

From Cub Scout to Boy Scout

Making the Transition

By: Sharon King, Pack 3663 - Troop 633

This is some information I found helpful when my son "bridged" from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts.

While the same philosophies and principles apply, the burden of responsibility changes. In Cub Scouts, **parents** plan and execute activities and the scouts participate. In Boy Scouts, **boys** plan and execute activities with the guidance of the adult leaders. If the program is not everything the parents hoped it would be, they must step back and listen to the boys. It is the boys who are responsible to plan the program. BSA intends parents to take a **supportive** role, not the director's seat.

How do we as parents support, when we've been directing? Your in-house experts are your Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters. In addition, BSA has many resources that address this question. Books and manuals explain the techniques and skills, but for me it was the training sessions that clarified the philosophy of boys teaching boys. Boy Scouts is the time for the adults to step back and give the boys the opportunity to lead. The Boy Scout Basic Leader Training course makes this very clear when we participated in mock weekly meetings and in an overnight camping trip. It was informative and fun. I recommend it.

Meetings

Troops usually hold weekly meetings. Boys run the meeting which focus on learning skills ("advancement") and planning activities (outdoor and service projects). The boys learn leadership as it is modeled by the older boys leading the meetings and through skill acquisition (boys teaching boys). The boy leaders are guided by the senior patrol leader (a boy) and the Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters (adults). Patrols meet as they choose. Most meet 2-4 times a month in **addition** to the Troop meeting.

Recognition and service are important features in scouting. "Courts of Honor" - meetings where the achievements of individual boys are recognized and honored - are held about every 3 months throughout the year.

Organization

	Cub Scouts	Boy Scouts
Overall Group	Pack	Troop
Smaller Unit	Den	Patrol
Adult leader of overall group	Cubmaster	Scoutmaster
Boy leader of overall group		Senior Patrol Leader
Smaller unit leader	Den Leader (adult)	Patrol Leader (boy) Troop Guide (boy)

Notice how the den leader for the Cub Scouts is an adult, while the equivalent Boy Scout position, Patrol Leader is a boy? Troops may be divided into patrols by age, rank, or particular interest; while dens are based upon age only.

Another change is that the Troop meets weekly and breaks into patrols for planning, while cub scout packs meet monthly and dens meet weekly, without the rest of the pack. In Cub Scouts, parents arrange everything: transportation, food, etc. In Boy Scouts, the boys make these kinds of arrangements in their patrol meetings. Many patrols will have a Troop Guide, an older Boy Scout, who will help and teach them how to plan for activities. Also boy leaders meet monthly with the Scoutmaster at the Patrol Leaders Council meetings. Your boy will be well supervised, but he will also be allowed to make mistakes and learn from them.

Remember that the Troop exists for the boys. We are here to support our boys so they will grow. We support them by letting them make decisions and take responsibilities. We support them when we help them learn from their failures and encourage them to repeat their successes. We support them by helping the adults who are helping our sons. (Check with your Troop to see how you can help).

"Nobody told me!"

One of the most difficult transitions from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts is that your son becomes the primary source of information. Before you were given information by the Den Leader, but now your son assumes that responsibility. This is a new learning experience and often more frustrating for the parent than for the Scout. You will have to be patient and persistent. Since your son is now responsible

for getting the information to you, tell him to "call the Patrol Leader and find out where the patrol meeting is this week," etc. The point is to teach your son what information you need, as well as what he needs to know.

Information on Scout Advancement

Advancement refers to the progression of a scout through the "ranks" by learning skills and participating in the scout program as outlined in the Boy Scout Handbook.

Boys progress to..

Scout Tenderfoot Scout 2nd Class Scout 1st Class Scout	The requirements for these ranks build up knowledge of first aid, camping, safety and scouting ideals.
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Star Scout (6) Life Scout (11) Eagle Scout (21)	In these ranks, merit badges become the major component. Merit badges show proficiency in a particular field of study. Each rank requires a specific number of merit badges (see # in parenthesis for each rank). Each of these ranks allows a number of elective merit badges as well as some from a list that is referred to as "Eagle Required"
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Service projects are required for each rank. Scouts may complete the requirements for these ranks at any time, but the ranks must be awarded in order. Merit badges may be earned at any time.

Any boy can become an Eagle Scout. The choice is the boy's. It requires perseverance, dedication and a lot of your support. Meetings and campouts often teach skills required for advancement through the ranks. However it is up to the boy to take responsibility for his own advancement. BSA provides the opportunity, but the boy must take the action. BSA recommends that all new boys set a goal of becoming first class scouts by the end of their first year.

Parents aid the advancement process by serving as merit badge counselors, or as Assistant Scoutmasters, or as Troop Committee members... ASK your Scoutmaster or Troop Committee Chairperson about how you can get involved.

To advance from one rank to another, each requirement listed in your son's Boy Scout Handbook must be signed off. When all are signed off, the boy has a Scoutmaster's Conference, then goes to a "Board of Review" - a team of 3-6 adults (formed from the Troop Committee), who assess that the requirements for that rank have been learned and completed. They listen to the scout and encourage further advancement. They do not retest the scout. They encourage him.

Merit Badge Counselors

Merit badges are different from rank requirements. The boy seeks out a counselor from a list supplied by the Scoutmaster. The counselor guides the boy through the requirements as outlined in the merit badge booklet. Merit badge booklets contain all the information needed to earn the badge. Many Boy Scout merit badge books are available at public libraries (ask the librarian). Look under Boys Scouts of America as the author. In addition, many troops frequently have libraries of merit badge books themselves. I found a summary book for all merit badges which lists the requirements (without the supporting information). It has a yellow cover, and is quite useful

Anyone with knowledge in a field may be a counselor by filling out the proper forms. There are more than 100 merit badges. These fields can be work related, a hobby, or just field in which you may have some general interest or knowledge.

Assistant Scoutmasters

Assistant Scoutmasters work more closely with the boys than the committee members. The Assistant Scoutmasters are the adults who "sign-off" the requirements for Tenderfoot, 2nd class and 1st Class. They may additionally be merit badge counselors. The Boy Scout Leader Basic Training course that was mentioned earlier is now required for all Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters in order for a Troop to earn the "Quality Unit" award.

Troop Committee (or Parent Committee)

This is the backbone of the Troop. Although the boys are running the Troop, it is the parents who guide them and do the "behind the scenes" support work. Many Troop Committee members also act as Merit Badge Counselors. The Troop Committee members provide the liaison between the sponsoring organization and the Troop, they review the scouts' progress, maintain bank accounts, establish policies for the Troop, establish and perform in fund raising projects, etc... Participating as a member of the Troop Committee benefits not only your son, but **all** the boys in the Troop.

Your Active Participation = Your Son's Success In Scouting