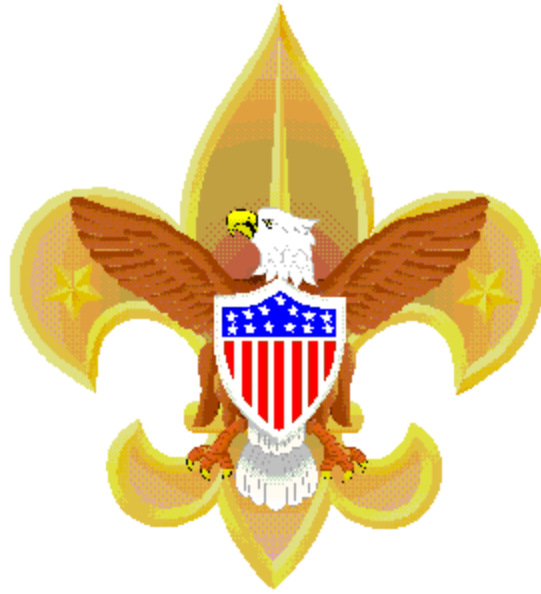




Pioneer Trails District
Denver Area Council

Webelos to Scouts Transition:
The New Parent's Quick Guide

Welcome!

For those of you who are new to Scouting, welcome to the journey and experience of Scouting! Scouting has a rich history of helping boys learn skills, values and ideals to better enable them to live an enriched life. The purpose of this guide is to help the parents better understand the Scouting experience. For those parents who were involved in Cub Scouting, you will find there are many things that are different such as the leadership of the Scouts. For those parents who were Boy Scouts, you may find that some things are very much the same as when you were active in Scouting. Other things may be very different now that you are the parent.

A Boy Led Troop

Yes, you read that correctly. Boy Scout Troops are led by the boys – or more to the point, they should be led by the boys. Parents are here to help guide and mentor the boys whereas in Cub Scouts the parents planned the activities and led them as well. You may recall from the Transition Guide for Parents and Boys, parental involvement is needed to make sure the Scouts are safe. Parent will help determine things such as “do we have anyone qualified to teach that skill”, “do we have funds to pay for that trip”, “do we have enough parents for adequate supervision at that activity”, etc. To that end, parental involvement is a critical piece of the Troop’s success!

The Mission, Aims and Methods

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) 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 Scout Law. From the Scoutmaster Handbook we learn that “every Scouting activity moves boys toward three basic aims: character development, citizenship training, and mental and physical fitness.” This too is where adult mentoring really comes into play. Below in Table 1 you will see some of the methods of Scouting and how they progress between the different areas of Scouting.

Here is an excerpt from the Advancement Guide. *From Cub Scouting through Venturing and Sea Scouts, we put the methods to work. Together they lead to mission fulfillment. For example, Scouting ideals, put forth in the timeless instruments of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, represent the most basic method. Moving on, we know young people want to belong to groups. Throughout the Scouting program, we provide a place where the sense of belonging is an outcome of practicing skills, exploring interests, learning values, forming friendships, and enjoying adventure. Associations within families and with a variety of adults are critical methods too, especially in terms of providing support and recognition and in developing mutual respect.*

Advancement is the method by which we promote and encourage the ongoing involvement and commitment that keeps members coming back for more. It works best when it is built into a unit's program so that simply participating leads to meaningful achievement and recognition - and to a continually improving readiness for more complex experiences.

Cub Scouting	Boy Scouting and Varsity Scouting	Venturing	Sea Scouts
Living the ideals	Ideals	The ideals	Ideals
Belonging to a Den	Patrol Method	Group Activities	Group Activities
Using Advancement	Advancement	Recognition/ advancement	Advancement
Involving Family and Home	Association with Adults	Adult Association	Adult Association
Participating in Activities	Outdoors	High Adventure and Sports	High Adventure, Outdoors and Nautical Activities
Serving Neighborhood and Community	Leadership Development	Leadership	Leadership
Wearing the Uniform	Uniform	Though not an expressed method, a uniform is available and often worn	Uniform
"Character Connections"	Personal Growth	Teaching Others	Teaching Others

Table 1

What Does All That Mean?

Scouting encourages boys to develop physical, mental, and emotional fitness. In conjunction with parents, boys learn to adopt and live by meaningful personal standards. These traits help to serve as a cornerstone for success in life. Scouts learn to develop personal strengths by following the examples of others and through hands-on experience. Some activities include outdoors skills such as camping, hiking kayaking and rock climbing. These will help test and develop fitness and provide for leadership. Merit badge incentives will help in mastering hobby and career skills. Many Scouts learn new skills that foster into long term career goals. Scouting encourages boys to expand and test their personal initiative, courage, and resourcefulness.

Imagine all of this learning and experience being gained while having fun at the same time. Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement, is credited with saying that Scouting is fun with a purpose. I hope you agree.

What Is The “Patrol Method”?

