Hints and Tips For New Cub Scout Leaders

1. Plan your meetings far enough ahead to allow time to gather materials needed. Set goals that you want to accomplish during the year. Outline your program for the year and plan ahead to involve as many people as possible. Plan each meeting ahead of time. You might find it valuable to plan next week's meeting after just completing a meeting. Educate your Cub's parents so that they will be prepared to sign off on the Wolf and Bear achievements to help and guide their son through the achievements

2. Get trained! Prior to submitting a leader application, everyone must complete Youth Protection Training. There are numerous additional training modules available on line. You will need to establish a My.Scouting - https://my.scouting.org/ (this is where you completed Youth Protection Training) account to complete most of them. To establish an account, you will need to know your BSA member number which will be sent to your unit leader as soon as your application is processed. After you get settled in, Leader Specific Training should be completed ASAP, before your first meeting if possible. It is the best place to go to learn the Cub Scouting fundamentals. It is offered on line but preferably should be completed in a classroom setting.

3. Always have a plan B, each group will be different and activities that thrilled one den may bore another, and when they get bored they get rowdy. If they are showing signs of boredom drop the activity and go to plan B and you will rarely have discipline problems.

4. If you plan an outdoor activity, always have an indoor alternate planned.

5. Transitions from one activity to the next are easiest if the meeting is planned so that the next activity is always preferred to the current one. For example we begin with opening ceremonies that reinforce the values of Scouting (boring) then go to advancement activities (less boring but not as much fun as games which come next), after games we go to snack time (they are always willing to stop what they are doing for snack!). I use the fact that they have their hands full and their mouths full as the best opportunity for announcements and reminders. Their parents are beginning to show up, and it doesn't hurt that parents are also hearing the announcements and reminders; it also helps to keep those impatient parents from grabbing the Cub and leaving before the closing ceremony, since they intuitively understand that they should not take their child away during announcements.

6. Don't try to carry the entire load yourself. In Tiger, Wolf and Bear dens the family unit is central to the forming of the Cub Scout and activities revolve around the family unit. Get other parents involved. Help them realize it is their program and then depend on them to lend expertise on aspects of the program. Expect and ask your Cub parents to help you. They can bring den refreshments, help with discipline, round up supplies, provide expertise for areas where you are less knowledgeable, rotate as den helpers (give them an assignment each week), provide transportation, serve as day leaders at day camps.

7. Don't spend very much of your own money. The pack should provide needed supplies, that's why the pack holds fundraisers or sells popcorn.

8. Leadership is developed and learned. You can become an effective Cub Scout Leader if you will prepare yourself and take the time to learn. Remember to be flexible in your planning. Be prepared to take advantage of unexpected events, such as; the appearance of a wild animal at your outdoor den meetings, a spectacular fall day for unscheduled nature hike or a gentle, warm rain for a puddle hike, a project or activity a Cub or parent may suggest that's workable on short notice. There are no set answers to handling boys. Don't be afraid to experiment.

9. Understand the Cub Scout program so you can help the boys grow throughout the program. There are a lot of resources available to help you. One of your best resources is your District's Roundtable, where you can exchange ideas with other Cub Scout Leaders. Roundtable schedules can be found at www.skcscouting.org

REMEMBER TO DO YOUR BEST, AND, ABOVE ALL, HAVE FUN!

Cub Scout Den Meetings

A den is a group of six to eight boys, within the pack, that meets several times a month between pack meetings. The boys in a den are usually all at the same grade level. The den structure allows boys to build relationships with leaders and other boys. The den provides opportunities for activities that would be difficult with a large group. The den also provides leadership opportunities for the boys.

The Den Meeting Location

The location of den meetings will vary, depending on the resources of the Cubmaster or den leader. An ideal meeting place is the home of an adult leader, if there is enough room for everybody. Meetings can also be held in a basement, garage, backyard, park, town square, or the activity room of an apartment building. Some dens meet at the chartered organization's meeting place or at a local school.

