

# “Bear Parents 101 or how I learned to stop worrying and love Cub Scouts”

with apologies to Peter Sellers

## Overview Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Communication.....	4
Advancement to Bear rank and Parental involvement.....	5
Bear Requirements.....	7
Bear Electives .....	7
Record Keeping .....	7
Uniform.....	8
Attendance .....	9
General Thoughts.....	10
Tiger vs. Cub vs. Scout.....	11
Tiger Cub .....	11
Cub Scout.....	11
Boy Scout.....	12
Who Ya Gonna Call???	12

## ***Introduction***

Some of you may be new to Scouting. Because of this you may not know how the Pack and Den works and what your son is expected to do and how he is to advance in Cub Scouting. This overview strives to begin to answer some of those questions. As a parent, you need to first read and understand pages 1-8 of your son's Bear handbook. Then read pages 9-11 then pages 23-25 with your son. This starts your son and you on the trail of Cub Scout and the Bear rank. Please also read, understand, and utilize your son's Bear handbook and help him with it. His handbook should also be brought to each Den meeting (not Pack meetings please).

Even if you are an "old hand" at Scouting as a parent you should please read this overview carefully as there may be some information that you may not know.

There is a lot of very important information contained here, so please read and reference this overview packet. I would like to call your attention to the following aspects as relates to the Den and to the Pack:

- Communication
- Advancement to Bear rank and Parent involvement
- Uniform
- Attendance
- General thoughts

## Communication

It is very hard to properly communicate to everyone with today's busy lifestyle that we lead. However, communication in the Bear Den is essential to its survival.

We are now going to primarily communicate with all of you through the Pack website. It is located on the Internet at [www.libertyvillepack72.com](http://www.libertyvillepack72.com). You should go to the site and make sure to bookmark it. You should also review it and see all the information contained in the website.



The most important part of the site for the Bear Den is the “Calendar” section. In addition to Pack meeting and special event information, you will see “Bear Den Meeting” notices. PLEASE READ THESE CAREFULLY. Preferably you will read several meetings into the future. The reason for this is simple: The Den Leaders will post information about what the Den is doing for each Den meeting and more importantly, what Bear rank requirements your son should be working on and when they are due. This is CRITICAL to your son's advancement and to working together as a member in the Bear Den. They should also post those requirement areas that have already been due to enable each Bear Den member to “catch up” as required, but it will be up to the Cub and his parents to keep up with their requirements as the leaders will not have time at the meetings to individually work with each boy on their advancements.



Please make it a habit to check the Pack website at least weekly for updates and new information. Also, as the Leaders will be updating meeting information, DO NOT assume that if you have read a meeting notice that it has not changed!!!

The Pack and Den Leaders will also make announcements at the Pack and Den meetings but it has become obvious that it is very difficult for these announcements to often be heard and to “stick” and so they must communicate effectively to maintain such a large Pack.

### ***Advancement to Bear rank and Parental involvement***

During this Scouting year, which corresponds to the school year, the Bear Den is working on reaching the Cub Scout rank of Bear. To attain this rank, 12 requirements must be completed by each boy. These requirements are contained in the Bear handbook. Note that there are a total of 24 Bear requirements in four major groupings (God, Country, Family, Self). Within these groupings a required number of requirements must be completed which add up to a total of 12 requirements. This allows the boy to choose within reason, the requirements he is most interested in accomplishing. It is the responsibility of the boy and his parent(s) to work on these requirements together and adequately understand the skills being taught through the requirements.

As noted in “Communication”, the Den Leaders will be posting the requirements that should be done prior to a specific Den meeting as part of the Pack calendar under the “Bear Den Meeting” notices as described above.

At the Den meeting, the Den leaders will work with the Den members to review the requirements and to help on any that may not have been clear. However, in general, the requirements will not be performed nor “signed off” as part of the Den meeting. There is too little time and too many boys. Additionally, for Bear like Bear requirements, the individual Cub Scout and their parent(s) is responsible for performing their own requirements and gaining “sign off” approval by the “Akela”.