The patrol method gives Scouts an experience in group dynamics and leadership. It places responsibility on them and teaches the Scouts how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to interact in small groups, typically six to eight boys, where they can easily relate to each other. Within the Patrol there will be a Patrol Leader who helps to lead the group for a six month period. Most Troops have elections every six months for the Senior Patrol Leader, who leads the Troop, as well as the Patrol Leaders. This is one method where leadership changes and boys have an opportunity to learn how to lead others.

How Do Scouts Advance in Rank?

Rank advancement is handled by the Scouts completing tasks defined for each rank. The official ranks are Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle. There is a “Scout” rank that shows understanding of the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout Motto and Scout Slogan. There are a few other things that go along with the “Scout” rank and they are all defined in the Boy Scout Handbook. Every Scout is required to have a personal copy of the handbook. This will help the Scout learn many of the skills for their ranks.

In addition to rank, Scouts can earn Merit Badges. Some of them are required to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. There are over 100 merit badges today that challenge Scouts in physical, mental and leadership activities in addition to teaching them more about citizenship in the local community and the world. A great resource to learn more about them is Meritbadge.org.

Ok, But What’s It Going To Cost?

Costs will vary from Troop to Troop and year to year. The common costs among all Troops are the yearly registration and subscription to Boy’s Life magazine. The current registration fee for BSA is \$15.00 per year. The current subscription cost for Boy’s Life magazine is \$12 per year. I highly recommend all Scouts continue to get Boy’s Life. It has a lot of good information and shows the Scouts how their skills can be used later in life. Some Troops have yearly dues in addition to the registration and Boy’s Life subscription.

Year to year costs will differ based on the camping, hiking and other activities. The costs of summer camp can vary depending on where the Troop goes. Typically you should budget \$250.00 for summer camp. If you can’t afford summer camp, talk to the Troop about camperships – that’s a camping scholarship. Most districts or councils have programs to help

Scouts enjoy the benefits of summer camping. A first year Scout can earn many of the requirements towards Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class in that one week of summer camp alone. This helps the Scout really get off to a good start with his Scouting and maintain the excitement.

The only other cost to consider is the uniform. As your Scout grows, a new field uniform, also called a Class A uniform, will be needed eventually. Many Troops have a standard neckerchief, hat and activity uniform, also called a Class B uniform, that they wear. Some Troops will give new Scouts the neckerchief when they join the Troop at no cost to the Scout. The hats and activity uniforms seldom are given as a welcome gift.

You may wonder why there are two different uniforms. When doing a community service project like planting trees or gardening or other such things, while it may look really sharp to be in the field uniform, we typically do not want the Scouts getting that torn or tattered. When at a Troop meeting, Court of Honor where awards are handed out, boards of review and the like, a sharply dressed Scout in his full field uniform is often required.

Be sure to ask the Scoutmaster during your visit what type of fundraising events the Scouts do and how they can use that to fund their Scouting experience. Aside from selling popcorn, many Troops have other fundraisers where the boys can earn money to pay their own yearly dues and camping costs. The money they earn often times goes into a “Scout account” with the Troop that can be used for all things Scouting.

How Can I Help The Troop?

Parents are encouraged to help the boys with their Scouting experience. Parents can become trained leaders such as Assistant Scoutmasters, Scoutmasters or Merit Badge Counselors. Parents can be members of the Troop Committee to help with planning and financing and fundraising. Parents can be Patrol Advisors helping the Scouts to plan their activities and making sure that leaders are available to help complete tasks.

Every parent is strongly encouraged to take Youth Protection Training (YPT) offered by the BSA. YPT is required for every trained leader with direct Scout interaction. The safety of the Scouts is one of the highest priorities of the BSA! Did I mention the training is free? Yes, FREE. You don't even have to leave your house to take the training. It's available online at [MyScouting.org](https://my.scouting.org). There is additional training available online as well as in person and it too is FREE! Every Scout deserves a well-trained leader!

Above and beyond what has been mentioned above, the best way you can help any Troop is to be involved with your Scout's experience. It is up to the Scouts to make their plans and it is up to us to help support them in reaching their goals. As hard as it may be to hear, failure is an option and Scouting is a safe place to fail.

It has been stated that Thomas Edison once said he never failed but instead learned one thousand ways not to make a light bulb. His actual statement from a January 1921 issue of American Magazine is this:

"After we had conducted thousands of experiments on a certain project without solving the problem, one of my associates, after we had conducted the crowning experiment and it had proved a failure, expressed discouragement and disgust over our having failed to find out anything. I cheerily assured him that we had learned something. For we had learned for a certainty that the thing couldn't be done that way, and that we would have to try some other way."

I included the above to leave you with the assurance that Scouting is a safe place to learn how to succeed and how not to succeed. We all learn by experience and Scouting can be one of the best experiences of a lifetime! I hope that you enjoy the experience as much as the Scouts do!