

What is a den chief?

A Den Chief is an older scout* who assists a Cub Scout or Webelos Scout den leader at den meetings, pack meetings, and other events. He is the “Activities Assistant” for a Cub Scout den or Webelos Scout patrol. His role is to work with the den leaders and help the scouts complete their Cub Scout or Webelos Scout advancement requirements and live up to Cub Scouting's ideals in their everyday lives. The den chief is a member of a leadership team that includes the den leader, assistant den leader, and the denner. He is already what every Cub Scout and Webelos Scout would like to be – a Boy Scout. As far as the younger boys are concerned, he is the person they would most like to follow, and that makes the older scout a natural leader for them. *** A den chief can be an older male from a Boy Scout Troop, Venture Crew or Varsity Team or an older female youth from a Venture Crew. To simplify material presentation the information in this handout refers to the den chief as specifically being a male.**

Why is a den chief important to the Cub and Boy Scout Program?

The den chief is a key means of building relationships between the pack and troop, crew or team. The den chief regularly reminds the boys about Boy Scouts in a positive way as he/she leads activities and shares their enthusiasm for Scouting with the Cub Scouts. Their presence adds another important asset: they can tell them all about Boy Scouting, with its outdoor activities, trips, summer camp, and opportunities for advancement. When it's time for them to move up to a Webelos Scout patrol or a Boy Scout troop, a den chief's positive example and encouragement can help them decide to make that transition.

Where do den chiefs come from?

- A Boy Scout Troop, Venture Crew or Varsity Team.
- It is best if he has attended a council, district or troop sponsored den chief training course.
- An Assistant Scoutmaster of Den Chiefs or a District Den Chief Trainer can assist a Cubmaster or den leader with obtaining a den chief.

Does a Boy Scout earn anything for being a trained den chief?

- Leadership practice, organization and communication skills and responsibility!!!
- A Boy Scout may use the den chief position as a means to help him fulfill specific leadership requirements needed for rank advancement.
- The Den Chief Service Award if he fulfills all requirements as detailed in the *Den Chief Handbook*.

How long does a den chief stay with the den?

- Your den chief should look at his role as being a one year commitment.
- You might want to speak with him early on about this commitment to see what he is willing to commit to. Many Boy Scout Troops elect their leaders every 6 months, so the den chief job is unusual in that regard. But the Boy Scout can get credit towards his rank for *each* 6 month term that he serves as a den chief.

What is a trained den chief responsible for?

- Set a good example by having a positive attitude and behaving in a proper and respectful manner that reflects the Scout Law and the Scout Oath.
- Treat each boy with respect, sensitivity, and fairness.
- Know the purposes of Cub Scouting, and help the boys to achieve them.
- Arrive on time and prepared to start.
- Wear the BSA Boy Scout uniform completely and correctly. (His troop will present him with the Den Chief Badge and “Trained” patch that he is to wear).
- Know and understand the monthly BSA Core Value.
- Be an “Activity Assistant” for the den: Lead and/or assist with the specific activities the den leader requested the den chief to prepare for.
- Assist with set-up, song/skit/ceremony rehearsal and any pre-assigned den activities at the monthly pack meetings.
- Participate in consistent communication with the the den leader so the den chief’s responsibilities for the den and pack meetings are clearly understood, prepared and organized.
- Recognize and work with the denner as his right-hand man by giving the denner opportunities to serve.
- Encourage Cub Scouts to become Webelos.
- Encourage Webelos to become Boy Scouts.