“Sign off” approval is done primarily by the parent(s). Please read pages 1-8 in your son’s Bear handbook. Look especially on page 3 for the section on “Akela’s OK”. This section speaks to your role as parent/ leader in your son’s advancement. You as your son’s Akela (leader), have the primary responsibility to help your son learn his various requirements and then provide your “OK” in his handbook at the appropriate approval spot once he has properly shown his working knowledge and understanding of the requirement. Please note that “almost all electives and achievements (requirements) are done by you and your Cub Scout at home, not in the den meeting.” While the Den can assist, initiate, and will reinforce the learnings of the requirement, there is not enough time at the meetings for the Den and Den leaders to be the teacher for the requirements and in fact this is not the way that the national Scouting organization wants the advancement done as noted in the Bear book. Instead, with Bear, the parents are to be quite involved.

At Den meetings the Den leaders will check the Cub’s handbook to see if the Cub has obtained his Akela’s approval for the requirements that were assigned or for any prior requirements. This is why each Cub Scout must bring their handbook to all Den meetings. The Den leaders will maintain a record of what requirements have been completed so that they will know who has completed what requirements for their Bear rank advancement. For every three (of the 12) requirements fully completed, the Cub will receive a recognition bead to put on their “instant recognition” holder which goes on their right pocket.

We strive to have the boys obtain their Bear rank advancement at the Pack’s **February** “Blue and Gold” banquet as a Den. The Blue and Gold banquet is a special recognition Pack meeting and traditionally it is where the boys are most formally recognized for their efforts and major achievements. To meet this goal, it is imperative that the boys and their parent(s) know what requirements they should be working on and keep up with the other members of the Den. Otherwise it will be very difficult to have them attain their rank along with others in the Den and they may miss out on their recognition at the Blue and Gold banquet. While certainly they can continue on their Bear requirements and attain Bear rank after the Blue and Gold and until they finish third grade, it is a nice milestone to reach as an entire Den.

## **Bear Requirements**

As noted previously, to attain Bear rank, the Cub must fulfill 12 of 24 requirements. The requirements are listed on pages 24 to 179. There are four groups and the numbers of requirements that must be completed are as follows:

- God – choose 1 out of 2
- Country – choose 3 out of 5
- Family – choose 4 out of 6
- Self – choose 4 out of 11

## **Bear Electives**

For Bear rank, the electives can be begun and signed off at any time during the “Bear year”. For every 10 electives completed, an arrow point is earned, starting with a gold arrow point and then silver arrow point(s). However, the arrow points cannot be awarded until the Bear rank is attained.

The Bear electives are shown on pages 180-278 and there are 25 elective sections.

PLEASE NOTE: an important change from Wolf to Bear is that Bear requirements that are not chosen but have been completed can ALSO be used as electives. HOWEVER, if you have used one of the 24 Bear requirements for your Bear rank, you cannot use the “left over” pieces of that requirement for arrow point electives. The description of this is a bit confusing in the Bear book, so an example is in order:

- Say the Cub has done 4 of the 7 pieces of requirement 9 “What’s Cooking” for his Bear rank. He cannot use any of the other 3 pieces in “What’s Cooking” for electives.
- However, say the Cub has NOT done (and will not do) requirement 13 “Saving Well, Spending Well” for his Bear rank. There are 7 pieces in that requirement and any or all of them could then be used for electives.

## **Record Keeping**

In the Bear book, record keeping is easier than in the Wolf book and that is good since the requirements are a lot more complex. So you need to properly log your son’s requirements and electives so that the Den Leadership can properly note them for awards.

