation.

The pack has the following responsibilities to the parents or guardians:

1. To provide a well-planned, year-round program of activities in the den and pack that meets the aims of Scouting and, more specifically, the purposes of Cub Scouting and the needs of boys
2. To provide trained, qualified, and enthusiastic leaders for all den and pack meetings and activities
3. To provide training for parents/guardians and to keep them informed
4. To provide activities that help strengthen family members and give them opportunities to work and play together
5. To help families participate in Cub Scouting according to each family's unique ability to do so

DEVELOPING FAMILY COOPERATION

The expectations of families are usually much closer to the aims of Scouting than the expectations of the boys. Families sometimes have special reasons for encouraging their son to join a Cub Scout pack.

Leaders from the pack should visit the home, get to know the family, and discuss the program and the purposes of Cub Scouting with them. Tell the family of your interest in their son and explain what is expected of them. Through home visits and special den and pack adults' meetings, you can show families what you are doing and ways you need their help. Show them that they are a much needed and essential part of

Cub Scouting. Try to involve them in small ways, and then during busy times, they will be ready and willing to help with meetings and activities.

Family Orientation

Orienting families to Cub Scouting will encourage their participation. A good, well-planned orientation can make the difference in how receptive the family will be with future involvement in the pack.

Family orientation is a process that should begin before the family joins the pack. The information may be given to the family in an informal setting, during the first visit in the home, or at Rally Night for Cub Scouting.

Information to Review at a Family Orientation

- Procedures for joining a pack, helping with den activities, paying dues, and helping with the boy's advancement
- The "Parent Agreement" on the application.
- The "Parent Guide" in the boy's handbook, which explains how parents or guardians work with their sons on-advancement
- "The Family's Responsibilities" in this chapter, to let them know what is expected of all families
- *Cub Scouting's BSA Family Activity Book* (No. 33012), which explains how Cub Scouting can help meet family needs (See Chapter 30, "Cub Scouting's BSA Family Program," for more details.)
- The Family Talent Survey Sheet (page 34-11).

Involving Parents/Guardians in the Pack

Orientation alone is not enough to keep parents involved. Communication is the key (see "Good Communication," on page 5-4). The more that families know about Cub Scouting, the more interested and cooperative they will be.

- Keep parents and guardians fully informed as soon as they join the pack.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Informed families are usually interested families.
- Urge and expect a parent or guardian to be present at and participate in ceremonies when the Cub Scout is inducted, recognized for advancement, or graduated from the pack.
- Use the Family Talent Survey Sheet (page 34-11) to identify talents, abilities, and resources that can be used in den and pack meeting activities.
- Give adults specific jobs in the den and pack. A request to do a specific job will get better results than a vague "I'll be needing your help sometime."

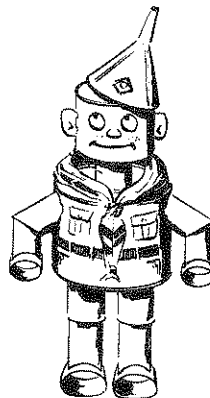
- Include adult recognition in pack ceremonies.
- Recognize dens that have good adult attendance at pack meetings.

Increasing Family Attendance at Pack Meetings

Once families get into the habit of attending pack meetings, they usually continue if the pack program is worthwhile. When families enjoy their first pack meeting, they usually want to attend the next pack activity.

A good rule: Plan all meetings with families in mind.

Each pack has its own way of building family attendance. If attendance of families at the pack meeting is not what it should be, perhaps the pack committee can come up with a plan for increasing attendance. Some packs have a **simple trophy** or a homemade "Cubby" that is presented to the den with the best adult attendance at each pack meeting. The winning den keeps the trophy in its meeting place until the next pack meeting, when it is passed to the den with the most attendance.



"Cubby," a homemade attendance trophy, can be made from tin cans or any scrap material. Challenge a creative parent to design and make your own attendance trophy. (See the *Cub Scout Leader How-To Book* for Cubby ideas.)

Some packs present a **family attendance ribbon** to the den with the best attendance. An attendance ribbon could be given to every den that reaches a certain percentage in attendance. The den keeps this ribbon and attaches it to the den flag.

Telephoning is another method for increasing and maintaining attendance. An adult in each den can call other den families to remind them of the pack meeting and relay special details about the plans of the meeting. An **e-mail list** for the pack could also be used to send out messages.

Each family could get a **personal invitation and a reminder** of the meeting. Some packs have a regular **newsletter** that is sent to families to keep them informed and to remind them of meetings. This newsletter could also be sent via e-mail. Remember, however, that not all families have access to the Internet or e-mail.

