



Family Scouting Questions and Answers

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General Questions

Q: What is different about Cub Scouts/Boy Scouts this year?

Starting in 2018, families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts, ages 5-10. Chartered partner organizations may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens or remain an all-boy pack. Cub Scout dens will be single gender – all boys or all girls.

Using the same curriculum as the Boy Scouts program, Scouts BSA is scheduled to launch in February 2019, enabling all eligible youth ages 11-17, to earn the Eagle Scout rank. Scouts BSA will be single gender – all girl troops or all boy troops. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

Q: Why did the organization decide to make Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts available to girls? Is it because of declining membership?

The BSA's decision to welcome girls into the Cub Scout program and to offer a program for older girls comes from input we have received from our Scouting families, as well as prospective Scouting families. We understand that families today are busier and more diverse than ever. In fact:

- Most are dual-earners.
- There are more single-parent households than in previous decades.
- Many underserved communities, including fastest-growing Hispanic and Asian communities, prefer to participate in activities as a family.
- And, all families have less free time. More than one-third of parents feel they spend too little free time with their kids, and millennial parents are desperate to spend more time interacting with their kids.

The BSA believes we owe it to families to structure our program offerings in a way that fits into their busy lives to deliver character development and values-based leadership training that Scouting promises.

Q: Is this change a departure from the BSA's core mission and values?

No. In fact, this aligns with our mission and values. After all, the values of Scouting as detailed in the 12 points of the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – are relevant and important for both young men and women.

Our mission 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 Scout Law. To achieve our mission, we create innovative programs and evolve existing ones that respond to the needs of today's families and deliver them through dedicated volunteers in communities across the nation.

Q: Are all BSA programs now co-ed?

The Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts/Scouts BSA programs are not co-ed.

The leadership of the BSA determined that the best way to welcome girls to serve today's families was to offer a unique model that builds on the proven benefits of our single-gender program, while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Q: Why is the BSA recommending single-gender dens and troops units instead of a co-ed model?

The leadership of the BSA determined that the best way to welcome girls to serve today's families is to offer a unique model that builds on the proven benefits of our single-gender program, while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Q: What research did the BSA conduct that informed this decision?

To inform this decision, the Boy Scouts of America conducted extensive research. The BSA also evaluated input from thousands of volunteers who participated in the nationwide family listening sessions.

The results were overwhelmingly positive and supported the decision to welcome girls into Cub Scouts and provide a path to earn the Eagle Scout rank. The research found that parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

The BSA also surveyed young girls and found that 90 percent of girls age 11-18 are interested in joining the BSA's programs.

Education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed the relevance of the program for young women.

Q: Is this for all levels of Scouting in all parts of the country?

BSA's programs are offered to youth nationwide and everywhere the BSA serves families. Of course, all of our programs are dependent on quality volunteers.

Effective June 11, 2018, parents can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts (specific date is council dependent). Existing packs may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens, or remain an all-boy pack. Cub Scout dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls.

Using the same curriculum as the current Boy Scouts program, the organization is also scheduled to launch Scouts BSA in February 2019, which will serve boy troops and girl troops, enabling all eligible youth to earn the Eagle Scout rank (Scouts BSA troops will be single gender — all girl or all boy). This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

Q: Will the organization's name change?

No. The Boy Scouts of America, in name and as an organization, has stood for character development and values-based leadership training for more than 108 years. It is, unequivocally, one of the most recognized, respected, and valuable brands on the planet. Therefore, while we have expanded the reach of our programs among today's youth and their families, our name remains the same, and our brand will continue to be a source of pride that we will protect and foster as we look to extend the reach of our promise to more families.

Q: How will the BSA respond to parents who don't want coeducational programs?

It is important to note that BSA did not decide to make the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts programs co-ed; instead, the organization has introduced a unique model that builds on the benefits of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls. Chartered organizations always have the option to select from the numerous BSA program offerings; no one program or format is mandatory – we are offering our communities more options.

Starting in 2018, families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts. Chartered partner organizations may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens or remain an all-boy pack. Dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls.

Using the same curriculum as the Boy Scouts program, Scouts BSA is scheduled to launch in February 2019, enabling all eligible youth to earn the Eagle Scout rank. Scouts BSA will be single gender – all-girl troops or all-boy troops. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

Additionally, Venturing crews and Sea Scout ships can be established as all-girl or all-boy units, in addition to the option of being coeducational units.

Q: What are you hearing from BSA leaders around the country about this announcement?

