

# October Roundtable

District 8 Cub Scout Roundtable  
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Point of Scout Law: Loyal  
Theme: Family Involvement

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First let's review Scouting's definition of family.

Family is different for many Scouts. It could be mom and dad, mom or dad, stepparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. Whoever a Scout's family is, that is who should be involved with him in Scouting.

Families help provide leadership and support to ensure that their Cub Scout has a good experience in the program. Successful family involvement relies on a meaningful connection between the youth, his family, and his Cub Scouting leaders. This connection nurtures and supports the Scout, allowing him to explore and experience all the Cub Scouting program has to offer to him. It is a connection that understands the diversity among the families in a pack and den, the differences in cultures and socioeconomic situations. It is a connection that works together to acknowledge that each boy's family can make an impactful contribution to his Cub Scouting activities and advancement.

Brainstorm-How to get parents involved and keep them involved.  
The following are key points:

- Specify exactly what you would like for them to do.
- Creating a list of needs for your annual program year will help families sign up for a specific responsibility.
- Make sure each family member is asked personally to help. If they sign up on the list you have created, reach out to them one-on-one, confirming their desire to help and thanking them for their support.
- Encourage them to ask questions.
- Explain how their involvement can help with the "bigger picture" of things. For example, a den leader may ask a parent to take the lead in working with the boys on their blue and gold table decorations. This allows the den leader to focus on advancement and den meetings, and assures that the den will be ready to celebrate the blue and gold banquet with all the other dens in the pack.
- When a family signs up for a task, hold them accountable by checking in with a friendly tone and asking if they have any questions. Keep that connection strong and communication lines open at all times.

## Too Little or Too Much?

Begin with the role-play scenarios below. Then brainstorm/discuss ways to keep a Scout active when his family is less than active, and how to help a family member who may a little too involved.

## Too Little Family Involvement

Players: 1 Cub Scout and 1 den leader

The den Leader asks the Cub Scout if he has been ill, as he has missed two meetings. His response could be: "No, Mom has been busy on meeting night." Or, "No, TV has been really good the past few weeks so I stayed home to watch it, and Mom and Dad said that was OK." The den leader then asks to see the Cub Scout's handbook. His response could be "Oops, I forgot it." Or, "It's in my room somewhere, and I can't find it."

## Key Points for Too Little Involvement

- Keep lines of communication open. A visit with the family can help answer questions about missed meetings and forgotten handbooks. There may be a sensitive situation going on at home. Try to connect with the family and gain insight on how to support them and their Scout. For example, the boy may need help with transportation to meetings

for a short time while a family member recovers from an illness. One-on-one support may encourage them to open up about what's going on.

- Families that are new to Scouting might be holding back, believing they have nothing to offer because the pack leaders have been there longer and "have it all under control." Or they may misunderstand, thinking they have to be registered leaders in order to help out.
- All family members have something to offer, and pack leadership must make opportunities available to them. Make sure that two-deep leadership is provided at all times when working with youth in the pack.

### Too Much Family Involvement

Players: Several Cub Scouts, 1 den leader, and 1 parent

A den leader is teaching the den how to tie the bowline knot. Meanwhile, a parent keeps interrupting the den leader with different ways to tie the bowline, and asks the den leader if he or she knows how to tie a one-handed bowline.

### Key Points for Too Much Involvement

- Family involvement is essential to the Cub Scouting program, but when it becomes "too much of a good thing," asking those helpers to do specific tasks may help give direction. For example, in the bowline scenario, the den leader might ask the parent, "Can you work with me at the next meeting to teach the Scouts the taut-line hitch? We will follow the directions on page 202 of their Webelos Handbook. Specific and detailed asks can help this situation.
- If a den leader still feels that he or she is being overrun, the Cubmaster and pack committee chair can attend a den meeting or outing and kindly remind a family member that their Scout is getting the support he needs from the Cub Scouting program and its leadership.