But an increasing number of families do have access to the Internet, so many packs are establishing a **Web site**. Through this site, pack families can have instant access to information on upcoming activities and events.

PARENT-LEADER CONFERENCES

Throughout the year, a parent-leader conference is an opportunity for a family adult member or members to discuss with you, the leader, the boy's participation and expectations of a den. The conference can help a boy gain the most from his Cub Scouting experience by giving parents and you the knowledge and awareness you need to work as a team to help the boy succeed.

Here are some suggested topics for discussion:

- 1. General Characteristics:** Start with a general picture of the boy. Is he shy or outgoing? What is his usual temperament—easygoing or easily frustrated? What does he like to do? What are his strengths and abilities?
- 2. Special Needs:** You need a clear picture of any special needs, limitations, or diet or health restrictions of a boy in order to determine how to best help him experience the fullest program possible.
- 3. Unit Operation:** Explain the Scouting program and emphasize why advancement is important to the boy's development. Discuss your expectations of the family's involvement.
- 4. Discipline:** Parents should inform you of the usual discipline used to maintain appropriate behavior. Discuss expected behavior at meetings.
- 5. Medication:** It is the responsibility of the boy and/or his parent or guardian to make sure that prescription medication is taken as needed. A Scout leader, after obtaining all the necessary information, can agree to accept responsibility for making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate nor necessarily encourage the Scout leader to do so. Also, if your state laws are more limiting as regards this issue, you must follow them.
- 6. Emergency Procedures:** You should have emergency phone numbers, appropriate written medical permission, and any other information specific to the boy's needs.

More suggestions on parent-leader conferences are given in Chapter 17, "Cub Scouts With Disabilities."

Good Communication

Good communication between leaders and families is essential to obtaining family cooperation. Here are some helpful tips:

- Talk with each boy's family about what is going on, what is needed, and how the family can help.

- Be sure families know the regular den and pack meeting dates and times. Provide reminders as needed.
- Let families know that the best way to find out what is going on with their boy is to stay actively involved in his life.
- Don't rely entirely on boys to take information home. The message might never get through to parents or guardians. Use newsletters, telephoning, e-mail, personal visits, or other means to stay in touch with and inform families of any special activities, projects, or needs.
- Get to know the family. Find out how the den and pack can help meet their needs.
- Hold den and pack adults' meetings as needed to communicate information.
- Keep families up-to-date on how their sons are progressing. Let them know how they can help them.
- Keep families up-to-date on how the den and pack are operating. Share with them the successes and the needs.
- Encourage families to read *Boys' Life* magazine to find out what's going on in Scouting and Cub Scouting.
- Keep families informed about activities that the entire family can enjoy, such as family camping.

Cub Scouting is for families. The involvement of parents and guardians, as well as other family members, can enhance a boy's experience and success. As family members participate together, the entire family can be strengthened.

NATIONAL PARENT INITIATIVE

In 2006, the Boy Scouts of America announced, as part of the new National Strategic Plan, a National Parent Initiative to engage parents in all units—Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews. The mission is to develop and implement methods that increase the passion and participation of volunteers, especially parents of Scouts. Promoting parental understanding and appreciation of Scouting will be the foundation from which all methods will develop.

The vision of the program is "A passionate parent initiative that continually increases youth and parent recruitment, retention, advancement, participation, determination, and a passion for Scouting."

By adopting this vision at all program levels, units will be able to access new avenues of support that will serve to increase program quality. The vision captures our passionate attitude about Scouting, and it can inspire many parents to become involved and more committed to the success of their child's Scouting experience.

All unit leaders are encouraged to adopt the program as an integral part of their unit's program. It is a part of one of the requirements for earning the Centennial Quality Unit Award beginning in 2007.

The objectives established for the program initiative include:

- Increase parent recruiting
- Increase parent retention
- Increase parent participation
- Increase youth advancement
- Increase youth determination
- Increase the passion for participation in Scouting by youth and parents

As part of the basic program, encourage each youth pack member's family to:

1. Complete a Family Talent Survey and turn in to you;
2. Influence their child to become a Boy Scout;
3. Participate in Scouting directly with their child;
4. Go to and observe pack meetings;
5. Be part of the den and pack program—both meetings and at outings;

6. Support the unit financially;
7. Coach their child's advancement and the earning of recognition awards; and
8. Serve in one support role during the Cub Scouting year.