The decision was informed by members of the BSA at all levels of the organization and from all parts of the country, so we are seeing support for the decision reflect that input. This is an exciting time for the BSA.

Due to early interest, the BSA offered an Early Adopter program that local councils could opt in to, which enabled units that expressed an early interest and capability in welcoming girls to do so starting January 15, 2018. Over 5,000 girls joined Cub Scouts since the Early Adopter program was introduced, and we continue to receive great feedback from packs and families about the opportunity.

We value the partnership with BSA leaders across the country as we continue to innovate and evolve our proven programs to meet the needs of today's families and provide the types of experiences that parents and their children want most.

Q: Do you think current youth members or adult volunteers will withdraw?

This programming is in response to what we've heard from our Scouting families in addition to those who are not involved in the BSA. A majority of parents surveyed said they are interested in having their daughters involved in a program like the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.

What's more, many of our current families, Scouts, donors, volunteers and professional staff are in support of this decision, and in a number of cases from our Early Adopter efforts, we have heard that more parents have started volunteering since their entire family could now be involved.

Q: Are BSA programs relevant for girls?

Yes. On average, more than 90 percent of Scouting families and leaders believe the BSA programs are relevant to both boys and girls. What's more, education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed that the programs are both relevant and empowering for both young men and young women.

Q: Why didn't the BSA partner with the Girl Scouts or another organization to serve girls?

The BSA had several conversations with other youth-serving organizations, but found through extensive research and conversations with parents that there is a need and an interest to welcome girls to our existing programs. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose the program that is best for their family.

What's more, the BSA has been providing programs to young girls since 1971 when we extended our Exploring program to young women. Girls also participate in our Venturing, Sea Scouts and STEM Scouts programs.

Q: How are the BSA programs different from what girls would experience with Girl Scouts?

BSA programs provide character- and leadership-building experiences that give young people a solid foundation for their futures. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose what program is best for their family.

Q: Why are you just now allowing girls into the Boy Scouts?

It is important to underscore that the BSA has provided programming to young women and young men for many years through Sea Scouts, STEM Scouts, Exploring and Venturing.

STEM Scouts: 45% of participants are girls/young women, 55% are boys/young men

Exploring: 39% of participants are girls/young women, 61% are boys/young men

Venturing: 36% of participants are girls/young women, 64% are boys/young men

Sea Scouts: 40% of participants are girls/young women, 60% are boys/young men

Q: At what age can girls join Scouting?

In 2018, families can choose Cub Scouts for their sons and daughters, starting at age five, up through age 20 in Venturing and Sea Scouts.

Q: How do units respond to girls who want to join BSA programs immediately?

We are excited to welcome girls who are interested in joining the Cub Scouting program in 2018. For those councils who did not participate in the soft launch of Family Cub Scouting, implementation begins June 11, 2018, or later (each council decided their own start date). For Scouts BSA, it is recommended that all councils that receive interest in the program from their community develop a list with contact information, so they can reach out to those interested as units are being developed.

Q: Will there be new curriculum for girl participants? Will you change the program to accommodate girls?

No. Our existing programs are relevant for young men and women. After all, the values of Scouting as outlined in the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – are relevant and important values for both young men and women.

Q: Can a unit that cannot meet the five-girl minimum offer the lone Scout program?

Councils will determine the viability of the lone Scout program, just as they do now with boys.

Q: How will BeAScout help identify which units are welcoming girls?

Unit pins have an indicator if the unit is accepting girls. This indicator on the pin will be set through the organization manager settings.

Q: Will we have different uniforms for boys and girls?

All uniforms continue to be reviewed and adjusted to meet participant needs. While the fit and styling may be a bit different, the uniforms will remain fundamentally the same.

Chartered Organizations

Q: Were chartered organizations consulted before the BSA decided to welcome girls into the Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs?

Chartered organizations were consulted throughout the research and evaluation process. Since the decision we have received supportive feedback from a number of our partners.

Q: Do chartered organizations have a choice whether or not to adopt the expanded program?

Yes. Chartered organizations always have the option to select from the numerous BSA program offerings. They can select all or one of the BSA programs that they feel best meet the needs of their members and the communities around them.

Q: How should we approach a chartered organization that does not want to offer Family Scouting?

Chartered organizations can choose which programs to offer and whether they want to offer Family Scouting or remain focused on single-gender programs. If the chartered organization has made a well-informed decision to focus on single-gender programs, we recommend working with your district or council membership teams to identify new unit development opportunities.

