

August 2026 - Welcoming New Cub Scout Families

A family may choose to attend your next recruiting event because their child saw camping, Pinewood Derby, fishing, rockets, or another exciting activity that caught their attention.

Our job is to help that family recognize Scouting’s larger value, take the next step with confidence, and experience enough of the program to want to return.

New families do not always leave because they decided Scouting was not for them. Sometimes they simply encounter too much uncertainty, too many unanswered questions, or too much effort between one step and the next.

The goal is not only to recruit families. It is to reduce the unnecessary friction that keeps interested families from participating.

Why is Scouting’s value harder to explain?

Parents often understand youth programs by the main outcome they associate with them:

Activity	Familiar value
Sports	Fitness and teamwork
STEM	Academic skills and problem-solving
Arts	Mastery and expression
Scouting	Belonging, responsibility, leadership, service, outdoor challenge, and long-term growth

Scouting’s strength is that it supports many parts of a child’s development at once.

That also makes it harder to summarize.

The activity captures their attention. The experience reveals the value.

Do not only describe what Cub Scouts do. Help parents see what those experiences can do for their child.

What is a parent deciding?

Most families are not ready to understand all of Scouting. They are deciding whether it deserves the next step.

The child needs	The parent needs
• Something real to do • A small success • Someone to connect with • A reason to want more	• Evidence of value • Confidence in the leaders • Clear logistics • Safety and trust • An obvious next step

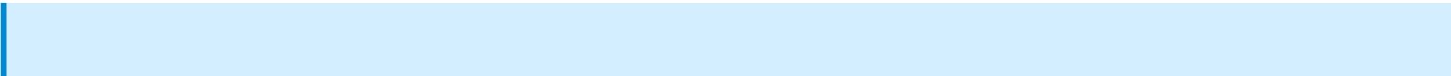
Listen before explaining

Use questions to discover what caught the family's attention, what they hope to gain, and what might make participation difficult.

Ask the child	Ask the parent
• What about Scouting caught your attention? • What are you most excited to try? • What kinds of things do you like to do for fun? • Do you know anyone here already?	• What made you decide to come tonight? • What are you hoping your child finds in Scouting? • What kinds of activities does your child usually enjoy? • What would be helpful to know about how our Pack works? • How does our meeting schedule fit with your family's week? • Is anything about participating still unclear?

Follow the answer

- Tell me more about that.
- Is that something your child already enjoys, or would it be new?
- Would it help if I showed you what that looks like in our Pack?



Do not ask every question. A natural conversation usually needs only:

1. what brought them in
2. what the child or parent values
3. one practical concern
4. one clear next step

The three yeses we need to earn

Registration may place a family on the roster, but participation and belonging develop only as the Pack earns a yes to three questions:

- Will we try it?
- Will we show up?
- Will we come back?

Each question is also a place where confusion, uncertainty, or unclear expectations can interrupt the family's journey.

1. Will we try it?

At Join Scouting Night, families are deciding whether Cub Scouting feels like something they can picture themselves joining.

Let the evening feel like a small Cub Scout meeting:

- Personally introduce yourself to each attending family.
- Use the American flag and Pack flag to make the room feel like a real Cub Scout meeting.
- Invite a current Scout in uniform to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Give prospective Scouts the chance to try a real Cub Scout activity.
- Let parents see leaders who are prepared, attentive, and comfortable working with children.
- Bring families back together before registration so the children can share what they did.
- End with one clear next step: register tonight or attend a specific upcoming meeting.

The activity does not need to be elaborate. A simple paper-airplane activity can show families that Cub Scouting is hands-on, welcoming, and built around learning by doing.

Reduce friction: Make the experience easy to enter, easy to understand, and easy to act on.

Avoid: Asking families to make a decision based only on a presentation about ranks, uniforms, Pack structure, and future activities.

**Do not make Join Scouting Night a meeting about Cub Scouts.
Let it be the family's first Cub Scout meeting.**

2. Will we show up?

After registering, the family is deciding whether the next step feels clear and manageable.

