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National Capital Area Council

University of Scouting -

College of Cub Scouting

CUB 133: Family Involvement in Cub Scouting

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Course Objectives

- **Define** family involvement in Cub Scouting
- **Understand importance** of family involvement
- **Identify ways** to encourage family involvement

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Who is the family?

- The “home government” to Ernest Thompson Seton, Boy Scouts of America co-founder, editor of first *Boy Scout Handbook*
- Individuals at home to whom the Cub Scout is responsible and/or serves – parents, siblings, relatives, guardians, close friends

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What is family involvement?

- Cub Scouting is family- and community-centered.
- Family involvement is one of the methods of Cub Scouting.
- Scouting provides a setting and model for living by the Scout Oath and Law.
- What a Scout learns is **practiced, reinforced, and applied at home** – in the scout’s “real life.”

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What is family involvement?

Goals of Scouting:

- Character Development
- Citizenship
- Personal Fitness
- Leadership Development

The mission of Scouting America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

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What is family involvement?

- What a Cub Scout learns in den and pack meetings and events has purpose outside of Scouting.
- Progress toward attainment of Scouting goals is made manifest through the Cub Scout’s performance at home as a family member.
- Family members are a Scout’s best leaders, teachers, and role models.

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The importance of family involvement

- Increased contact time
- Often required by Scouting America policy
- Recruiting and retention
- Parent-Scout pride cycle
- Application of Scouting virtues at home
- Families provide:
 - Leadership ➤ Mentoring
 - Awareness ➤ Encouragement
 - Knowledge ➤ Support
 - Skills ➤ Reinforcement
 - Experience ➤ Validation

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When families are uninvolved

- Family members do not attend pack meetings
 - Parents do not attend, support den meetings
 - Parents do not value Scouting virtues, Cub Scout's growth
 - Parents do not instill an Oath/Law culture at home
 - Parents do not encourage, appreciate Cub Scout's achievements
 - Unsupported, Cub Scout becomes disinterested. Participation becomes perfunctory. Eventually drops out.
- A Cub Scout will only value and find important that which his/her adult mentors value and find important.*

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When families are involved

- Parents step forward to serve as registered leaders
- Parents volunteer to help at meetings
- Parents participate in pack, den activities, endorsing, encouraging, and validating what the Cub Scout learns
- Parents mentor Cub Scout through completion of advancement requirements at home
- Parents act as role models for Cub Scouts, in Scouting and at home
- Siblings, family friends join and help grow pack

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When families are involved

- Parents attend award ceremonies, Blue and Gold, cheering Cub Scout's accomplishments as they happen
- Cub Scout experiences scouting journey together with parent(s), placing Scouting as a way of life – good, worthwhile, and essential.
- Cub Scout sees parent's influence applied equally to his peers as well as himself
- Parent assuming leader role in pack/den/committee has a hand in shaping the Cub Scout program, Scouting environment not just for their Cub Scout but his/her peers.
- Siblings take opportunity to participate in Scouting events

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Encouraging family involvement

- Family involvement cannot be forced!
- Start early – JSN, kickoff parent meeting, first pack meeting.
- Approach parent one-on-one if possible.

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Encouraging family involvement

- Approach with three messages:
 - We are delighted to have your family in the pack.
 - Please be there to support your Cub Scout.
 - You have something to offer, and volunteer leadership is essential for a successful den and pack. Can you help?

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Encouraging family involvement

- Be friendly.
- Be honest.
- Ask. Do not command. Do not be insistent. Do not beg.
- Sympathize with external commitments and scheduling. Do not defy them.
- Be organized and specific about needs.
- Demonstrate you will provide support.

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Encouraging family involvement

- Play to their strengths, passions. Use family talent survey.
- Seek moments for emotional connection, engagement.
- Thank them regardless!
- Continue on-going contact.

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Encouraging family involvement

- Family talent surveys
 - Seek out useful talents, experiences, capabilities
 - Professions and trades (e.g., first responders)
 - Hobbies (e.g., model railroad, etc.)
 - Sports
 - Civic service
 - Religious service
 - Military service
 - Other

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Encouraging family involvement

- Design survey for easy completion
 - Radio button choices
 - Leave blank space for other/additional information
 - Full contact information (inc. phone, e-mail)
 - Request information as to availability

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Encouraging family involvement

- Recognition for volunteer service
 - Official Scouting America awards
 - Homemade awards: golden spatula, good egg, helping hand etc.
- Encourage training
 - Provide support to those taking online training
 - Provide schedules to leaders
 - Pack covers training fees

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Encouraging family involvement

- Family requirements for advancement
 - Many requirements for advancement are designed for completion at home
 - Den Leader obligation to make sure families are aware
- Assign Denner families
 - Denner is Cub Scout assigned to help Den Leader for a period of time
 - Denner's family asked to support Denner in his/her role

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Encouraging family involvement

- Assign family tasks to support pack, den
- Reduce barriers/ friction
 - Pack welcome packet for new families
 - Uniform bin
 - Pack library of handbooks, etc.
 - Pack/den communication mechanisms
 - Pack newsletter
- Rope presentation

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Other considerations

- Single-parent family – will need extra support
 - Limited availability for meetings, events
 - Transportation of Cub Scout to/from meetings, events (note youth protection constraints)
 - May or may not have financial concerns

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Other considerations

- Faith
 - Families are responsible for their Cub Scouts meeting faith-based requirements for rank.
 - Families responsible for participation in religious emblem program
 - Religious chartered organizations have right to include their religious practices in pack, den meetings
 - Otherwise, seek for inclusion with non-denominational Scouts Own worship services and non-denominational grace before meals.

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When family involvement goes wrong

- What could go wrong?
 - New adult leader delivering poor quality program
 - New adult leader not working well with Cub Scouts
 - Parent violates policies, poor role model
 - Irrate, vocal, complaining, dissenting parent
 - Helicopter parent, perpetually meddling
 - Sibling interference
 - Failing to follow through on family requirements for advancement
 - Parent/family not doing its fair share

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When family involvement goes wrong

- General guidance:
 - Scouting America policies (youth protection, *Guide to Safe Scouting*) must be followed; violations must be addressed, reported
 - Attempt to address concerns one-on-one
 - Unresolved concerns promptly brought to pack committee (do not ignore!)
 - Committee discussion with the parent involved
 - Consult Unit Commissioner for concerns not easily addressed by pack committee
 - Be skeptical but allow for possibility the parent might be right, or more supportive than it appears

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Summary

- Cub Scouting is family- and community- centered; family involvement is vital
- Cub Scout program experience is enhanced, reinforced when families take part
- Involvement operates on two levels: encouragement at home, supporting leadership in the pack
- Approach recruiting parent volunteers enthusiastically and honestly
- Seek for one-on-one discussion, using talent surveys
- Be sensitive to concerns of single-parent families
- Communicate and engage pack committee when concerns arise

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