Cub Scouting

Q: How will packs and dens be structured?

Cub Scout dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls. Cub Scout packs, meanwhile, can include any combination of all-boy or all-girl dens. The choice is left to individual leaders in consultation with their chartered organization.

This hybrid model builds on the benefit of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.



Q: Should dens for girls and dens for boys meet at the same time and place?

It is up to the chartered organization and the pack or the den to decide meeting times and places.

Q: Can separate boy and girl dens work on the same activity at the same time together?

There is no set rule or guideline on this. If appropriate, this can be treated the same as two dens of the same gender working together. It will be up to the good judgement of leaders to decide what is best for their units.

Q: Will girls who enter in the fall of 2018 as Arrow of Light have a troop ready to accept them at crossover time in 2019?

Though we cannot guarantee a troop will be ready where you are, the Scouting program for older girls is scheduled to be ready to accept participants February 1, 2019, to coincide with timing for many crossovers across the nation.

Q: Will girls who registered in the early adopter program need to register again later in the year?

Those who registered in the spring of 2018 were charged the prorated membership fee based on their unit's next recharter. For example, if a new Cub Scout registered in February and that pack has a December recharter, then that Cub Scout registration fee was for 11 months. So, they will need to re-register with the pack, along with the other members of the pack, in December.

Q: If I have a question about how to incorporate girls into the pack, who should I talk to?

In an overwhelming number of existing packs across the country, girls have already informally been participating in activities, including pack meetings and family camping, so the BSA doesn't foresee major issues in welcoming girls officially to packs. Because the program itself is not changing, your unit commissioner would be the most knowledgeable person to talk to about the Scouting program. Your district executive is also a resource.

Q: Can packs share unit numbers? If so, how do we tell them apart?

A: Yes, they can share pack numbers. You will be able to tell them apart in the system the same way that we do when councils merge — there is a prefix in ScoutNet that IDs each unit.

Q: What if I only have one or two girls who are interested in joining?

Keep recruiting — have the girls invite their friends. Packs will continue to have the option to combine grade levels to form a den as long as they are working on their respective ranks. For example, if you have two third-grade girls and two fourth-grade girls, you may combine into one single-gender den as long as they are working on their Bear and Webelos, respectively.

Q: Can the Lion badge be worn on the blue Cub Scout uniform?

Yes. The Lion badge can be worn on the blue Cub Scout uniform.

The proper badge configuration for the Cub Scouting badges from Lion through Bear is depicted here.



Q: Are Webelos required to wear the tan uniform or can they wear the Cub Scout blue?

The Webelos uniform is the tan uniform. **Note:** the diamond Webelos badge is being phased out. Below is the proper Webelos/Arrow of Light badge configuration.



Scouts BSA

Q: What is the name of the program for older youth?

The name of the program serving youth 11-17 years old will be Scouts BSA, which perfectly represents the new, inclusive program for older Scouts that the Boy Scouts of America is proud to offer. The name change is effective February 2019, when Scouts BSA will begin welcoming girls and boys.

Scouts BSA builds on the legacy of the Scout name, the Scout handbook, Scouts themselves – we have more than 108 years of heritage and tradition built on the Scout name. Scouts BSA is the same iconic program with a name that welcomes young men and women to the adventure of Scouting.

The BSA will continue to build the future of Scouting with Scouts BSA, as we deliver character and leadership and offer a path to the rank of Eagle Scout for boys and girls.

Q: What will the members of the program be called?

Just as today, they will be called Scouts. For example, “I’m in Scouts BSA, so I am a Scout.”

Q: Why did the BSA not keep the Boy Scout program name and introduce a separate name for the program for girls?

Since all single-gender troops will run the same Scouting program, earn the same merit badges and achieve the same ranks, it became clear that there should be one program name.

Q: Will the Boy Scout Handbook be updated to reflect the new name?

Yes.

Q: Will Scouts BSA be rolled out like a pilot, or implemented all at one time?

The Boy Scouts of America’s Board of Directors unanimously approved to welcome girls into its iconic Scouting programs and to deliver a Scouting program for older girls that will enable them to advance and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout. This will not be handled as a pilot. For Scouts BSA, there will be no soft launch; implementation for this program is scheduled for February 2019.

Q: Can linked troops share troop numbers? If so, how do we tell them apart?

A: Yes, they can share troop numbers. You will be able to tell them apart in the system the same way that we do when councils merge — there is a prefix in ScoutNet that IDs each troop.

Q: Will girls be able to earn the same merit badges?