Send a personal follow-up that points the family to a parent-ready calendar invitation. Event descriptions in Scoutbook, or your Pack's preferred calendar app, should answer:

- **Action:** Do we need to RSVP or complete anything?
- **Who:** Which Scouts and family members should attend?
- **What:** What will happen at the meeting?
- **When and where:** What time, location, entrance, and meeting point?
- **Adult participation:** Does a parent or guardian remain?
- **Bring and wear:** What is needed, and are regular clothes okay?
- **Participation notes:** Can we arrive late, miss this meeting, or request support?
- **Questions:** Who should we contact?

Use the [Pack Calendar and Event Description Templates](#) to create parent-ready calendar entries for den meetings, Pack meetings, outings, campouts, recruiting events, and other common Pack activities.

A new family should not need to search old messages, understand Pack terminology, or contact a leader before they can participate.

Reduce friction: Put the information where the family will look for it and answer the questions before they have to ask.

Avoid: A bare listing that gives only the event name, time, and location.

An event listing tells families that something exists. A participation-ready invitation tells them how to join it.

3. Will we come back?

At the first meeting, the family is deciding whether the experience felt welcoming, worthwhile, and manageable enough to repeat.

- Know the family's names and expect their arrival.
- Assign someone to greet them.
- Introduce the child to another Scout.
- Introduce the parent to another adult.
- Give the child something real to do within the first few minutes.
- Check in before the family leaves.
- Confirm the next meeting and what to expect.

Explain only what the family needs right now. The rest of Cub Scouting can be introduced over time.

Reduce friction: Do not make the family figure out where to go, whom to talk to, or what happens next.

Avoid: Assuming registration, a name tag, or simply being present in the room automatically creates belonging.

The child needs a reason to return. The parent needs confidence to bring them back.

Reduce friction between each yes

At every step, ask:

- Does the family know what happens next?
- Do they know what they need to do?
- Can they find the information easily?
- Have we explained only what they need right now?
- Does someone know this family and remain connected through the handoff?

Families should not have to overcome our operating system before they can experience the value of Scouting.

Make sure someone stays connected

Clear information helps, but families also need a person who knows who they are and helps them find their place in the Pack.

Scouting America's **New Member Coordinator** role is designed to support that connection. In your Pack, that person may:

- meet families at recruiting events
- follow up after registration
- help them connect with the correct den
- answer early questions
- check in after the first meeting

The New Member Coordinator does not need to do everything personally. The important thing is that no family is left wondering who knows them or what happens next.

Before your next recruiting event

Ask your Pack:

Who will personally follow up with each family?

Does the first meeting invitation answer the questions a new parent will have?

Who will expect and greet the family when they arrive?

Improve the next handoff, the next invitation, and the next first meeting.

Additional resources

Heart of Virginia Council

- [Recruitment Materials](#): Council recruiting resources, campaign materials, peer-to-peer recruiting tools, and guidance for helping families find and join your unit.
- [Join the Adventure](#): Parent-facing information that supports Join Scouting Night, answers common questions, and helps families understand how to take the next step.
- [Cub Scouts in the Heart of Virginia Council](#): A local overview of Cub Scouting and council opportunities for prospective and newly registered families.
- [Update Your Unit Pin on BeAScout](#): Instructions for making sure families see current meeting, contact, and application information when they search for your Pack.
- [Den, Pack, and Troop Driven Recruitment](#): Heart of Virginia Council guidance on the role units play in inviting families, supporting Join Scouting Night, and sustaining membership growth.

Scouting America

- [Recruitment Resources](#): National recruiting materials and ideas for helping families experience the outdoor adventure and fun of Scouting.
- [Cub Scouts](#): A parent-facing introduction to Cub Scouting, including the New Family Information Guide, program structure, uniforms, costs, and common questions.
- [New Member Coordinator](#): Guidance on the New Member Coordinator role and its focus on reaching prospective families and helping new members feel welcomed and want to stay.