Den Meeting Attendance

The den leader and assistant den leader (or another adult) attend all den meetings with the Cub Scouts. (At least two adults must be present at all meetings.) Tiger Cub den meetings are also attended by each Tiger Cub's adult partner. Wolf, Bear, and Webelos den meetings are often attended by a den chief, a Boy Scout or Venturer who assists the adult leaders. An activity badge counselor who has been asked to help with a specific badge may also attend a Webelos den meeting. Sometimes, a parent, guardian, or other family member might be asked to help at a specific meeting, but family members do not normally attend Wolf, Bear, or Webelos den meetings.

The Den Meeting Agenda

All Cub Scout den meetings have the following parts:

Before the Meeting. Before the Cub Scouts arrive, leaders gather to make preparations and handle last-minute details.
Gathering Activity. As the Cub Scouts begin to arrive, they join in an informal activity or game, often conducted by the den chief to keep the boys interested and active until the entire group has arrived.
Opening. The opening is the official start of the den meeting. It usually consists of a formal ceremony, such as a flag ceremony, a prayer or song, or a group recital of the Cub Scout Promise.
Program. The program part of the meeting will vary by the age of the boys (see below), and may be broken into two or more parts. Generally, most of the meeting consists of craft projects, games, and activities that are all based on the monthly theme.
Closing. The closing draws the meeting to an end. It's usually serious and quiet. Den leaders could present a thought for the day or give reminders about coming events.
After the Meeting. The leaders review the events of the meeting, finalize plans for the next den meeting, and review their progress toward the upcoming pack meeting.

Tiger Cub Program

Tiger Cubs generally have four meetings each month: they attend the Cub Scout pack meeting, participate in a "Go See It" outing, and take part in at least two den meetings. Using the concept of Shared Leadership, the Den Leader works with a different boy-adult parent team each month.

The program section of the Tiger Cub den meeting is usually divided into three parts, corresponding to the Tiger Cub motto:

> **Share**. The Share part of the den meeting gives each boy a chance to share something that he's done since the last meeting. This activity gives boys time to share family experiences.
> **Search**. During the Search time of the meeting, the leaders will talk about plans for the Go See It outing. This activity could fulfill one of the achievement requirements or one of the elective requirements, or it could relate to the monthly theme.
> **Discover**. During Discover time, the den leader may introduce the monthly theme and talk about what the den will be doing for the pack meeting. Then the boys will play games, work on craft projects and puzzles, take part in outdoor activities, or work on advancement requirements.

Wolf and Bear Cub Scout Program

Wolf and Bear Cub Scouts devote part of their weekly meeting to "business items" such as monitoring the boys' progress toward rank advancement and other awards and choosing, planning, and preparing their activity for the upcoming pack meeting.

Every den meeting should include at least one game, to be conducted by the den chief; craft projects that are started at the meeting and completed at home with the boys' families; and other group activities such as songs, stunts, and puzzles related to the monthly theme.

Often, den meeting activities enable the Cub Scouts to complete some requirements toward an award or rank. The den leader can initial the requirement in the boys' handbooks, but it must also be signed by a parent or guardian to indicate the requirement has been completed.

Webelos Scout Program

The program activities in a Webelos den meeting often focus on "Activity Badge Fun." It's a time for instruction, practice, games, and contests related to the activity badge of the month. It's a chance for the boys to learn by doing.

The *Webelos Leader Guide* provides den meeting outlines for each activity badge. Many Webelos den leaders use these outlines as guides and incorporate ideas or plans they develop themselves. A well-planned den meeting program will ensure that most of the boys will qualify for the activity badge by the end of the month.

Webelos Scouts also prepare for the den's part in the next pack meeting. They may work on projects that they will exhibit, or practice ceremonies, skits, songs, and other activities that they will conduct.

Finally, the den meeting is a good time to plan and prepare for other activities, such as service projects and outdoor events that are also key parts of the Webelos Scouts' experience.

Den Meeting Activities

The range of activities that may fit into a den meeting is as wide as imagination itself. Many suggestions for activities can be found in the Cub Scout program literature, children's' books and magazines, and many other sources.