Yes. All members of Scouts BSA will be eligible to earn merit badges.

Q: Will girls have to meet the same requirement to achieve Eagle Scout?

Yes. Young women will have the opportunity to earn the Eagle Scout rank by meeting the same criteria and achievements as young men.

Order of the Arrow

Q: Will girls be able to be members of the Order of the Arrow?

Beginning February 1, 2019, unit elections will be permitted in Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scout units.

Q: Will camping be counted retroactively for those currently in Venturing and Sea Scouts?

Yes. Camping that has taken place within the two years immediately prior to the election will be counted beginning February 1, 2019. This camping must have taken place while an individual was registered with the BSA as a program participant and must be while participating with a BSA Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship.

Q: Can I be elected into the OA if I am over the age of 18?

Yes! As long as you are under the age of 21 at the time the election is held. If you are over 21, you will need to go through the adult selection process.

Q: Will there be any opportunities for Venturers to learn more about the OA and Venturing?

Yes! We will provide high level information and the opportunity to gather feedback from youth Venturing participants at VenturingFest 2018, which will be held July 1-6, 2018.

Q: When will the OA literature be updated to reflect these changes?

We are planning that all literature will be updated by Summer of 2019.

Q: Will we still be able to wear lodge flaps on any female uniforms that may be created?

Yes. We continue to work with BSA National Supply to help ensure that the current OA lodge flap shape and size will be accommodated.

Youth Protection and Adult Supervision

Q: May an adult male lead an all-girl unit?

Yes, an adult male can lead an all-girl unit, just as we already have adult females leading all-boy programs. Youth protection requirements still apply to both male and female participants.

Effective, October 1, 2018, two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader over 21 in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader over 21 must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.

Eligible volunteers need to be:

- 1) 21 and over
- 2) Registered as a volunteer with the BSA
- 3) Have gone through a background check, and
- 4) Be up to date on Youth Protection training

This is a change from our previous policy where one leader could be 21 years of age or older with a second leader who could be 18 years of age or older.

Q: Are there going to be changes in the requirements for adult leadership?

As always, we will maintain our continuous improvement model to ensure the safety of all youth.

Effective, October 1, 2018, two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader over 21 in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader over 21 must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.

Eligible volunteers would need to be:

- 5) 21 and over
- 6) Registered as volunteers with the BSA
- 7) Have gone through a background check, and
- 8) Be up to date on Youth Protection training

This is a change from our previous policy where one volunteer could be 21 years of age or older with a second volunteer who could be 18 years of age or older.

Examples of approved leadership

Boy dens, troops, crews, or ships

Volunteers may be all male, all female, or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over.

Girl dens, troops, crews, or ships

Volunteers may be all female or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over and at least one must be female.

Family packs

Volunteers may be all female or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over and at least one must be female.

Overnight activities

A change from the previous policy where only one of the adults was required to be registered, we are now requiring two 21 years old or over leaders for all activities, including overnights; if girls are present, at least one of the volunteers must be female (to be a volunteer, you must be registered).

Additional leadership

As one example of additional leadership, camp standards require not only the minimum adult leadership, but also require certain ratios (e.g., aquatics (PS-201-1) and COPE (SQ-409-3)).

All adults accompanying a Scouting unit who are present at the activity for 72 total hours or more must be registered as leaders. The 72 hours need not be consecutive.

Q: What facility changes will need to happen at our camps?

The Boy Scouts of America has been serving young women for decades, so many camps already accommodate women. Each council will evaluate their facilities and make any needed changes.

Q: What is the policy for restroom and showering facilities?

Separate shower and latrine facilities should be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth. If separate facilities are not available, separate times should be scheduled and posted. This is not a change.

Q: What are the policies for sleeping accommodations?

Separate accommodations for adult males and females and youth males and females are required.

- Separate tenting arrangements must be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth.
- Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age.
- In Cub Scouting, parents and guardians may share a tent with their family.
- In all other programs, youth and adults tent separately.
- Spouses may share tents.

Q: What training will be taken by camp staff?

Camp director and camp staff training includes “Understanding and Preventing Youth-on-Youth Abuse,” which addresses key issues that apply to all youth: bullying, harassment, inappropriate behavior, privacy, and other important subjects.

Q: What will happen at Day Camp if we only have a few girls, and they are not the same rank?

Maintaining the all-boy den and all-girl den is an overall Cub Scouting program requirement that extends into all activities; however, Day Camps can offer joint activities that are available to multiple dens.