Your pack should select someone to serve on the pack committee, accepting the responsibility for delivery and coordination of this program. This person would be responsible for keeping the parents informed of the unit's programs and needs. Responsibilities of this position include:

1. Providing new members' parents with:
 - A welcome package that outlines how the unit works.
 - An orientation providing answers for questions and sharing information on the benefits of the Cub Scouting program to their family.
 - Updates on the pack's program and their child's involvement.
2. Securing a commitment from the parents of each youth member to help with at least one assignment or project annually.

Additional details will be communicated as the program develops. Below are examples of ways parents could help your pack, either in standard pack leadership roles or in support roles. Don't forget: all volunteers must complete an Adult Application!

Ways Parents Can Help Cub Scout Packs

Academics and sports coordinator	Coordinate the academics activities and sports skills programs for youth in the den or pack.
Activities leader	Assist in leading activities such as craft projects and games.
Activity badge counselor	Serve as an information resource for boys on one of the Webelos activity badges.
Activity record-keeper	Keep track of boys' participation in unit events.
Advancement committee member	Help keep award and recognition records for the den or pack.
Assistant den leader	Provide support to a den leader for one of the dens.
Awards coordinator	Complete paperwork and pick up award items from the Scout shop or local council service center.
Back-up assistant	Help the den leader as a second helper (to maintain two-deep leadership).
Birthday coordinator	Keep track of birthdays and share the information with leaders to ensure recognition.
Calendar coordinator	Help create and maintain the unit calendar.
Camping assistant	Attend campouts and help where needed.
Campout coordinator	Coordinate the planning for outdoor programs, especially campouts.
Carpool coordinator	Coordinate transportation for field trips, campouts, or other events.
Ceremonies helper	Provide support for ceremonies and presentation of awards for youth and adults at unit meetings.

Chartered organization representative	Serve as the liaison with the chartered organization. (Appointed by the organization.)
Sitter	If leaders have younger children, watch them during meetings.
Unit commissioner	Serve as pack liaison with the district or council.
Construction coordinator	Build derby tracks, props, etc.
Cubmaster or assistant Cubmaster	Serve as the unit leader or assistant, overseeing the pack's program.
Day camp assistant	Attend day camp with son and assist leaders as needed.
Day Camp staff/helper	Serve on day camp staff as a den helper or an activity area helper.
Decorations committee member	Make or obtain decorations for key meetings and events.
Delivery coordinator	Deliver supplies, flyers, activity kits, etc., handed out at meetings to boys who couldn't attend.
Den project helper	Assist with preparation for den meeting projects (cut out patterns, make stencils, etc.)
Den leader or assistant den leader	Serve as the key leader or assistant for a den.
Den record keeper	Help keep the records of advancement for all boys in the den.
Derby committee member	Serve on the Pinewood Derby, Space Derby, or Regatta Regatta planning and execution committee (Pinewood, Space, Regatta Derbies).
District committee member	Provide support on the district level for program, membership, finance, or unit service.
Driver's information coordinator	Keep all information on drivers current for tour permits.
Equipment coordinator	Maintain unit equipment: ceremonial props, game equipment, etc.
Facilities coordinator	Locate meeting places and coordinate arrangements for special events.
Family camping committee member	Assist with arrangements for the pack's family campout.
Field trip coordinator	Make sure permission slips and emergency contact forms are collected from all members.
Field trip planner	Maintain a list of and information about potential field trips and help secure permission from organizations.
Field trip assistant	Drive, chaperone, or arrange for den field trips.
Firewood supplier	Provide firewood as needed for campfires and outdoor ceremonies.
First aid coordinator	Be aware of and prepared to deal with health and safety issues at unit meetings and activities.
Flag ceremony coordinator	Work with boys performing the flag ceremony at den and unit meetings.
Friends of Scouting coordinator	Support to the pack's Friends of Scouting fundraising efforts.
Fundraising coordinator	Coordinate product sales for the pack.
Fundraising supporter	Help with a specific part of the pack or den money-earning project.
Game leader	Plan and provide materials for games at pack meetings.
Grocery shopper	Purchase food and other supplies for outings and meetings.
Guest speaker coordinator	Secure guest speakers and presenters related to the theme of the month or event.
Historian	Keep track of den and pack events: past, current, and future.
Hobby expert	Give a presentation to the den or pack on a hobby of interest to the boys.
Holiday party committee member	Assist with preparations for the holiday party for the den or pack.
Judge at events	Serve as a judge for pack competitive events such as derbies.