What a den chief is NOT responsible for:

- **A den chief is NOT ANOTHER CUB SCOUT.** It is the den leader's responsibility to ensure the den chief does not become just another one of the boys in the Cub Scout den. It is important that he not be seen as a competitor to the Cubs and Webelos. If anything, he is more like a big brother than a fellow den member.
- **A den chief is NOT A DENNER.** The reasons why the positions of denner and assistant denner exist are to give the Cubs and Webelos a chance to experience some of their own leadership tasks. If a den chief begins to take over the role of the denner then the boys in the den are losing a great chance to learn some new people skills.
- **A den chief is NOT A BABYSITTER.** Keep Youth Protection Guidelines in mind at all times...a den chief should not be left to run an activity or discussion without an adult within sight. A den chief does not fulfill the "trained adult over the age of 18" requirement on a Tour Permit or Guide to Safe Scouting!
- **A den chief is NOT AN ADULT.** They should not be given the role of den or assistant den leader. Their job is to be the Activities Leader at meetings.
- They are **NOT THE DISCIPLINARIAN**...all discipline is the responsibility of the adults!

What are the DEN LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITIES to the den chief?

1. **Be prepared** with jobs and assignments for him...don't ignore him.
 - If your den meeting is planned and prepared it is easier for you to have a list of specific responsibilities to give him before the meeting.
 - It is easier on everyone to ask him a week before the meeting to have two gathering activities ready to go instead of waiting until the meeting starts to ask him to "keep the scouts busy for 10 minutes with a game that relates to the month's Core Value".
2. **Make it clear** what his specific responsibilities are for each activity.
 - If he understands what is specifically expected of him during each meeting, he can arrive prepared to lead the boys and be of help to you.
 - Make sure he is aware of how much time he has for each of his tasks.
3. **You create the meeting agenda.**
 - As the leader you will decide how you schedule the den activities and what rank requirements will be covered during den meetings, the den chief will not be making these decisions. But he will have to know what you plan to do and what you would like to see him do to support your plan.
 - Share the BSA Monthly Core Value with him; Boy Scouts do not utilize this program. Give him a copy of the Core Value description to help him understand the concept and prepare his tasks.
4. Do not have the den chief doing a job that should be done by the denner.
5. Clear and consistent weekly **communication** with the den chief.
 - Ask him if he prefers to be emailed or phoned, and when the best times to do this are, and the correct number/email address for this.
 - Make sure he is given both an updated den and pack schedule detailing all events (date/time/location/items needed/etc.), as well as your pack's website address.
 - Include him in any communication with your den regarding meetings, events and changes.
 - Sign off in the den chief's handbook when he has completed specific requirements and brought his handbook to you.
6. **Maintain open communication with the Boy Scout's Den Chief Advisor.**
 - The Den Chief Advisor will periodically contact you to check in and get an update on the den chief's performance and progress.
 - Complete a letter of review describing and evaluating the den chief's performance, and return it to the advisor in a timely manner.

A den leader's responsibilities to the den chief, cont.

7. **Open communication with the parent(s)** of the den chief.
 - When he joins your den, immediately obtain his contact/emergency/medical information.
 - Give his parents all of you and your assistant den leader's contact info.
 - Get permission from the parents to share his phone number or email address with others in the den and pack.
 - Make sure his parents receive an updated den and pack schedule detailing all events (date/time/location/items needed/etc.).
 - **Remember**...he is only 11 – 15 years old...it is his parents that are shuttling him around to all of your den and pack activities...they need to know ASAP of any schedule changes and cancellations.
8. **Purchase and presentation of the den chief cord.**
 - There is a specific den chief cord for a Tiger and a Cub den chief to wear, and a specific one for a Webelos den chief to wear. Each type is worn on the left shoulder.
 - Check with your Pack Awards Chair to find out how to get one and who pays for it in your unit.
9. **Be patient** and remember that he is learning leadership and communications skills, as well as how to be organized and responsible!
10. **Understand his abilities and strengths** and emphasize those over his limitations.
11. **Praise publically and criticize privately.**

What is the den chief's role during a den meeting?

1. Gathering Activity
 - Helps teach boys tricks, puzzles, games and songs while Scouts are arriving for the meeting.
 - The activities he uses here could be related to the monthly Core Value.
2. Opening
 - Gather together/organize scouts for the more serious part of the den meeting.
 - He could hold a uniform inspection during this time, teach or assist them with a flag ceremony, lead them in the Cub Scout Promise and/or the Law of the Pack.
3. Activities
 - This is when the den chief can be the most help. He is the Activities Assistant, leading boys in games, songs, craft projects, scouting discussions etc.