Any activity you can imagine can be incorporated into a den meeting, so long as it is age-appropriate, safe, and—most of all—fun. Ideally, the activities included in a den meeting reinforce the values taught by Cub Scouting or match the monthly theme. But sometimes, "just for fun" is all the reason you need.

Here are some activities commonly included in Cub Scout den meetings.

- **Crafts**

Crafts are an important part of Cub Scouting because they help a boy learn new skills, follow directions, work with his hands, appreciate and value materials, and use and care for tools. Boys usually start their craft projects during the den meeting and complete them at home with help from their families.

Crafts and projects in Cub Scouting may relate to the monthly theme, relate to adventures or are done just for fun. The monthly theme is designed to suggest opportunities for handicrafts and other activities. For a well-rounded program, part of a meeting might be devoted to crafts. The rest of the time can be devoted to games, fitness activities, a trip, or a service project.

Most dens operate on limited funds, so craft projects should be simple and inexpensive. Scrap materials can be put to good use and are readily available at little or no cost. Some den leaders ask boys to bring scrap materials or equipment from home. All den families can help fill a den craft-supply box. When tools are needed for crafts and projects, call on a parent, neighbors, or other adults to help.

For help with craft project ideas, see the *Cub Scout Leader How-To Book.*

- **Games**

Mention the word "game" to most boys, and their eyes light up. Whether they are physical outdoor events or simple mental challenges, games are an important part of Cub Scouting because they help a boy

Learn good sportsmanship, self-confidence, and patience
Develop consideration for others
Learn to follow rules, to wait their turn, and to respect the rights of others
Learn give-and-take and fair play
Improve his physical and mental health

Many games combine fun and fitness. They provide a chance for every Cub Scout to learn the basic skills of a sport, game, or competition while learning good sportsmanship and habits of personal fitness. And all of this takes place in an environment where participation and doing one's best are more important than winning.

- **Skits**

Tiger Cub, Cub Scout, and Webelos dens may be asked to present skits or demonstrations at the pack meeting. These can be pantomimes, sketches, or short plays. The main purpose of skits is for the boys—and the audience—to have fun. But as boys practice performing in these informal skits, their confidence and leadership skills begin to develop as well.

Skits usually are based on the monthly theme. A Webelos den skit or demonstration might be based on the monthly activity badge area. Boys will have the chance to plan, rehearse, and make props and costumes during den meetings. The final presentation can be made at the pack meeting.

Some Cub Scouts may want to just watch rather than take part in the skit. Ask them to handle the lights or offstage sound effects, or watch the time. Sometimes, playing a character who wears a mask or uses puppets helps lessen a boy's self-consciousness.

- **Songs**

Group singing at a den or pack meeting adds to fellowship and a feeling of togetherness. Most boys enjoy singing. For a leader, music can help lift spirits and create a happy atmosphere for teaching the more serious parts of the program. You can use songs to help set whatever mood you want—serious, patriotic, inspirational, or theme-related. Boys especially like action songs that give them a chance to move around. They also enjoy seeing their families taking part in action songs at pack meetings.

Some packs have enough copies of the *Cub Scout Songbook* (No. 33222) to use at den meetings. When people know the song or have the words, they are more inclined to join the fun. Also, the singing at pack meetings is greatly improved if the dens know in advance which songs will be sung and can practice them in den meetings.

- **Storytelling**

Storytelling is a good way for a den leader to introduce the theme for the next month. Depending on the theme, the leader might tell a true story from nature or an incident from the life of a famous person, a myth, or an American Indian legend. The Cub Scout Promise, the Law of the Pack, and the Cub Scout motto all can be explained and illustrated by stories.

A story can set the scene for a special outing or trip. It can meet a special need, such as a behavior problem. It can help you get a point across without singling out a particular boy or incident.

One of the best reasons for telling stories is because they are fun and boys enjoy them. Stories are sometimes just the right thing to change the pace of a meeting from noisy to quiet, or to put a finishing touch on a pack campfire.

