

Cub Scout Academics and Sports Program: Introduction

The Cub Scout Academics and Sports program is a supplemental enrichment program that complements the existing Cub Scout program. The Academics subjects and, Sports activities allow boys to learn new techniques, increase scholarship skills, develop sportsmanship - and have fun. Boys participating in the program will be recognized for enjoying teamwork, developing physical fitness, and discovering and building new talents. The Academics and Sports program encourages a boy to do his best.

Concepts and Guidelines

The Cub Scout Academics and Sports program is based on the following concepts and guidelines

- The program supplements the existing advancement and recognition program for Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Webelos Scouts; it does not replace it. The program is one element of Cub Scouting, as are den and pack meetings, day camp, and other activities.
- All registered Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Webelos Scouts have an opportunity to participate in the Academics and Sports program.
- Participation may take place at home, with the family, or within a den, a pack, or the community.
- Adult participation by a parent or adult relative, if possible, is strongly recommended for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts and is required for Tiger Cubs.
- Emphasis is placed on introducing a boy to a sport or academic subject, allowing him to participate in it and encouraging him to do his best. The Academics and Sports program focuses on learning and skill development, not winning.
- The primary focus of the program is on scholarship and sportsmanship.
- Each Tiger Cub, Cub Scout, and Webelos Scout will be presented with the appropriate recognition item for completing the requirements, whether he does so as an individual Scout, with his family, with his den or pack, or in his school or community.
- The Academics portion of the program covers a variety of subjects, including art, chess, citizenship, communicating, computers, geography, heritages, mathematics, music, science, weather, and wildlife conservation.
- The Sports portion of the program includes summer and winter sports, indoor and outdoor sports, active and less-active sports, and team and individual sports.
- Cub Scouts who have disabilities may select their own activities and design their own fitness or academic program with the help of a physician, teacher, or parent.

The Purposes of Cub Scouting

The Cub Scout Academics and Sports program relates directly to the nine purposes of Cub Scouting:

- Positively influencing a boy's character development and encouraging spiritual growth
- Helping boys develop habits and attitudes of good citizenship
- Encouraging good sportsmanship and pride in growing strong in mind and body
- Improving understanding within the family
- Strengthening the ability to get along with other boys and to respect other people
- Fostering a sense of personal achievement by helping boys develop new interests and skills
- Showing how to be helpful and do one's best
- Providing fun and exciting new things to do
- Preparing boys to become Boy Scouts

Implementing the Program

One member of the pack committee should be responsible for coordinating the Academics and Sports program and overseeing the integration of the Academics and Sports activities into the pack program. This person can also ensure that requirements for the different activities are available to boys, families, and dens so that all boys have opportunities to earn awards.

Pack leaders should encourage involvement by dens and families and make sure they have opportunities to participate. Many of these academic subjects or sports may become activities a Cub Scout will enjoy for the rest of his life.

The pack leaders should also define how costs of the program are budgeted, how requirements will be verified, when and how recognition takes place, and what constitutes a den or pack tournament.

The pack leadership can begin incorporating the Academics and Sports activities into the pack program during the annual pack planning meeting. Using a list of Cub Scout Academics and Sports activities, the committee reviews the annual program plan and decides where the academic subjects and sports activities might fit. Remember that these activities should complement the pack's program.

1. As you consider which activities to use, ask,
 - Do the Academics and Sports activities fit into the pack's current program?
 - Which ones are a natural part of the pack program?
 - Which ones will help the boys to grow?
 - Which activities reinforce one or more of the purposes of Cub Scouting?
2. Pack leaders should consider the boys in the pack and ask these questions:
 - What is the natural inclination of the boys?
 - Which activities seem to interest them?
 - How can we best use this program in conjunction with our current plans?
 - What is an avid interest of an inactive Cub Scout in the den or pack?

Remember: The object of the program is to help boys learn a new skill or improve those they already possess - not simply to provide an opportunity for boys to earn additional recognition.

3. As you review the Academics and Sports activities, keep the school year in mind. Check with school leaders for guidance.
 - Which of the academic subjects fit with the school's education plans?
 - When does the school offer instruction in certain sports or academic areas?
4. Consider other community programs that affect a Cub Scouts involvement.
 - Are the boys playing organized sports that complement one of the sports in the Cub Scout Sports program?
 - Do they take part in music or art activities that complement one of the Academics subjects?
 - Do they participate in other activities covered by Cub Scout Academics and Sports areas?

Decisions about which academic subjects and sports to include in the pack's plan will be easier if you know the specific requirements for the activities you are considering. The "Academics and

Sports Program Guide" book lists all requirements, with academic requirements beginning on page 26, and sports requirements beginning on page 51. You are sure to find several Academics and Sports activities that will interest the boys. Try to introduce several new ones each year.

Carrying Out the Program

When your unit has selected the academic subjects and sports that you will do, incorporate them into your pack's program. Make copies of the program requirements and resources from this guide and give a copy to each boy and his adult participant. Remember that individual boys may also work on other Academics and Sports topics, so providing a list of all available ones may be helpful for families.

Depending on the activity and how the pack's leadership has decided to incorporate it into the pack's program, you may

- Tell boys that they may complete the activities as an individual at home, in school, or in another community setting.
- Incorporate the activity into your den meeting plans on a weekly or monthly basis.
- Incorporate the activity into your pack meeting or activity.
- Make the activity a broader experience by having the den or pack participate in a community-sponsored event.

Each activity has *two levels* of involvement: first, the belt loop; and second, the pin.

