

PACK OVERNIGHTER FOR NEW CUB SCOUTS

When families join Cub Scouting, they're ready for action. Once you have them recruited, your pack needs to do everything in its power to provide that action if you want to keep them. Cub Scout packs that conduct an event or pack overnighter for new Cub Scouts routinely experience better newcomer retention; research shows that over half of children who join Cub Scouting expect to go camping right away.

Purpose

Get new pack members, including parents or guardians, off to a great start in Cub Scouting by giving them an outdoor experience that satisfies their expectations in a simple, safe way. Overnighters can be planned to follow both spring and fall recruiting events.

A new family outdoor event is immediate, it is simple, and it makes a new Cub Scout and their parent(s) or guardian happy that they have joined an active pack. It shows that your pack cares when you give them what they want: an immediate activity.

Remember, Cub Scouts are still children. Most of them will not have ever camped before. In fact, their parents/guardians may never have camped before either. Accordingly, this overnighter should be simple and easy—now is not the time for an “extreme” camping experience. Assume that the Cub Scouts and their parents know nothing at all about the equipment necessary for comfortable camping. Particularly for new-family event camping, have plenty of gear on hand to lend and have experts present to advise new campers

in its use. A BALOO-trained (Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation) leader from the pack must be on-site and responsible for the planning and execution of the event. Keep an eye on the weather forecast; cancel the event if the weather will not be pleasant.

It will be exciting (and probably run more smoothly) if you have a large encampment already set up. Most new Cub Scouts won't have tents at home, so imagine the size of a new Cub Scout's eyes when they arrive and are a part of that scene!

A local Scouts BSA troop could help run stations, run a campfire program, serve as campsite guides, and help new Cub Scouts and their parents or guardians set up their camp.

Benefits

A new-family outdoor event offers several benefits for new Cub Scouts and their parents or guardians, including the following:

- New pack members and their families quickly gain a sense of belonging, which builds pack cohesion.
- The event delivers on Cub Scouting's promise of fun from day one, which makes the new Cub Scouts and their families look forward to more.
- By choosing an easy, simple outdoor event for the new members, the pack allows them an immediate taste of success as Cub Scouts.



Sample Pack Camping Agenda

This is a sample. Remember to keep it simple—make it fun!

DAY 1

9:00 a.m.	Arrive at campsite; set up tents and bedding.	
10:00 a.m.	Raise U.S. flag with ceremony. Welcome families and review ground rules.	
10:15 a.m.	If new Cub Scouts have not completed their Bobcat badge, have experienced Cub Scouts and their parents work with the new Cub Scout and parent(s) to work on the requirements together.	
	If new Cub Scouts have already earned their Bobcat badge, consider doing activities in the following required adventures that have outdoor elements.	
	Lion—Mountain Lion Adventure	Tiger—My Tiger Jungle
	Wolf—Call of the Wild	Bear—Bear Necessities
	Webelos—Webelos Walk About	Arrow of Light—Outdoor Adventurer
11:30 a.m.	Cub Scouts and parents prepare and eat lunch; clean up.	
12:30 p.m.	Free time.	
1:00 p.m.	Play large group games.	
2:30 p.m.	Go swimming, using the Safe Swim Defense, or go on a hike, possibly using a theme to the hike. Keep in mind the ages and abilities of the Scouts and their family members.	
3:30 p.m.	Free time.	
4:00 p.m.	Cub Scout-adult teams begin preparations for dinner; dens eat as groups.	
5:30 p.m.	Wash dishes and clean up.	
6:30 p.m.	Free time.	
7:00 p.m.	Lower U.S. flag with ceremony.	
7:30 p.m.	Prepare for campfire.	
8:30 p.m.	Campfire program.	
9:30 p.m.	Bedtime.	
10:00 p.m.	Lights out.	

DAY 2

7:00 a.m.	Reveille.
7:30 a.m.	Clean up campsite.
8:30 a.m.	Cub Scout-adult teams prepare and eat breakfast.
9:00 a.m.	Wash dishes and clean up.
9:30 a.m.	Interfaith service.
10:00 a.m.	Strike camp, leaving it in better condition than you found it.

This schedule assumes that each family is preparing meals separately. Group meals are also appropriate. Meals should be simple and easy; avoid meals that require large amounts of cleanup. This is an ideal event to use tin foil dinners.