Pack librarian	Maintain updated literature and resources for the pack.
Lifeguard/lookout for Aquatics	Serve as a certified lifeguard for aquatics activities.
Mailing coordinator	Mailing the newsletter, flyers, and other communications to pack families.
Newsletter editor	Collect information and images, then write the unit newsletter (printed and/or electronic).
Pack committee member	Serve as a committee member in support of the pack and attend monthly committee meetings to help with planning.
Pack Committee chairperson	Chair for the pack committee to coordinate pack business.
Parent communication coordinator	Assist with keeping all parents in the den or pack informed of upcoming activities.
Pack meeting arrangements coordinator	Arrive early for setup and stay for cleanup.
Pack meeting program helper	Help with the program at monthly pack meetings: setup, registration, etc.
Pack record keeper	Help keep the advancement records for all boys in the pack.
Pack trainer	Coordinator training of adults in the pack.
Parent initiative coordinator	Serve as the Parent Initiative coordinator, working with all parents on their involvement.
Family Talent Survey recorder	Conduct a Family Talent Survey annually and maintain a database of parental interests and skills.
Parents' helper	Help parents who need assistance with their children in Scouting.
Photographer	Take photos or videos of events and support showing them at meetings.
Popcorn chairperson (kernel)	Coordinator the annual popcorn sale in the den or pack.
Poster artist	Make posters as needed to promote the pack's events and activities.
Printer	Lay out and print the newsletter, flyers, and other promotional items for special events.
Prop builder	Make props for activities: ceremonies, costumes, presentations, decorations, etc.
Public relations coordinator	Write and submit articles to local media outlets.
Recruiter	Help at a recruiting event—setup, registration, share information about the program with new parents.
Recruiting promoter	Make and distribute promotional items in the community.
Recycling coordinator	Assist the den or pack with recycling.
Refreshments coordinator	Coordinate refreshments duties of the parents in the den or pack.
Refreshments provider	Bring refreshments to a den, pack, or adult leader meeting.
Attendance coordinator	Record the attendance of those at meetings or activities.
Registration coordinator	Collect all membership applications, keep records on them, and forward as required.
Religious emblems counselor	Instruct or guide youth in earning the religious award for their age and faith.
Resident camp supporter	Go with son to camp and assist leaders as needed.
Scouting show exhibit committee member	Assist with preparing an exhibit for a Scouting show or other community event.
Scouting show ticket committee member	Assist with ticket sales for a Scouting show.
Scout Sabbath/Scout Sunday coordinator	Arrange for pack participation at religious institutions in February.
Tailor	Help sew or iron patches on uniforms for those needing help.

Secretary	Take notes at meetings, help send out thank-you notes for field trips and activities, etc.
Service projects supporter	Coordinate and help organize service projects; for example, clothing or food drives.
Skills expert	Give a presentation to the den or pack on a skill of interest to the boys for their advancement.
Skit leader	Lead skits at a den or pack meeting.
Song leader	Lead songs at a den or pack meeting.
Special awards coordinator	Keep track of special awards earned: Leave No Trace, World Conservation Award, etc.
Special events helper	Help coordinate blue and gold banquet, holiday parties, pack outings, etc.
Leader recognition coordinator	Make arrangements for public recognition of unit leaders.
Adult training specialist	Provide training in skills of interest to the adults in unit (for example, swimming, first aid, etc.).
Sports coordinator	Coordinate sports activities for the den or pack: secure equipment, referee, coach, etc.
Sports recorder	Keep track of boys' participation in various Cub Scout Sports for earning of belt loops and pins.
Summertime pack coordinator	Coordinate plans and program and monitor participation in one of the monthly summertime activities.
Supply coordinator	Coordinate the purchase or collection of craft supplies and provide them for meetings.
Telephone tree coordinator	Coordinate and maintain a telephone tree for the den or pack.
Theme developer	Develop ideas for activities, crafts, and programs for monthly themes.
Equipment Transportation provider	Provide a trailer or other transportation for equipment needed for an event.
Driver	Transport youth to and from activities.
Treasurer	Help with budgeting, collection, and payment of funds for the pack.
Trip planner	Research places to go for field trips, campouts, etc. Provide details for planning.
Uniform exchange coordinator	Coordinate donation and help distribute experienced uniforms for the pack.
Uniform inspection coordinator	Help the pack commissioner conduct a uniform inspection during the year.
Webelos den leader or Assistant Webelos den leader	Serve as the den leader or assistant den leader for one of the Webelos dens.
Webelos-to-Scout coordinator	Arrange a seamless transition of Webelos Scouts into Boy Scouting.
Webmaster	Maintain a pack Web site, send e-mail reminders of upcoming events; frequently check BSA national and council Web sites for information important to the pack.
Woodworking helper	Help teach and support any wood working projects in the den or pack.
Youth Protection Training coordinator	Coordinate the training of youth and adults in Youth Protection training.