“The den chief’s role during a den meeting” cont.

- Make sure you have explained all aspects of the activity/craft/game to him a week before the meeting, and confirm any additional details a couple days before the actual meeting. Review them the day of the meeting, beforehand.
 - The den chief can *assist* the scouts with running the clean-up/help “motivate” the younger scouts to do their part in cleaning up...he is not the maid or janitor.
4. Closing
- Helps restore order and quiet for closing ceremony.
 - He can help make announcements, lead a closing ceremony, review the Bobcat Badge requirements, teach the denner how to properly fold and put away any flags or displays.
5. After the meeting
- He can have a quick game, magic trick or scout skill ready to teach any boys that are staying after the meeting while their parents are talking with the den leader.
 - Review the evening’s meeting and how you both felt it went. Remember: “Praise publically, criticize privately”.
 - Be sure to include him in your planning for the next den meeting and assign him specific responsibilities.

(Note: The Webelos den chief helps a Webelos den similarly. In addition to the suggestions above, he helps Webelos Scouts learn Boy Scout requirements for the Webelos badge and Arrow of Light Award and helps with demonstrations and teaching of activity badges, as needed.)

What can a den chief assist with during a pack meeting?

1. Guiding Scouts in setting up displays and preparing the meeting room.
2. Leading a prepared gathering activity with another adult(s) and/or den chief.
3. Getting the boys organized and seated.
4. Helping with and or participating in skits, applause stunts, den yell or songs, or activity badge demonstrations.
5. If your pack utilizes a den chief as an assistant to the entire pack, make sure it has been made clear in advance what is expected of the den chief during each specific pack meeting...the Cubmaster may like input with regards to this.
6. Helps den leader maintain good behavior from Cub Scouts.
7. Guides the Scouts in taking down any displays at end of pack meeting and returning the pack meeting room to order.

Den Chief Service Award

When a Scout takes on the job of den chief, he is asked to discuss the following with the den leader: The importance of the attitude of service and leadership within Scouting, having a positive attitude regarding service and leadership within the den, and the length of service he will provide to the den and the pack.

The requirements were REVISED January 1, 2009, and he should have a Den Chief Handbook that states the following requirements:

1. Serve the pack faithfully for 1 full year.
2. Attend a den chief training (if available within year of service) OR be trained by the assistant Cubmaster and den leader.
3. Know the purposes of Cub Scouting.
4. Help Cub Scouts achieve the purposes of Cub Scouting.
5. Be the activities assistant in den meetings and lead five songs, five stunts or skits, five games, five sports activities.
6. Set a good example by attitude and uniforming for a minimum of six months.
7. Be a friend to the boys in the den.
8. Take part in weekly meetings for a minimum of six months.
9. Assist the den at the monthly pack program at least three times.
10. Meet as needed with the adult members of the den, pack or troop.
11. Complete FOUR of these projects:
 - A. Serve as a staff member of a Cub Scout special event, such as a Scouting show, bicycle rodeo, etc.
 - B. Serve as a staff member of a Cub Scout Day camp or resident camp.
 - C. Advance one rank.
 - D. Assist in recruiting three new Cub Scouts.
 - E. Assist three Cub Scouts to become Webelos Scouts.
 - F. Assist three Webelos Scouts to join a troop.
 - G. Help to plan and carry out a joint pack-troop activity.
 - H. Recommend to your Scoutmaster, Varsity Scout Coach, or Venturing Adviser another Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or Venturer to be a den chief.

The **Blue & Gold Braids** are worn by a den chief serving a Tiger or Cub Scout Den. **The Red, Blue and Gold Braids** are worn by a den chief serving a Webelos Den.

The **Red, White and Blue Braids** are the Den Chief Service Award Braids.

Each of these is worn over the left shoulder, (under the epaulet and under the arm). A Scout that has earned the Den Chief Service Award, and is serving as a Den Chief or Webelos Den Chief, may wear both braids.