- **Stunts, Tricks, and Puzzles**

Stunts, tricks, and puzzles brighten meetings and put the group in a happier, livelier, more receptive mood. Use them as icebreakers to get the meeting off to a good start or as an element of surprise or excitement when people get restless. There are several different types of stunts:

Those that the boys perform for an audience
Audience participation, in which everyone joins in by making sound effects or some other type of response to a leader
Applause stunts, which are especially useful for recognition

These activities should be fun for the boys as well as the audience. Because stunts are simpler than skits, they usually don't require as much preparation and rehearsal. All stunts, however, should be positive in nature and encourage a boy's self-esteem.

- **Ceremonies**

Use simple ceremonies to open and close den meetings and to mark important events in the lives of the boys and the den. 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 boys 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.
An **Adventure ceremony** can acknowledge a boy's progress toward his rank advancement.
A **denner installation** ceremony recognizes a boy 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.

Ideas for ceremonies can be found in *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs.*

Planning Den Meetings

A Cub Scout den leader is not expected to find and develop all of the ideas and materials needed to run lively den meetings. The Cubmaster and pack committee members work with den leaders to develop den meeting programs. Much of the planning for the den and pack is done at the annual pack program planning conference, the pack leaders' planning meeting, and the den chief planning meeting.

Den Leader Guides, one for each rank, provide four monthly den meeting outlines based on an Adventure. Most leaders use these outlines as guides for planning their own den meetings, but they are also free to incorporate their own ideas in the den meeting plan.

Remember that sometimes a den trip or other special activity might take the place of a regular den meeting. If the den meeting program is well-planned, interesting, and fun, the boys will be more likely to attend.

Training For Cub Scout Leaders

A Cub Scout den leader is expected to complete training for his/her position as soon as possible. Upon registration as a leader, Youth Protection Training must be completed on-line at www.my.scouting.org

Before holding the first Den Meeting, leaders should complete Fast Start Training and Cub Scout Leader Position Specific Training, also on-line. These trainings will give you an overall perspective and get you started as a Cub Scout Leader.

It is important that each leader also attend an in-person training which is offered through the District or Council. At this group training, leaders will be presented with the core elements of Scouting, an understanding of Scouting's expectations, and specific responsibilities along with personal support. In addition, Scouting offers supplemental training such as Roundtable, Basic Outdoor Leader Orientation (BALOO), Outdoor Leader Skills for Webelos Leaders, Cubcasts, Unit Leadership Enhancements, and University of Scouting.

Elements of a Good Meeting

Have you ever had the horrible experience of discovering the refrigerator empty after inviting a house full of guests for the evening? Or have you ever been out where the big ones are jumping and found you've forgotten your bait? Frustrating, wasn't it? If you should ever find yourself in this predicament, facing wild Indians up a creek without a paddle, you'd make sure beforehand that everyone had a paddle, so that they could be busy and helpful. That's just common sense and foresight.

If that's true, then you'll agree that planning is quite important in the Cub Scout program. Planning is simply foresight and you have quite a few "wild Indians" to keep constructively busy over quite a period of time, don't just have the same thing over and over again. Variety is the spice of any program, and Cub Scouting's answer to this is the use of the theme or Webelos activity badge area in the program planning. The monthly theme is an idea around which the program for any month of activity is planned. It was developed to ensure a Cub Scout program that has variety, action and purpose.

HOW TO PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE

- Insist on attention while speaking - use the Cub Scout sign.
- Do not create impossible goals for your Cub Scouts.
- Give boys responsibility and expect them to meet it.
- Always plan your den meeting in advance.
- Keep den meeting going at a fast pace.
- Be fair and consistent with discipline.
- Teach boys self-respect for other.
- Praise in public; criticize in private.
- Never discipline when angry.
- Be firm in a friendly manner.
- Always mean what you say.
- Get everyone in uniform.
- Get to know each boy.

Successful program planning involves good leadership and exciting program activities. Throughout the program planning process leaders should remember that their prime objective is to provide a high quality program to each boy. It must achieve the purposes of Cub Scouting while being fun and exciting for the boys.

Program planning provides direction for the program, a sense of satisfaction for those participating, and a feeling of accomplishment in seeing boys grow in knowledge, skills and expanded interests. Planning also helps make the best use of time and resources available.