- For Bear Requirements – as each piece of a requirement is completed and signed off by the Akela, go to page 286 and have the Cub color in the appropriate piece within the requirement. When the proper number of pieces are done to qualify for the requirement (for example, requirement 4 “Tall Tales” requires all 3 pieces), color in or check the box preceding the requirement.
- For Bear Electives – as each elective (whether arrow point elective or non-used Bear requirement piece) is completed, log that number and letter on the chart on page 288.

PLEASE NOTE: It is NOT a requirement for continuation in Cub Scouting that a boy attain a rank whether Tiger, Bear, Bear, or Webelos. Cub Scouting is grade dependent and the boy will move to the next Den level whether they have attained their rank or not.

So as members of the Bear Den, they will be members but will not be a “Bear” until they have attained their Bear badge. However, if the boy does not attain Bear in the Scouting (School) year, they can still move along to the Webelos I Den the following year. It is important to know this, but also to know that there is a feeling of accomplishment for the boys when they have attained their rank along with their friends.

**VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:** It is always possible in a Bear Den that some members did not start as Tiger Cubs. That is fine and Scouting always welcomes new Cub Scouts at any level. It is important to know that they are not required to “go back” and earn their Tiger rank (or Wolf rank) to progress as Bear scouts. However, ALL Cub Scouts must attain the Bobcat rank, which serves as an introduction and basic training for Cub Scouts. If your son has not earned his Bobcat rank the Den Leaders and you as “Akela” will be working with him at home and at Den meetings to teach him these basic skills. However, we have asked each of those working on Bobcat to read and perform the Bobcat requirements on pages 12-23. You son will need Akela’s OK on the 8 requirements and you will also want to review “A Parent’s Guide pages 1-23 as the removable supplement to the front of the Bear book with your son. This needs to be done as soon as possible.

Advancement aspects contained in the Bear handbook:

- Parent Guide – pages 1-8
- Akela’s OK – page 3
- Bear Trail – pages 9-11
- Bobcat Trail (as applicable) – pages 12-22
- Your Den, Pack, and Uniform – page 23
- Rank requirements – pages 24-179
  - Pay special attention to page 24-25 which point out the requirements that must be done. Of the 24 overall requirements, 12 must be completed for Bear rank.
- Arrow Points (Electives) – pages 180-277
  - There are 25 different elective activity areas the boy can choose to work on for additional recognition after attaining his Bear rank
  - NOTE: each of the elective activity areas has multiple requirements. For each 10 requirements (not full electives) that the boy achieves, he will attain an arrow point. Gold first, and then silver arrow points.

Other recognition – the “Brag Vest”

- Segments – events attended
- General patches from Cub Scouting events

## **Uniform**

The uniform is an important part of the Scouting experience since it represents Scouting in general and is worn to all Scouting events including Pack and Den meetings and other Scouting outings including fundraisers. The key is that a uniform should be “uniform” hence the name, and all members are to properly wear and maintain their uniform to provide a good example of pride in their Pack, in their Den, and in themselves.

The Pack has determined that the following components of the uniform are mandatory and all Cub Scouts should wear the uniform with these components:

- Cub Scout uniform shirt with proper insignia and patches (see following section on “Uniform patches and insignia”)
- Bear Cub Scout hat (different for each rank)
- Bear neckerchief and neckerchief slide (different for each rank) – NOTE: the official Bear neckerchief slide should be used instead of rubber bands or just an overhand knot
- Blue jeans or blue slacks (please no sweat pants) – obviously official Cub Scout pants would be the preferred uniform component, but with rapidly growing Cub Scouts, buying Cub Scout pants yearly or more can be impractical.
- Shoes and socks (no open toed shoes – preferably clean tied sneakers and/or hiking boots as appropriate)

While the Pack does not require a Cub Scout belt, a proper Cub Scout belt enhances the uniform and when worn with official pants, blue jeans, or blue slacks, provides a very good-looking uniform and should be obtained and worn if at all possible.