Belt Loops

There are three specific requirements for each belt loop. As a Cub Scout completes these requirements, he is encouraged to do his best to learn about the activity. The Cub Scout or

Webelos Scout can take part in one of three ways: (1) individually or with the family, (2) in the den or pack, or (3) in the school or the community. As Tiger Cubs participate in these activities, their adult partners must accompany them.

Pins

Once the boy has earned the belt loop, he may choose to stop; however, some boys will want to continue with the activity. A Tiger Cub, Cub Scout, or Webelos Scout may complete additional requirements to earn a pin.

Each boy should be recognized for participating in the program. Once a boy has completed the requirements for recognition, a pack leader completes the Den Recognition Report. He or she secures the appropriate recognition items, and the boy is presented with the recognition in a meaningful setting, such as a pack meeting.

Working With Cub Scout-Age Boys

You might often find yourself acting as teacher or coach as you work with boys in the Academics and Sports program. Keep these tips in mind.

1. Keep instruction fun. The use of games and stunts will enhance learning and keep the experience enjoyable for everyone.
2. When teaching skills, use words and ideas that children can easily relate to and enjoy. For instance, in swimming, you might tell boys they are going to "learn to float like a log" rather than learning "the prone float" Knowing the technical names of skills isn't as important as the skills themselves.

3. Keep the boys busy and active. Be ready to change to a new activity or to another skill before boys become restless and bored.
 4. Don't tease, ridicule, or threaten learners especially in front of others!
 5. Demonstrate skills slowly and correctly. It may be helpful to have a boy who is proficient in a skill demonstrate it for his peers.
 6. Always provide for the overall protection and supervision of all the boys.
- And remember: Actions speak louder than words! Discussions you have with youth may be meaningless if your own behavior is inconsistent with what you say.

Adaptations for Individuals With Disabilities

Flexibility and individuality are key words to remember when adapting Cub Scout Academics and Sports for boys with disabilities. For instance, a fast-moving sport may be difficult for some Cub Scouts with disabilities to participate in. The pace may be too quick, and they may not have enough time to make decisions. *Scouting for Youth with Learning Disabilities* (No. 33065), *Scouting for Youth with Emotional Disabilities* (No. 32998A), and *Understanding Cub Scouts with Disabilities* (No. 33839) are important resources for packs and dens using the Cub Scouts Academics and Sports program. Here are some general ideas for adapting the program for boys with disabilities.

1. *Adapt the activity*, or use mentors, to help a Cub Scout to participate. The boy should be involved to the best of his ability and so that he feels good about his participation.
2. *Involve the boy in a needed, unique role* that enhances the activity. For instance, he may be the team manager, the timekeeper, or the person responsible for equipment.
3. *Determine alternatives*. For instance, miniature golf could be used instead of a full golf course; wheelchair races could be used instead of cycling.
4. *Incorporate special helps* into the activity. For instance, during bowling, use ramps with wheelchairs and guide rails for visually impaired youth. During basketball, youth can use a scooter board. During swimming, let youth use artificial aids to help them move across the pool.
5. *Shorten time limits* as needed for the mental or physical ability of the Cub Scout.
6. *Include family members when planning* a boy's participation in your activity. A knowledgeable parent or guardian is the best resource to help you adapt an Academics or Sports activity.
7. Pack leaders, with the boy's parent or guardian, may *determine different requirements* in a specific academic subject or sport to better suit the Cub Scout's ability.

Here are some other helpful hints:

- Soccer, basketball, and volleyball are easy to adapt for wheelchair-bound youth.
- Computers can often be adapted to deal with specific disabilities.
- If baseball is too fast use tee ball or softball.
- In basketball games, adaptations could be minor changes in the rules; for example, don't use the three-second rule, let players cross the centerline, and permit double dribbling.
- Most youth with disabilities participate in physical fitness activities, and special-Olympics games are held in the summer and winter. Common sports for youth with disabilities include fishing, horseshoes, gymnastics, aerobics, hiking, and walking.
- Cycling may be possible, but pay attention to potential added dangers on the road to some youth with disabilities.
- Sports rated the highest in acceptability for youth with mental disabilities are swimming, softball, soccer, basketball, and physical fitness.

Recognition

A variety of recognition items are available for the boys who participate in the Cub Scout Academics and Sports program. (Adults are not awarded with belt loops or pins.) Packs are encouraged to include the cost of these recognition items in their annual budgets. Packs may consider charging a fee to each participating Cub Scout and adult partner to cover the cost of the awards.

Belt Loops

Belt loops are awarded to boys who complete the three belt loop requirements in an academic subject or sport. Participation can take place individually or with the family, in the den or pack, or in the school or community. Academics belt loops are gold, and Sports belt loops are silver.

Belt loops may be worn with the Cub Scout uniform on the Cub Scout belt. Webelos Scouts who have chosen to wear the khaki uniform may still wear the blue Cub Scout belt so as to display the belt loops they have earned.

Many Webelos Scouts may earn belt loops and pins a second time to qualify for Webelos activity badges. All boys may earn belt loops more than once; however, leaders should encourage boys to try different requirements and earn the pin. Packs should have a clear policy in place to determine whether the pack or the boy's family will be responsible for the cost of awards that are earned more than once.

Pins

Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Webelos Scouts may choose to continue their involvement in an Academics or Sports area and earn the pin. Pins may be worn on the Cub Scout Academics and Sports letter.

Academics and Sports Letter

The Academics and Sports letter, "C" (No. 00805), is available to boys for displaying Academics and Sports pins that Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Webelos Scouts earn. The letter, representing "Cub Scouts," can be worn on a sweater or jacket, or displayed or framed. It does not go on the uniform. There are no specific requirements for earning the letter, as it is designed merely to display pins.