A "GOOD MEETING"

A good meeting doesn't just happen; it requires careful planning and execution of that plan. A "good meeting" achieves the purposes of Cub Scouting.

FOUR STEPS IN PLANNING

Cub Scouting has a proven plan and procedure that brings success. The three steps in this planning process are:

- Annual Planning Conference - A long range look at all program possibilities for the year. Held in July or August.
- Monthly Pack Leaders' Meeting (Pack Committee) - to outline general plans and assign responsibilities.
- Den Leader Coach/Den Leaders' Meeting - to help plan the den meetings.

BASIC CONCEPTS

Cub Scouting is a year round program.
Cub Scouting must meet the needs and desires of any boy, any place.
The Cub Scout program is built around completing Adventures.
Webelos dens earn Adventure pins in their monthly program.
The Cub Scout program should have VARIETY, ACTION, and PURPOSE.
The program must be FUN for all.

SEVEN PARTS OF A MEETING

1. BEFORE THE MEETING STARTS - Take care of any last-minute details, make sure that everything is ready before the boys arrive.

2. WHILE THE CUB SCOUTS GATHER - As soon as the boys begin arriving, give them something to do. If you don't, they will find something on their own.

3. OPENING - The signal the meeting is starting.

4. TALK TIME - Keep this short. Cover important information about upcoming dates.

5. ACTIVITIES - At den meetings this is the time for games, crafts, the FUN stuff.

6. CLOSING - Serious and quiet. The meeting is over.

7. AFTER THE MEETING - The den leaders and den chief evaluate the meeting and go over plans for the next one.

New Den Leaders

This is for all you brave Moms and Dads who said they would be a Den Leader (Whatever that is!).

As all of your friends and neighbors laugh, snicker and call you crazy, you might begin to wonder, just what am I in for? And, you may ask yourself, what did I let them talk me into???

PANIC TIME! STAGE #1 Reality begins to set in. You have no idea what to do or when, or how.

NO PROBLEM! They probably told you about the **Training,** a must so you can learn about what to do. Training is available on line at www.my.scouting.org Another resource is your District's **Roundtable**. Isn't that supposed to be additional training? You go to them and you're all set, right?

PANIC TIME! STAGE #2 You realize, that you have to hold a few meetings before you can get to the training.

NO PROBLEM! If you are not quite convinced yet, or even if you are, read on. The very first thing to do, is to relax. Maybe sit down with a good cup of de-Caf coffee. Then finish reading this letter. Then, call your Cubmaster, (or Den Leader Coach if your Pack has one). Believe it or not, it is the job of these people to help **You!** Surprise!

STEP #1 Call the Cubmaster. Find out how the pack meetings are run and what, if anything, will be expected of you and your den during the year. While you're on the phone, ask what kind of information, guides, booklets, etc., you can borrow. Ask if your Pack has an information booklet for new parents and leaders. In this booklet you will find a list of who's who in the Pack and in the District. As you read it, you might be amazed at the number of adults like you out there. And they are all beginners once, just like you may be and most can still remember what it was like to be a kid.

The most important book for you to have right now is for your Den - Wolf, Bear, or Webelos - book. As soon as you get it, start reading it. That way, you will see what your boys will have to do, and how easy it can be if you take it one step at a time. Your next resource is the Den Leader Guide for your Den's rank. Everything you need to know about leading your Den is in there – meeting by meeting.

STEP # 2 (Now that we have got a good lock on your attention) Re-read your Den's book. Look at each of the Adventures. Take a little time and just kind of outline what the requirements are for your badge.

STEP # 3 is to call your Cubmaster again. (Honest, he won't mind at all! Actually you'll make him/her happy!) Ask for suggestions in getting your den meetings off to a good start. This would also be a good time to talk about where you want to hold your den meetings. You should also find out when the Pack committee meetings are.