Uniform patches and insignia. Proper patches and insignia including rank insignia are an integral part of the Cub Scout uniform and should be properly placed and worn on the uniform. The following link provides instructions as to where the patches and insignia are to be worn: [www.scouting.org/forms/34282.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/forms/34282.pdf) . These instructions are also contained on the Pack website in the “Parents” section.

The Pack initially provides the required patches and insignia. Your son should have the following Pack supplied patches and insignia on his uniform, and they should be applied per the instructions for location in the noted link:

- Council strip for the Northeast Illinois council – left sleeve
- Pack numeral “72” – left sleeve
- American flag (should have been already on the uniform when purchased) – right sleeve
- World Crest (purple compass point insignia) – centered over left pocket
- Rank badge(s) – these should be placed as shown on the left pocket. PLEASE NOTE, there is a specified order for these rank badges. If you son was not a Tiger Cub and did not get the Tiger badge, or did not attain Wolf, leave that/ those space(s) open on their uniform. However, please have the Bobcat badge placed appropriately on the uniform as all Bear Den members should either have or shortly will be attaining the Bobcat rank.
- Den insignia – right sleeve – typically, Cub Dens are recognized as a number (Den 6 for instance). So the Bear Den will have a Den number which goes under the American flag, centered under it and touching it.

## **Attendance**

While perfect attendance is not a requirement for Cub Scouting, it is clear that involvement is key to the leading, learning, growing, and team experience provided by Scouting. Every effort should be made to have your son attend all the Pack and Den

meetings. Additionally, throughout the Scouting year, the Pack and Den go on many outings and events as a unit. These will be listed far in advance on the Pack website calendar and typically announced at the Pack and often at the Den meetings. Please take advantage of these outings and events as they also form an important part of the Scouting experience. For every outing and event that your son attends, he will be awarded a “segment” piece that can be placed on an optional red “brag vest”. This brag vest is to be used (if desired) to place all non-uniform patches and segments obtained by the Cub Scout during their Cub Scouting career. Ask an adult leader about these vests and how to obtain one. You will undoubtedly see some of the Cubs wearing theirs at meetings and special events.

### ***General Thoughts***

The adult leaders of the Pack and Den are volunteers. They spend at least four days a month in direct Cub Scouting activities including a Pack meeting, two Den meetings, and a Committee meeting. Additionally, there is preparation time and often time spent attending other Scouting events including training and council events. It is imperative that you assist these leaders whenever possible and check the Pack website calendar to know what you and your son should be doing to prevent additional time being spent in individual calls, etc.

This is not to say that your leaders do not want you to call, far from it. But if the information is provided on the Pack website, it is a lot easier for everyone to find it and utilize it. Additionally, please feel free to speak to your Pack or Den leaders before or after the various meetings if you have questions or comments.

Also, PLEASE VOLUNTEER to assist on or with the Pack Committee, the Pack or Den itself. Speak to the adult leaders about this. The Pack Committee always has needs for additional help and it is the duty of all parents to provide at least some of their time to assist the Pack or Den directly as well as bringing their son to the meetings and events.

A primary purpose of Scouting is to teach boys and young men how to lead and how to lead proper lives. However, a huge measure of this is doled out with FUN. If it is not fun, they guys won't participate and won't learn. So as part of Scouting at the Pack and Den meetings, the adult leaders try to make it FUN.

However, our meetings cannot be solely “Fun and Games”. Learning and growing also need to take place. So we try to mix learning skills in with having fun, but we all must remember that we have a limited time and if there is too much “goofing off” then we don't have fun and can't learn. So please help your son to remember this important balance and it will help the adult leaders in their efforts!

As noted earlier, many of the Bear requirements are worked on and completed at home with the boy's Akela (parent or parents). This is very important since it is impossible for the boy to attain his Bear rank without this focus and assistance. There is not nearly enough time at Pack and Den meetings to work fully on all the requirements and many are designed to be family activities, which cannot be done at Pack or Den meetings. Let

us know if this cannot be done at your home and we will need to work on how to best proceed with you and your son.

