Cub Scout Frequently Asked Questions

Joining Cub Scouting

How old (or young) can a boy be to join Cub Scouting? Cub Scouting is for boys in the first through fifth grades, or 7 to 10 years of age. Boys who are older than 10, or who have completed the fifth grade, can no longer join Cub Scouting, but they may be eligible to join the Boy Scouting or Venturing program depending on their age and grade level.

How can I become an adult volunteer in Cub Scouting? Express your interest to the pack leaders—the committee chair, Cubmaster, chartered organization representative, or members of the unit committee. While there's no guarantee that a specific role or position will be available—and there may be a selection process among several candidates even if the position is currently vacant—there is usually some way in which you can contribute. Most units are glad for any offer of help. There are many single-instance volunteer opportunities such as popcorn chair or pinewood derby chair.

Is there a Cub Scout pack in my area? In most instances, yes. There are tens of thousands of Cub Scout packs in the United States and its territories, as well as packs that serve the families of U.S. citizens who live overseas. Go to www.beascout.org, select Cub Scouts, key in your zip code, and press the red button. You will be directed to a Google map and provided a list of units in your area. You will also be provided contact information for the BSA council serving your zip code. Contact any unit(s) or contact the council directly.

Is it possible to be a Cub Scout if there is not a pack in my area? In rare instances where there actually is no pack in your area—which generally occurs only in rural areas or overseas locations—a single youth can become a Lone Cub Scout. He would work with an adult mentor to pursue the advancement program and participate in activities with nearby packs when possible. You will need to check with the BSA council serving your area to verify that it supports the Lone Scout program.

Must I be a U.S. citizen to join Cub Scouting? Citizenship is not required of youth or adult members. If you live outside the United States and are not a U.S. citizen, it may be more beneficial to join the Scouting association in your own nation. The World Organization of the Scout Movement provides contact information for all national Scouting organizations on its website at www.scout.org.

The Cub Scout Program

Are Cub Scouts the same as Boy Scouts? No. Cub Scouting is a program of the Boy Scouts of America—so in that sense, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts are both members of the same organization. However, they are entirely different programs: Cub Scouting is a family-oriented program designed specifically to address the needs of younger boys.

How often do Cub Scouts meet? Cub Scouts meet in their dens once each week, and a pack meeting is held for all Cub Scouts and their families once a month. Beyond that, it depends on the den and pack. A den may hold a special activity, such as a service project or visit to a local museum, in place of one of the weekly meetings or in addition to the weekly meetings. Likewise, a pack may conduct a special event such as a blue and gold banquet as an additional event, rather than a substitute for its monthly pack meeting.

May parents attend den meetings? Cub Scout den meetings are intended to be an activity for the individual boys. They are not a family activity, and the presence of parents can be a distraction. However, parental involvement is encouraged, and all meetings should be open to your participation. If you would like to be present at a den meeting, ask the den leader in advance so that the leader can plan a way for you to observe or participate in an unobtrusive manner, or talk to the pack leaders on becoming more involved.

Uniform and Supplies

What supplies and equipment are needed to participate in Cub Scouting? At minimum, each boy in Cub Scouting will need a uniform and a handbook. Each year, the handbook changes, as does the cap and neckerchief, but other uniform parts remain the same for at least the first three years. When a boy enters a Webelos den, he may need to obtain a new uniform if the parents in the den opt for the khaki-and-olive uniform. Additional supplies and equipment may be needed for certain activities such as camping trips or field days. What equipment is needed, as well as whether it will be provided by the unit, will vary from pack to pack. Den and pack leaders should provide parents with information about any supplies that will be required at the beginning of each program year.

Where can I purchase BSA literature, uniforms, and other program materials? Our uniforms, literature, and other Scouting merchandise is available at your local council, Scout Shops, and other licensed distributors. Visit the Supply Group website at www.scoutstuff.org to find a list of distributors in your area. If there aren't any suppliers near you, you can order directly from the Supply Group by telephone.

How can I save money on the cost of uniforms and equipment? The Cub Scout pack may provide assistance to families. Some packs operate a uniform exchange or uniform bank, or they may hold fundraisers to enable the boys to earn their uniforms. Also, some packs will award boys rank-specific uniform components (hat and neckerchief) and/or the program books that the Cub Scout needs each year—so parents should inquire as to what the pack provides before purchasing the items themselves.

Advancement and Awards

If a boy joins a Bear den, may he go back and earn the Tiger Cub and Wolf badges? No. In the Cub Scout program, all boys in a den work toward the same badge. If a boy joins Cub Scouting as a 9-year-old or in the third grade, he must earn the Bobcat badge (all boys in Cub Scouting earn this badge), and then he will begin working on the Bear badge with his fellow Cub Scouts. He is not required to have earned the Tiger Cub or Wolf badges. Since those badges are for younger boys (first grade or age 7 and second grade or age 8), the requirements for those badges are below a third grade or 9-year-old's current level of ability, so "going back" to pick up those badges is not permitted.

If a boy completes the Wolf badge early, may he begin working on the Bear badge? No. In the Cub Scout program, all boys in a den work toward a badge that is geared to their level of development. If the Wolf badge is completed before the end of the program year, a boy may work on electives to earn Arrow Points, or Academic and Sports belt loops and pins, Nova awards, or the religious emblem of their faith. He may not begin working on the requirements for the Bear badge. His work on the Bear badge will begin the next program year, when he graduates into a Bear den.

May Cub Scouts earn badges such as the 50-Miler Award or Mile Swim BSA? No, Cub Scouts are not eligible to earn these awards, which are part of the Boy Scout program. All of the awards that Cub Scouts may earn are listed in their handbooks and on this website.

When a Cub Scout earns the Arrow of Light, may he immediately join a Boy Scout troop? Boy Scouting is available to boys who have earned the Arrow of Light and are at least 10 years old. So a Webelos Scout who has earned the Arrow of Light is eligible to join a troop immediately (provided he is at least 10 years old). A boy can join a Boy Scout troop if he is 11 years old whether he has earned the Arrow of Light or not.

However, many packs coordinate with a local Boy Scout troop to facilitate the transition from Cub Scouting to Boy Scouting. In these instances, it is better for the boy, his family, and both units if all Webelos Scouts make the transition together, in a coordinated fashion, rather than having each boy leave the pack as soon as he is eligible.

How does a Cub Scout earn a Nova award? A Cub Scout, with his counselor, acquires the Cub Scout Nova Awards Guidebook. The Cub Scout decides which Nova award he wishes to work on. He will then work with his counselor to understand the procedure and begin completing the requirements. Once he has completed his first Nova award he will be presented the Nova patch for Cub Scouts. For each Nova award he completes after that he will be presented a "pi" pin to put on the Nova patch.

If he chooses to work toward the Supernova award, he will need a Supernova mentor. You can contact your local council for a list of mentors in your area, or someone who is qualified can register through the council to become a Supernova mentor. This information can be found at www.scouting.org/stem.aspx.