

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

with apologies to Peter Sellers

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Introduction

Some of you and perhaps all 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 the “Dear Parents” section inside the front cover of your son’s Tiger book. Then you are ready to help your son along the Trail of the Tiger.

Pages 1-19 of the Tiger book is an introduction to Tigers that all parents should read and understand. These pages in conjunction with this “Tiger Den overview” will provide you the insights to help your son advance and have fun in Cub Scouts and initially in his Tiger Den. This overview is being written by Pack 72 by those who have been there before and it will emphasize certain aspects of the material you will read in the introduction, pages 1-19.

You should then read pages 25-27 with your son. This is very important information for both of you.

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
- Bobcat
- Advancement to Tiger 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, prompt and proper communication in the Tiger 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. 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 Tiger Den is the "Calendar" section. In addition to Pack meeting and special event information, you will see "Tiger 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 Tiger 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 Tiger Den. They should also post those requirement areas that have already been due to enable each Tiger Den member to "catch up" as required, but it will be up to the Cub and his parents to keep up with their requirements. Very importantly, Tigers have one outing per month called a "Go See It" which is a vital part of the

requirements. If you miss this activity, then you will have to work with the Den Leader to determine how to “make up” this activity on your own. So knowing when the Den is going on the “Go See It” and then participating in the activity is vital to your son’s advancement in Tigers.



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 Bobcat rank

The Bobcat rank is the only required rank in Cub Scouts. All other ranks can be bypassed should the boy desire to do so and the boy can still be a part of Cub Scouting. While this is not recommended procedure, there are times when events make it difficult for the boy to attain a rank. For this reason, and to allow the boy to move along in Cub Scouting with their peers in their age group, rank advancement with the exception of Bobcat is not required.

Bobcat sets the foundation for all of Cub Scouting. It provides “basic training” in the key aspects of the Cub Scout promise, law of the Pack, Cub Scout sign, handshake, motto, and salute. All of these are critical basic tenants of Cub Scouting that all boys should instantly know. Thus the need to earn Bobcat initially and prior to earning another rank.

The “Trail to Bobcat” is on pages 29-34 of your son’s Tiger book. Please review this material with your son and the Tiger Den will initially work on Bobcat together so that the Den as a whole can then proceed onward to Tiger.

Advancement to Tiger rank

During this Scouting year, which corresponds to the school year, the Tiger Den is working on reaching the Cub Scout rank of Tiger. To attain this rank, 5 requirements must be completed by each boy. These requirements are contained in the Tiger handbook. In general, the requirements are done by the boys at the same rate and are paced by the Den Leader to make sure everyone is keeping up. However, it is up to the boy and his parent(s) to keep up with the schedule and Den meetings since much of the things that are done are hard to “catch up” to.

Each requirement is made up of three major parts:

- Family Activity
- Den Activity
- Go See It!

It is the responsibility of the boy and his parent(s) to work on the Family Activity requirements together and adequately understand the skills being taught through the requirements.

The Den Activity will be done with the Den as an overall team, but there may be some “pre-work” that must be done by the Cub and his parent(s) and brought to the appropriate Den meeting.

The “Go See It” will be a Den outing to a specific place to actually see and learn about something relevant to the requirement being worked on as a Den.

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 “Tiger Den Meeting” notices as described above.

“Sign off” approval for the Family Activity is done by the parent(s). Please read pages 14-15 in your son’s Tiger handbook. Look especially on page 15 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 shared responsibility in the Tiger Den 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. The Den Leader will approve and sign

the “Den Activity” and “Go See It” requirements as the Den Leader will be the “Akela” for these activities. However, the parent(s) is the primary “Akela” for Family Activity. Note that starting with the Wolf rank, the parents are the primary “Akela” and will be working directly with their son on requirements.

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 Family Activity requirements that were assigned. 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 Tiger rank advancement. For every one of the 15 sub-requirements fully completed, the Tiger 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 Tiger 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 Tiger requirements and attain Tiger rank after the Blue and Gold and until they finish first grade, it is a nice milestone to reach as an entire Den.

PLEASE NOTE: It is NOT a requirement for continuation in Cub Scouting that a boy attain a rank whether Tiger, Tiger, 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 Tiger Den, they will be members but will not be a “Tiger” until they have attained their Tiger badge. However, if the boy does not attain Tiger in the Scouting (School) year, they can still move along to the Wolf 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.

Advancement aspects contained in the Tiger handbook:

- Parent Guide – pages 1-7
- Akela’s OK – page 15
- Rank – pages 37-77
- Arrow Points (Electives) – pages 78-148
 - Electives the boy can choose to work on for additional recognition after attaining his Tiger rank

Other recognition – the “Brag Vest”

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

Parental Involvement

The parental involvement in assisting your son attain his Bobcat and Tiger rank has been discussed. However a very key aspect of Tigers is the close working relationship between the boy, the parent(s), and the Tiger Den.

Since this by design is a time for boy/ parent teaming, the parent(s) must be very involved in all the activities of the Den. The parent(s) are asked to attend each Den meeting and the “Go See It” activities. This supports the boy/ parent team concept.

The parent(s) will also typically be asked by the Den Leader to assist the Den Leader in the planning and execution of the upcoming months Den meetings. This allows everyone to be involved and take a turn. The Den Leader will help with the program and meeting, but the parent(s) will be asked to help plan and perform aspects of the meeting.

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”)
- Tiger Cub Scout hat (different for each rank)
- Tiger neckerchief and neckerchief slide (different for each rank) – NOTE: the official Tiger 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 . The Pack 72 website also contains this information 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. Tiger Den members 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 Tiger 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. This is especially true for the Tiger Den as Tigers do things as a Den, especially the “Go See It” activities. This means that if your son misses a Den meeting or “Go See It”, it will be difficult to make it up especially with the Den, and it may require that you as the parent provide the “Go See It” activity on your own.

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, the "Family Activity" aspects of the Tiger 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 Tiger 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 some at home 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).

Tiger 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.

Cub Scout

Starting with Wolf, 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, 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.