### ***Tiger vs. Cub vs. Scout***

The intent of Scouting all the way from Tiger Cub, to Cub, and on to Scouting is to teach the boys to be leaders and gain skills for life. This is done by activities and obtaining rank advancements. However, the rank advancements and how they are performed and attained are different at the different levels. This is important to know in helping your son.

### **Tiger Cub**

Tiger Cubs are first graders and have very short attention spans. As such the “requirements” are typically done together as a Den and are relatively easy to accomplish. This is more a time to get to know each other and begin an easy transition into Cub Scouting for both the boy and the parent(s).

### **Cub Scout**

Cub Scouts begin with attaining their Bobcat rank. This is “basic learning” and an introduction to Cub Scouting for all boys who join Cub Scouting no matter at what age/ grade they begin Cub Scouting. Bobcat is typically worked on and attained at the Den meeting and is fairly easy to attain. However, more emphasis is placed on the boy learning and being able to repeat various aspects of Scouting and perform various other aspects such as the salute and handshake. The boy begins to learn responsibility to know Cub Scouting.

Starting with Bear, much of the emphasis for advancement goes to the boy and his parent(s). Gradually the requirements become more difficult as the boy becomes better able to perform them. At first, especially in Wolf, the boy works mostly directly with the parent(s) to perform his requirements. Later, starting in Bear, the requirements are structured to allow the boy to be able to perform more of the requirements himself and show responsibility. However, they still require that the parent(s) sign off on proper attainment. The Den Leader will co-sign the requirement to verify that the boy has a working knowledge relating to the requirement.

It is key to note that Cub Scouts is grade dependent and the boy will be in:

- A Wolf Den in second grade
- A Bear Den in third grade
- A Webelos I Den in fourth grade
- A Webelos II Den in fifth grade and then graduate to Scouts

Because of this, it is not an absolute necessity for the boy to actually attain a rank in order to proceed. While everyone would like to gain recognition with the others in their Den, if it is impractical to attain all the requirements for the rank by the end of May of a grade year, then the boy can move to the next “Den level”

without attaining the rank. In this manner, the boy can stay with their peers in the appropriate grade level of Cub Scouting.

## **Boy Scout**

By the time a boy moves from Cub Scouting to Boy Scouting near the end of fifth grade, they are expected to be able to perform somewhat on their own and have a measure of responsibility. So Boy Scouts have a series of ranks but they are not age and grade dependent. The ranks are fully dependent upon the Scout earning them at their own pace if at all.

The ranks are:

- Tenderfoot
- Second Class
- First Class
- Star
- Life
- Eagle

Merit badges are also earned starting after First Class and the merit badges are an integral part of attaining Star through Eagle Scout. In fact, Eagle currently requires attainment of 21 merit badges, 11 of which are mandated.

The Boy Scout works on the requirements for each rank at their own pace with the assistance of others in their Patrol, their Scout leaders, and with their parents. However, it is up to the Scout to initiate this and to attain the rank themselves. Unlike Cubs where one age group moves along together in a Cub Den, a Scout Patrol can be made up of several ages and ranks. This allows boys to work together in a multi-functional and experience team, but it is up to the individual as to how fast and how far they progress in Scouting.

For instance, less than 2% of those who begin Boy Scouting attain the rank of Eagle so Eagle is a major challenge for boys and one that when attained is a very strong certification of their abilities and responsibility.

## ***Who Ya Gonna Call???***

So, with all of this new knowledge, what happens if you still need help???

First off, please ask and **DON'T BE SHY!**

On the website, the leadership adults are all listed with phone numbers and the ability to contact them directly by email by clicking on their name and sending a message. This is listed in the "Contact Us" section of the Pack 72 website.

Additionally, you should feel free to speak to your Pack and Den Leadership at any meeting. They are there to help and cannot help if they do not know you have a question of need.