



This is session 3 of the MCBSA Comprehensive One-Evening Cub Scout Leader Position-Specific Training course.

The Den Leader Position-Specific Training course provides all Cub Scout den leaders with the basic information they need to conduct successful den meetings.



The Den Leader's Role

- Gives leadership to den program planning
- Works with adult partners (Lion or Tiger Cubs) or an assistant and den chief
- Helps the Cubs advance
- Maintains den records
- Works with other pack leaders
- Participates in pack program planning
- Attends monthly roundtables
- Approves advancement (Webelos)

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Explain that den leaders plan meetings around Cub Scout adventures, and help the Cubs in their dens have a great time as they complete the requirements. Tell them that it takes a special commitment to be a den leader, and thank them for volunteering.

You play an important role, but one that is simple and fun thanks to the support provided by the BSA. This training will help you prepare fun and meaningful den meetings.



Den Management

- Set Expectations
- Model Behavior
- Scout Sign
- Code of Conduct
- Talking Feather
- Denners and Den Chiefs

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By setting expectations, modeling behavior, and setting up incentives, you will be able to manage positive behavior rather than deal with negative behavior.

To get attention, simply raise the Scout Sign. Never yell “Sign’s up” though.

Preventing behavioral problems is the first step but being prepared with a plan of action when behavioral problems arise will keep situations from escalating and disrupting the flow of the meeting. Your first den meeting should include development of a den code of conduct. Children are more likely to behave when they have some ownership of the rules and consequences of their actions.

The talking feather (or simply a stick or other object) gives the person holding it the opportunity to speak without others talking or interrupting. This is an excellent tool to use during Talk Time. Naturally the den leader or another adult controls who has the talking stick and for how long it is held by any Cub Scout.

Cub Scouts have the opportunity to begin developing their leadership skills, starting with Wolves in second grade and continuing through Webelos in the fifth grade. At this age, they do so by serving as a denner or assistant denner for their Cub Scout den. The denner is a special person and helper at the den meeting. For example, the denner might help pass out snacks at den meetings, and lead the rest of the den in picking up trash and putting the meeting room back in order after the meeting, or might have the privilege of carrying the U.S. flag during the opening ceremony at the den meeting. The denner wears special denner cords on the left shoulder of the uniform.

Den chiefs help the den in a different way by providing leadership and service. Den chiefs are older youth from a Scouts BSA troop, a Venturing crew, or a Sea Scout ship who are approved by their adult leader to assist a Cub Scout den. They will have a *Den Chief Handbook* that contains information they learned during Den Chief Training. This handbook is a useful resource and provides examples of songs, games, and activities. A den chief can serve as a role model to inspire Cub Scouts, and help ease their transition to a Scouts BSA troop.

Reference: Resources *in the on-line handouts.*



Den Meetings

Overview - Similar to Pack Meeting Structure

- Before the Meeting
- Gathering
- Opening
- Talk Time
- Activities
- Closing
- After the Meeting

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Do not dwell on this chart. Separate charts follow for each of the meeting elements.

Easy-to-follow den meeting plans that are exciting and help Cubs complete adventure requirements for their rank are contained in the den leader guides. There is a den leader guide for each of the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks, and a combined guide for the Webelos and Arrow of Light ranks.

Preparation and planning help Cub Scout leaders make Cub Scouting more fun for both Cubs and leaders, help reduce leader stress, and provide the long-term benefits for our Scouts. Fortunately, the BSA provides the materials to make planning simple—leaders just need to use them!



Before the Meeting

- Room arrangements
- Materials and equipment
- Meeting agenda review
- Put on a smile
- Get ready to have FUN!

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Point out that meeting plans are available in the den leader guides. Tell participants that meeting plans can be found in the printed guide or can be downloaded from www.scouting.org/CubScouts.



Gathering Time Activity

- Have a gathering game that Cubs can do as soon as they arrive
- Involve parents, Denner, and Den Chief
- Get the meeting off to a fun start

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There are suggested gathering activity ideas for each of the den meeting plans. More may be found in *Group Meeting Sparklers*.

Explain that it is important to give active, excited Cub Scouts something to do as soon as they arrive at the meeting place. This is a good time to have some fun and still accomplish several business details. This is also a part of the meeting where parent helpers, a Denner (a different Cub Scout selected each month to be a peer leader), and a Den Chief (an older Scout recruited from a Scouts BSA troop or Venturing crew to help the den leaders) should be used.

Explain that in the Tiger den, parents are actively involved in the meetings and this is a very important part of Tigers. While parents should be encouraged to be active in Wolf and Bear dens as well, they might not be so involved during the Webelos years. The Cubs are moving toward the Scouts BSA program where troops are youth-led. Parents who are not serving as den leaders or assistants are encouraged to assist the den leader with projects and adventures.