A note to our NEW FEARLESS LEADERS: Please keep in mind that this is not a schedule for your first day. We know that at first glance, this can seem rather overwhelming. Relax. Have another cup of coffee (de-Caf, nothing to get nervous about right?). If you break it down, and take it one step at a time, you'll see it's really pretty easy. But, should you get stuck, go blank for a meeting or project, there is lots of help around. Don't be afraid to ask. You are the first person to know when you need help. Don't keep it a secret. We want to help. You see? It's just like I've been telling you...--... NO PROBLEM!!

Step #4. Back to work. Plan two den meetings. They are outlined in your Den Leader Guide. Do something simple. You and the boys will be nervous. Relax, then they can too. It could be two, three or more weeks before you see anything completed in their books. That's normal. If you "OK" anything in their books in the first three weeks, you're totally amazing!!!

Step #5. Plan four meetings. Each one gets easier. Some leaders have been known to plan the whole year out in advance. If you want to do this, that's great. If not, I don't blame you! As you are planning, remember the holidays. Christmas cards or tree ornaments may be needed. You may want to make presents for the parents - many of these can be planned to meet certain requirements. If so, that's even better. Most things you'll want done at home, some at the meeting. Remember - it's your Den, your boys... and have some fun!!

DEN MEETING (Sample)

Needed: 2 Adults
1 Den Cub Scouts
A meeting place - This can be held at someone's home or in a room at school. An American flag.
Refreshments: i.e., Fruit drinks & healthy snacks.
Opening ceremony: i.e., The Pledge of Allegiance.
Game: Simple, easy game or activity for inside or out.
Closing ceremony: Suggestion: Recite the Boy Scout Law and shake hands till next t i m e .

Prerequisite: Read the book of your rank
Plan what you are going to do prior to the meeting

1). There are many different activities and crafts that can easily be done in the Den Meeting that will count in the boys' books. You can find books with lots of helpful ideas either in the Pack library or with the Den Leader Coach.

2). Have refreshments and game or a fun activity. This is to build friendship among a group of boys. It also releases some of the excess energy these boys seem to have. They will learn to contain this energy until this point of your meeting.

3). Record what has been done at home and signed by a parent. If this is your first meeting, nothing may have been done. You may want to take a few minutes to talk about some of the real simple things the boys can do at home.

4). Closing, as desired, then send the boys home with parents or guardians. You could also get suggestion from the Cubs for the next meeting, or several meetings. They may have some good ideas for a games or activity. The boys may look forward to and work harder on something that they have planned.
Any notes or letters to parents should be handed out at this time. Any sooner and they will be lost or forgotten.

5). Turn in records / information to Cubmaster or advancement chair

CHECK LIST

You've come a long way in a short time. Congratulations! Not so bad, huh? It can be pretty easy actually. See, now what have I been telling you all along? NO PROBLEM! But, just to be sure you believe me, here is a little “check list” in case you should hit a snag along the path. It should solve the p r o b l e m .

1) **Relax** - Everyone was a beginner at one time or another.
2) Read at least the front of your book often - it helps a lot.
3) Talk to the other Den Leaders - you can discuss many of the same problems- and each other’s solutions.
4) Questions or problems? Talk to your: Cubmaster, and/or Den Leader Coach. If they don't have your answer, they will know how to get it. You should also plan to attend your monthly Roundtable to see how other leaders are coping and get the latest information about District events.
5) Don't be afraid to experiment. It is your Den.
6) Ask your assistant(s)/parents for input and help in planning and running the Den Meeting.
7) Relax. Re-learn how to have fun. Let the “kid” in you come out to play now and then. You deserve it! Your kids will relax and have more fun too.
8) Problems? Questions? Like to see something changed? Or improved? Want to complain? Have solutions to someone else’s problem? Go to your committee meetings to learn, share and teach. Adults still can and should, learn something new every day. The committee needs and wants to hear from you.
9) You know, our kids are only kids once, (unless they become Scout Leaders like us one day) why not help them make the most of it? After all, if we don't give them our time now, will they really want our time and help 5 years from now?

It is hard to devote countless hours to any one thing in this day and age. We all know that. We only ask you to share what time you can spare for our kids.

All those who took this path before us, and all who may follow after us thank you for taking the time to care enough to give the very best - Yourself