### Family Involvement in Cub Scouting Advancement

Advancement is a joint effort involving the youth members, the adult leaders, and the family. Cub Scouting uses the program delivery method of involving families in advancement. Together with the den leader, a family member signs off on advancement each step of the way in the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear handbooks. In the Webelos Handbook, if a family member serves as a Webelos/Arrow of Light adventure counselor under the leadership of the den leader, they may sign for the requirements they helped the Scout complete.

Reflection Exercise-You may want to try this with the leaders in your pack:

Ask the participants to close their eyes for a personal reflection exercise. Explain that you will share some questions that might be asked of new volunteers in a unit. The participants are to reflect silently on each question.

Ask the following:

- How were you recruited to help in your unit?
- Did you feel that by volunteering you would help your pack and your Scout at the same time?
- Was it a positive recruitment? What words were said to make you feel that way or not feel that way?
- What would you keep or change about that experience when asking the family members of your den or your pack to become involved?

### RESOURCES FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT INTEREST TOPIC

- Family Involvement Teamwork Closing from Webelos Den Leader Guide, Project Family Adventure, page 267
- District membership chair
- Pack committee chair/Cubmaster of a unit with successful parent involvement
- 26 Ways to Build Involvement

# Easy as ABC—Ways to Encourage Involvement

A is for Asking for Assistance.

Everyone enjoys an opportunity to be helpful, but never assume that anyone will step up without being asked. Make it a practice to ask for help by going to someone and telling them they are needed. One of the reasons that people often give for not helping: No one asked them. (Friendly)

B is for the Black Hole of Forever.

Some people are afraid that if they step up and say yes to an activity, they'll be pulled into that dark space called forever, unable to step back from the assignment. Let them know up front the amount of time the project will require. Is it a one-time project like serving as the blue and gold banquet chair, or a yearlong position such as pack advancement chair? (Courteous)

C is for Communicating.

Today's world is full of technology, and communication is easier than ever before. Discover what method(s) of communication work best for your group, and implement those. Be sure to use a variety of methods so that you reach everyone. Remember to share not only information on upcoming events but achievements too. (Helpful)

D is for Diversity.

Your pack may be faced with many types of diversity—family structure, culture, geography, etc. Evaluate what diversity opportunities you may have, and, as a group, develop a plan that will reach everyone. Your pack and each individual Scout will benefit from multifamily involvement. It makes our world a smaller place! (Friendly)

E is for Evaluate.

Periodically stop and take a look at your pack and den activities to decide what's working and what isn't. Determine which programs are most successful and should stay the same—because no one wants to waste time “reinventing the wheel.” But quite often, new ideas can create new excitement for your group. (Brave)

F is for Fun.

Every event should have a component of fun built in! Make sure your entire group finds fun in all that they do. This will go a long way toward building the desire to be involved, and it also prevents burnout. Looking back, people won't remember tiny details but they will recall how much fun they had. (Friendly)

G is for Gentle.

Start new parents out gently in the Scouting program. Let them become comfortable in their roles. Helping your leaders and parents to be successful will aid in recruiting future leadership. Parents who come away feeling good about participating in a family event may be more likely to help with future pack activities. (Loyal)

H is for one Hour.

Today's fast-paced world creates an environment where people worry about their time and family commitments. By using the committee approach executing pack activities, you can limit general meetings to one hour or less. This honors the time commitment of leaders, as you discussed with them when they were recruited. (Trustworthy)

I is for Inviting.

All people appreciate being asked to do a task instead of you assuming that they will help. Take the time to extend a personal invitation, and you will be more successful in your leader recruiting efforts. Also, it's easier to recruit people when they already know someone who is active in the group. Creating that personal relationship will help them get over the jitters of being a first-time participant. (Brave)

J is for Joining.

It is vital to the health of your unit to make sure that everyone—Scouts, parents, leaders, etc.—feel they are a part of the entire group. No cliques! (Kind)

K is for Kudos.

