



**Pioneer Trails District
Denver Area Council**

***Webelos to Scouts Transition:
A Webelos Leader Reference***

Welcome!

For those of you who are a new Webelos Leader, welcome to the journey and experience of Scouting! Webelos dates back to 1941 when the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) created the rank and boys could earn their Lion badge. Pop quiz time! What did Webelos stand for before **We'll Be Loyal Scouts**? Give up? It stood for Wolf, Bear, Lion, Scout which was the progression from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts. Now you can impress your friends with Scouting trivia!

Is Webelos Different

You may be new to Scouting and wondering if Webelos is any different from Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts. Webelos are in the Cub Scouting program but they are different. Depending on how your program is implemented, you could be in a one or two year Webelos program. Why are there different programs? The Boy Scouts of America partners with various chartered organizations and those groups do have some latitude in how the program is delivered and incorporated into existing programs. With that said, you and the Webelos patrol have anywhere from 12 to 24 months to earn the Webelos Rank and the Arrow of Light. Don't worry. It can be done in as little as six months but I wouldn't recommend that be your standard! As stated above, Webelos stands for We'll Be Loyal Scouts. The Webelos rank is earned on the path to becoming a Boy Scout. Many of the activities are a sample of what Boy Scouts is all about. Keep that in mind as you read on.

Webelos "Patrol"

In the younger ranks, boys are organized into dens and the den size is really dependent on the leaders. It is recommended that dens be between six and eight boys. If you only have 10 boys, it may not make sense to make two dens of five. I would recommend that Webelos have two patrols of five instead of one patrol of 10.

You may be asking yourself why I am calling the Webelos a patrol instead of a den. Well, when the Webelos transition to Boy Scouts, they will be formed into patrols and asked to use the patrol method. The patrol method gives Scouts experience in group dynamics and leadership. It places responsibility on them and teaches them how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to interact in small groups, typically six to eight boys, where they can easily relate to each other. Within the Patrol there will be a Patrol Leader who leads the group for a six month period. Most Boy Scout Troops have elections every six months for the senior leadership. The senior leadership consists of the Senior Patrol Leader who leads the Troop, as well as the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader(s), Historian, Scribe and Librarian just to name a few. The elections are where boys decide who will lead them and the boys have an opportunity to learn how to lead others.

Teaching The Patrol Method

If you have not heard the phrase “Patrol Method” before, you may be wondering how you can possibly teach something you don’t know. Is there training for the patrol method? Yes, there is. You learn the fundamentals of the patrol method with the outdoor leadership training. But, I have an easier method for you to teach the patrol method. Get a Den Chief from a local Boy Scout Troop!

What Is A “Den Chief”?

A Den Chief is an older Boy Scout who is typically selected by the senior patrol leader and Scoutmaster of a local Troop. You can talk to your Cubmaster about getting one or more Den Chiefs from local Troops. The Den Chief will have taken training specific to the position and understand the goals of Webelos. He will help lead the weekly meetings and take on various assignments in order to help you lead the boys.

The Den Chief leadership role is one within Boy Scouts that is an eligible position to count towards earning the rank of Eagle Scout. In truth, getting a Den Chief helps you with the Webelos earning rank and helps the Scout reach his goal of Eagle Scout.

Our Pack Feeds Troop 1

Many Packs have a Troop with whom they associate primarily. That does not mean that all boys from your pack have to join that Troop. As I’m sure you know, not all boys get along with every other boy. This is even more true as they mature. Boys develop different interests and goals as they grow and as they explore Scouting and become more in tune with who they are.

Keeping that in mind, I would strongly encourage you to make sure you have a Den Chief from more than one Troop in your area if you have more than one patrol. The other thing to consider is having two Den Chiefs for the same patrol – one per six months. Leadership positions in a Boy Scout Troop are typically for six months at a time. Having the Webelos learn different skills from boys of different Troops will give them an edge in that they will have learned how to better deal with change and adapt to a new team dynamic.

How Do I Find Other Troops

The Cubmaster and Committee Chair should know about various Troops in the area or they can talk to the Unit Commissioner about Troops in the area. In addition, you can use the BeAScout.org website to find local Troops. Using the website is a task best suited for the boys. As a requirement to earn rank, they have to visit with a Boy Scout Troop and participate in a Boy Scout oriented outdoor activity. Using the website, the boys can find

Troops in the area to visit and make plans on when to visit. For more information on this process, please review the *Transition Guide for Boys and Parents*.

If your Cubmaster says to only ask Troop 1 for a Den Chief, please respectfully decline and remind the Cubmaster that not one size, or Troop, fits all. Remember, Scouting is all about the boys learning values and skills to help them throughout their life.

Is The Patrol Method Important

In a word, YES! When we equip Scouts with the knowledge and tools they need, they are more likely to have fun and stay active in Scouting. The patrol method is an integral part of the Scouting experience. It teaches leadership, conflict management and team building. It allows the boys to become a cohesive group working towards common goals and ideals.

During the Webelos program a Scout must learn to transition from being led to being a leader. Once the Scout crosses over into Boy Scouts, it is up to the Scout to blaze his own trail to Eagle. Moms, Dads, grandparents, uncles and aunts are no longer “Akela” and leading the pack. All of these people are now supporting, guiding, mentoring the Scouts and allowing them to succeed or not. Scouting is a safe place for boys to learn, succeed and fail.

You Make The Difference

As boys reach the Webelos age, they are often faced with many choices taking them in many different directions. Statistics show us that every year more than 25 percent of all Webelos Scouts do not continue into a Boy Scout Troop. Why is this?

Many boys find they are more interested in playing sports than in making crafts as they have in years past. As the leader, one of the underlying goals is to help Webelos understand the value of Scouting. You also need to help the Webelos understand the differences of Boy Scouting and get ready for “all of the really cool stuff like camping, rifle shooting, kayaking and even high adventures such as rock climbing.” If Webelos and parents do not visit with Boy Scout Troops, the Webelos Scout may think it’s another year of the same old stuff.

Attending activities with Boy Scout Troops is one way for the Webelos to understand how things are different. It’s also a way for the parents to meet with the Troop parents and understand roles and responsibilities. Parents need a good orientation just like the boys. It’s important for you to know who the contacts are inside of a Troop. This will allow you to introduce the parents to the adult leaders at the same time that you introduce the Webelos to the boy leaders.

As Lord Baden-Powell is credited with saying, Scouting is fun with a purpose. We all learn so much more when we enjoy what we do and better yet, when we don’t realize that we are learning at all. Make it fun! Make it exciting! Make it an experience of a lifetime!