

10 Things every Cub Scout Leader needs to know:

Congratulations! Maybe you've just volunteered to be a new Cub Scout leader, or maybe you've been at it for a few years, and are prepping for one more year. Either way, you're headed for an adventure for yourself and the young people you're working with. Nervous?

Don't worry. We've got your back.

We surveyed a handful of people with a wide range of experience in Cub Scouts about what leaders need to know and do. What we found was revealing: Whether it was a volunteer with just a few years of experience, a volunteer with tons of experience or the professionals who literally helped create the current program, their answers were remarkably the same.

We've compiled them into the list below for your convenience.

- 1. Get trained.** **The online training modules** are specifically designed to help you Be Prepared for leadership positions such as den leader, Cubmaster, pack committee chair and pack committee member. Most modules are only eight minutes long, just in-depth enough to tell you all you need to know, but not so long that they become a burden. They will educate you on what you need to know about the Cub Scout program to get started and what your role as leader will involve. You can complete all the modules for most positions in about two hours, but you don't have to do it all at once. You can complete a module on your smartphone when you have 10 minutes as you are waiting to pick your child up from school or during a break at work.
Better yet, attend in-person training if it fits your schedule. The trainers you'll meet can answer your specific questions, and often will be available in the future when a question comes up.
- 2. Use Scoutbook.** **Scoutbook** is the official record of your Scouting activities. It provides access to valuable tools and resources that will help with the day-to-day management of your Cub Scouts. For den leaders, Scoutbook's Den Leader Experience gives you the tools to plan a year's worth of meetings in around five minutes and allows you to track the progress of your Cub Scouts as they advance through the program. You can also use it to communicate with the families in your unit, but more on that later. Your pack leadership will need to get your registered so that you can access Scoutbook.
- 3. Safety first.** The **Guide to Safe Scouting** and the **Health and Safety section of [scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org)** are non-negotiable. Be aware of age-specific activities. What's good for a 15-year-old member of Scouts BSA isn't necessarily good for an 8-year-old Cub Scout. These guidelines are the result of years and years of studies and analysis by experts. They exist for a reason. Follow them!

DON'T STOP! It's important to note that, after you have completed the online training and have earned your trained patch as a Cub Scout leader, you could stop right there — as long as you continue to stay up to date on all things Cub Scouting. However, there are lots of other resources available to help you! So read on to learn about those.

- 4. Pay regular visits to the official Cub Scout website.** You'll find a resource page for each rank in Cub Scouting to help den leaders deliver a great program, as well as an overview of the aims and methods of the Cub Scout program. This is also a great place to send new parents who want to learn more about Cub Scouts.

5. **Stay in touch with your district.** Your Cub Scout pack is part of a district that includes all of the packs around you. This can be a very valuable resource. Roundtables are monthly groups (meeting either virtually or in person) where your district leaders share ideas with the latest Cub Scouting news. You have a district commissioner and a district executive who are there to help. Contact your local council to get in touch with them.
Roundtable videos are available on line, and are best viewed with a group of parents and leaders, but can be viewed by anyone. These videos are about eight minutes long and are designed to help with specific topics.
6. **Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.** Communicating with other parents in your pack or den is so important that some units have an entire volunteer position dedicated to nothing but communications. ScoutBook has a built-in communication tool. If you're active on Facebook or other social media sites, use them, too. Parents will appreciate you keeping them up to date on future plans. Speaking of social media ...
7. **There are a lot of unofficial Cub Scout social media sites out there.** Most of them are great. Some might not be. Make sure that any information you get from them is backed up with current official BSA documentation. If you find a site that allows individuals to be un-Scoutlike, it is probably not a good source of information.
8. **Get outside.** Most kids spend their days in classrooms or on their computers learning from home. When appropriate and when the weather permits, get outside! Family campouts are a great way to let kids run free in a safe environment while mixing in some Cub Scout-approved activities. Not comfortable organizing your own campout yet? Sign up for camping opportunities with your council and district (see No. 5). Service projects can be another great outdoors activity.
9. **Don't be afraid to ask for help from other parents.** When it comes to being a Cub Scout leader, you absolutely do not have to go it alone. Recruiting different parents to help with one chore each could make a huge difference. If everyone does their part, no one gets overworked.
10. **Do Your Best.** That's the Cub Scout motto, and it applies to Cub Scout leaders, too. Parents will understand if you have to cancel a meeting at the last minute due to a sick kid or if the weather doesn't cooperate during a planned outdoor event. As long as you communicate (No. 6), stick to the program (No. 3) and plan in advance as much as possible (No. 2), you'll have a bunch of happy Cub Scout families.
11. **Who you gonna call?** Here are some phone numbers and email addresses you can use to get the help you need:

District Executive: Stacy Hall stacy.hall@scouting.org. (607) 648-7888 (office)

Baden-Powell Council: 2150 NYS Route 12, Binghamton, NY 13901
 Phone: (607) 648-7888 Fax: (607) 648-7895

Unit Commissioner: _____

Other Leaders in your Pack: _____