Recognizing the efforts of others with awards or even a simple “thank you” is an important aspect of working with a group. Always let people know that you appreciate their help, whether they have chaired a blue and gold banquet or just greeted folks at the pack meeting. Think of this old adage:

There are three types of people who like recognition—men, women, and children. (Friendly, Courteous, Kind)

L is for Leading.

Demonstrate good leadership by looking into your pack's future. Has the pack made a long-range plan? If so, are steps in place to turn the plan into reality? Part of getting your parents and families excited is to share the vision of the unit and give them something to reach for. Remember to stay focused on a leadership succession plan. Who will take your place when you move on? Is that person trained and ready to take over? (Brave)

M is for Merchandising.

Wrap the gift of Scouting, and let your community know what that gift contains. Share the values and outcome of Scouting. Demonstrate the fun your pack members are having, and what your unit does to increase participatory citizenship, education, and service to others. Your parents will want to be a part of such a successful youth program! (Cheerful)

N is for Novice.

ALWAYS make an effort to reach out to new parents and new Scouts. They may need your help but, many times, they are afraid to ask questions. You can provide them with information about the program, the unit leaders, activities, and more. (Helpful)

O is for Optimally Organized.

Whether your group is large or small, make sure your events are highly organized and orderly. Make sure event volunteers are in place and details are addressed. Good advance communication will prevent the disappointment of hearing that some parents and Scouts missed an event because they didn't have the information they needed or received it too late. (Helpful)

P is for Priority.

The Cub Scouting program has many levels, from den meetings to pack and family outings. Make sure that the priority of meetings and events is established and recognized. If you know who the activities are intended for, you can better guide each event to a successful outcome. Remember that Cub Scouting is for the entire family. (Obedient)

Q is for Qualifications.

Every person has something to offer. They are qualified to help in some way. Remember to ask not only for your volunteers' time but also for their talents. The parent talent survey sheet is a great resource to find out each person's skills. (Thrifty)

R is for Retention.

Retaining quality leadership is essential for a unit to stay strong and healthy. Boys join because they are expecting a terrific experience, but without solid adult leadership the unit may not be able to deliver the promise of Scouting. (Loyal)

S is for Success.

It is said that many hands make light work. By involving parents in planning, preparing, and executing meetings and activities, you will guarantee the success of the pack and delivery of the promise of Scouting. (Cheerful)

T is for Training.

Try not to give a job or project to a volunteer when they don't have the right preparation. No one enjoys failing, and with proper training you can help everyone to do their job well. The training should communicate clearly what is expected of them, and it should give them the resources and knowledge they need to do the job. Online training in Cub Scouting has made this an easy challenge to address. (Courteous)

U is for Undivided.

The Scouting program is designed to bridge the diversity gap of any community by recognizing and respecting our differences, and not allowing those differences to become an issue. Work together with the members of your pack and your community to make sure all activities include all people, and stay respectful of cultural differences. (Courteous, Kind)

V is for Visibility.

Don't let Scouting be the best kept secret in your community. Do all you can to be visible to the world. Be visible through uniforming, booths, fliers, etc. at school open houses, school registration, and community activities. The Family Talent Survey Sheet may help you find a parent who can assist with media coverage and social media communication for the pack. (Helpful)

W is for Wanted.

No one wants to feel they are imposing on an event. Do all you can to provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Let your families know that you want them to come and participate. Create a pack welcoming committee to greet newcomers at pack meetings and family activities, and strive to make sure they feel comfortable. (Friendly)

X is for X-cellence.

A component of excellence in building a strong unit and parent group is to keep all things balanced. For a pack to remain strong and healthy, parents need to be involved and active. Always be planning for the future excellence of your unit. (Thrifty)

Y is for Year.

Holding the annual pack planning conference will help keep everyone on track for the entire year. Take into consideration school, religious, and community activities. Balance your activities throughout the year so you won't see burn out in your parents, leaders, or yourself. (Helpful)

Z is for Zoom In.

Each pack has many details to attend to. If you take some time to develop a strong parent group, you will see your pack grow and continue as a strong, healthy unit for many years to come! (Loyal, Friendly, Courteous)