

Twenty Things I Know Now That I Wish I'd Known Then: Webelos to Boy Scouts Transition Hints for Webelos Leaders

In my opinion, Webelos Scouts enjoy the most fun and most exciting program in Cub Scouts. Your eighteen months with your Webelos will help them begin to think and act like Boy Scouts, with the goal that they will all cross over into Boy Scouting. Here are some pointers that will help you guide your scouts in a smooth transition from a Cub Scout Pack to a Boy Scout Troop.

1. First and foremost: Understand, believe in, and always use the Guide to Safe Scouting.
2. Get as much training as you can! The Webelos program is very different from the other Cub Scouting programs; attending University of Scouting, Roundtables, and workshops about the Webelos rank will help you provide your scouts with the best experience possible.
3. While your scouts are still Bears, talk to current Webelos leaders for advice, suggestions, and ideas.
4. Plan ahead – make a schedule for the 18 to 20 month Webelos program. Figure out which activity badges you would like to cover during each season, keeping in mind that some badges have outdoor components. Also remember that the boys will cross over to the troops in February or March of their fifth grade year.
5. Encourage your scouts to attend summer camp as many summers as they can!
6. Hold a Parent Meeting at the start of your program to explain how your Webelos den will work and your expectations for the boys and for the parents. Remember, a successful scout needs the support of his family.
7. Identify experts who can help you with specific activity badges – art teachers, engineers, medical personnel, etc. – and then recruit them! Don't forget to check with your scouts' parents – many of them have professions, hobbies, and knowledge that can enrich your activity badge presentations.
8. Reach up to your local troops for their Scouting expertise and leadership! Boy Scouts can be wonderful teachers and great role models for your Webelos. Using a trained Den Chief from a local troop gives your boys great exposure to what a Boy Scout is and gives you an extra pair of hands!
9. Always encourage and expect the boys to become Boy Scouts. Remind them that the fun things they are doing in their Webelos den are just the beginning of their future Scouting adventures.
10. Present the joining requirements for Boy Scouts early in the program and reinforce and practice them often.
11. Get the boys outside as much as possible and in all kinds of weather.
12. Camping is a big part of Boy Scouting. It's a great idea to expose your Webelos to camping, outdoor cooking, and fire building. Backyard campouts are a fun and unthreatening way to start.
13. Look to your local troops for opportunities to go camping as well. Introduce yourself to some Scoutmasters and ask to be invited to the next Webelos-friendly outings they have on their troop calendars.
14. After your den has earned the Webelos rank badge, allow the boys to help determine the activity badges that they want to work on in the coming months. This is also a good time to move to tan uniforms, if the boys aren't wearing them already.
15. Continue your program throughout the summer between fourth and fifth grade. Fun summertime activities like backyard campouts or campfires, hikes, and swimming will keep the boys motivated and interested in Scouting.

16. Buy a Boy Scout Handbook for your reference and to make your Webelos Scouts drool!
17. In the fall of fifth grade, invite Boy Scout troop representatives to come to a den meeting and tell the boys all about Boy Scouts.
18. Schedule visits to two or three local Boy Scout troops with your den. The boys need to see how Boy Scout troop meetings are run and the ways in which troops differ from each other.
19. In the winter of fifth grade, help the boys narrow down which troops appeal to them. By late January, notify the Scoutmasters of those troops so they can reach out to the boys. Once the Webelos have decided which troops to join, invite the Scoutmasters to the Crossing Over Ceremony, which in most Packs will take place in February.
20. Work with your Cubmaster to plan special Arrow of Light and Crossing Over Ceremonies, because your Webelos deserve it!

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