Opening

- Opening ceremony/prayer
 - Flag ceremony
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Scout Oath and Law
- Uniform inspection (optional)

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Sample opening ceremonies are included in the den meeting plans.

Remind participants that a formal opening is important because it lets the Cubs know the meeting has started. A good opening may provide the Cubs a chance to help meet the citizenship and spiritual growth parts of Scouting's purpose or to set the stage for the meeting.

As is the case with pack meetings, because Scouting recognizes the importance of reverence, it is appropriate for meetings to begin with a prayer. This is a decision that should be made in conjunction with both the Cubs' parents and the chartered organization.

This opening period may also be a good time for a uniform inspection. Proper uniforms are not mandatory, but they are important for Cubs because:

- Cubs in uniform are generally better-behaved.
- The uniform is the best place to display the patches and awards they have earned.
- The uniform provides identification with the organization and with other Cub Scouts.
- The uniform is an equalizer among the members of the den.

Point out that it is also important for den leaders to set a good example for their Cub Scouts by wearing a proper uniform.



Talk Time

- Pack meeting preparation
- Denner selection
- Creating a den yell or cheer
- Check advancement progress
- Create a den code of conduct

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Explain that right after the opening is the time to conduct any den business not accomplished during gathering time. Usually, during the first meeting of the month, Talk Time would include pack and den meeting ideas, plans for the den's part in an upcoming pack meeting, and plans for special den activities. Later, it could be a time for selecting a Denner, creating a den yell or cheer, or playing a game. This may also be an appropriate time to check advancement and record progress, if not already done.

Explain that each month the Cub Scouting program emphasizes a theme or one of the points of the Scout Law around which leaders can plan den and pack meetings. These monthly themes are useful because they simplify planning, give dens a focus for work, and bring all dens together at the pack meeting with activities related to the same theme—not to mention that they teach important values.

Explain that establishing rules for good behavior right from the start is important. These rules may need to be reinforced in the event of a change in leadership or meeting location. Let the Cubs help establish the den code of conduct at the first meeting so they are a part of the process rather than feeling the rules are just the den leader's rules.

Refer to the handout "Characteristics of Cub Scouts" and state that it is important for den leaders to understand "normal" behavior so that expectations for the Cubs are reasonable. Further, we should remember each Cub is a unique individual and Cubs of the same age develop at different rates.

Discuss the conduct candle (or another favorite method) for influencing Cub behavior. Discuss the Den Code of Conduct poster and tell participants that as long as the Cubs are well behaved and follow the code, the candle will stay lit. Suggest that when the candle burns down the den could have a special den ice cream party (or other similar reward).

Conclude by saying the conduct of adult den leaders, the Den Chief, and parent helpers is also an important consideration. The Cub Scouts will look up to the adult leaders and the Den Chief and will model their behavior on what the leaders demonstrate.




Activities

- Play a game
- Prepare for upcoming pack meeting presentation
- Advancement-related activity
- Prepare for outdoor activity

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Tell participants that Cubs in Cub Scouting want to have fun and to do fun things with their friends. Den meetings should be one of the times when Cubs have the most fun.

Remind den leaders that during the Talk Time portion of the meeting they might have planned or discussed what the den is going to do at the pack meeting. Now is the time when the den might practice its part. Remember, try to get everyone involved (even, or especially, parents and other family members) at the pack meeting.

Recall that Cub Scout-age youth are full of energy and like to expend it in large quantities. Tell participants that games and activities related to advancement can be a great way to expend youthful energy and to accomplish learning goals like teamwork, sportsmanship, personal fitness, earning awards, and doing your best. Often, projects started at den meetings can be taken home for the Cubs to finish with their families.

Share with the participants that outdoor adventure is one of the promises made to Cubs when they join Scouting. Some of the reasons why outdoor programs are important are:

- Cubs yearn for outdoor programs that stir their imagination and interest.
- In the outdoors, Cubs have opportunities to acquire skills that make them more self-reliant.
- Cubs can explore trails and complete challenges they first thought were beyond their ability.
- Cubs meet unexpected challenges that contribute to forming good character as a result of outdoor experiences.
- Cubs can learn good communication skills, leadership, and teamwork as they strive toward achieving goals they set for themselves.
- Cubs learn by doing—a hallmark of outdoor education.
- Research shows that a connection to the outdoors is a vital part of human development.

Refer to www.scouting.org/outdoorprogram which explains “Scouting’s Camping Program—Ever-Increasing Challenge Out-of-Doors,” and shows the different outdoor programs in Scouting. Explain that as Scouts grow older, they can be involved in more advanced outdoor experiences.

Tell participants about the basic training offered for Cub Scout leaders — BALOO (Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation) and OWLS (Outdoor Webelos Leader Skills).



Closing

- Awards and recognition
- Reminders (upcoming events and home assignments)
- Den leader's Minute
- Brief closing ceremony
- Cleanup

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Tell the participants that just as openings are important to start a meeting, closings are important to conclude meetings and are a good time to communicate inspirational messages to the Scouts.

Explain that a good den meeting closing can provide time for a Cub Scout to reflect, be recognized for achievement, and maybe even learn a new skill like folding an American flag. Den meeting closings can be solemn, patriotic, inspirational, or fun.

The den leader might also want to add a Den Leader's Minute comment.

Share that it is a good idea to invite the Cub Scouts' parents who are arriving to pick up their sons to join the den—along with the parents who helped with the meeting—for the closing.

Explain that the relative quiet of the closing portion of the meeting is a good time to remind Cub Scouts of upcoming pack and den activities. Keep in mind we are dealing with young boys and girls, so reminders should also be in written form for their parents.

Effective and frequent communication with parents is a very important, if not critical, ingredient in the success of your den and your Cub Scouts. Knowing about issues, meetings, and activities well in advance will be appreciated and will make them more successful.



After the Meeting

- Review this meeting
- Plan the next meeting
- Clean up
- Relax

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Share with participants that immediately following the den meeting is the time to sit down with the Den Chief and assistant leaders to evaluate the meeting, talk about and plan for the next meeting, and update records while things are still fresh in their minds.

Planning is vital to the success of the den. Well-planned den meetings attract and keep Cub Scouts coming each week. Planning also helps make the den leader's role much easier, and Cub Scouting resources make planning easier.

Explain to participants that right after the meeting is when the leaders confirm the plans that were made during the monthly plan for the next meeting.




Webelos-to-Scout Transition

- Start early
- Visit troop meetings
- Organize joint den/troop campouts
- Visit troop activities
- Discuss options with adults and Cubs
- Explain that not all Cubs will go to the same troop
- Encourage completing the Arrow of Light
- Encourage movement of Webelos Scouts and parents to Scouts BSA troops

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Tell the participants that one of the most important things of which a Webelos den leader should be aware is the Webelos-to-Scout transition. From the time a Scout begins in Cub Scouting, he should be looking forward to Scouts BSA.

Few families register their sons or daughters as Lions or Tigers with the intent of having them remain in Scouting until they age out as Venturers at 21. However, Scouting offers a continuous program that provides fun, interesting, educational, and character-building experiences, so it is important for them to know that they can! If the expectation that the Cubs will remain in Scouting is communicated at every opportunity, and if the Webelos Scouts are told of the great experiences they will have in Scouts BSA, you will have a much greater chance of retaining more Cubs and having a longer time to influence them with all that Scouting has to offer them.

A key factor to improving Webelos Scouts' transition from Cub Scouts to Scouts BSA is the ongoing working relationship of the leaders of a pack and a troop. Often, troops have an immediate avenue from which to obtain new Scouts because their chartered organization has both a pack and a troop. This is not always the case, and if a pack is the only Scouting unit in the chartered organization, members should cultivate a relationship with a nearby troop.

Ideally, all packs will have troops with which they are aligned so that the passage from Cub Scout pack to Scouts BSA troop is seamless. By the time Webelos Scouts are ready to cross over, they and their families should be familiar with and comfortable with the youth and adult leaders of the troop and with their roles in the troop and troop activities. And they should be excited about beginning this new adventure. It is important to note that Cubs can join any troop they want to join. Most troops hold open house meetings for the purpose of having Cubs and their families visit to see which troop best fits their needs and wants. However, it is often easiest and most comfortable for Cubs to join troops with which they are familiar and with which their packs already have a relationship.

A Webelos Scout who has earned the Arrow of Light Award and is at least 10½ years of age or has completed the fifth grade can join a Scouts BSA troop. The Webelos Scout's graduation ceremony should clearly signify his transition to a new level of Scouting and can include the presentation of his Arrow of Light Award, a *Scouts BSA Handbook*, and a troop neckerchief.




Den Leader Training Award

- **Tenure**
 - One year
- **Training**
 - basic training, University of Scouting (or equivalent), Roundtables
- **Performance**
 - Complete 5 of the specified performance metrics



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Tenure

Complete one year as a registered den leader in the position selected. Tiger den leader's tenure can be the program year as long as it is greater than eight months.

Training

- Complete basic training for the den leader position.
- Attend a pow wow or university of Scouting (or equivalent), or attend at least four roundtables (or equivalent) during the tenure used for this award.

Performance

Do five of the requirements listed on the application for this award.

Reference: Cub Scout Leader Awards *link in the on-line handouts.*



Review and Questions

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Say (in your own words):

Do you have any questions? If not, proceed with the next session.