

# Notes



BOY SCOUTS  
OF AMERICA®

SIMON KENTON COUNCIL

## Recruitment Playbook: Sign-Up Nights

“Sign-up” nights have been a keystone for Boy Scout recruiting for years, and for good reason: They work! Sign-up nights give parents and youth an opportunity to get to know Scouting at a personal level, face-to-face. Questions are answered, interest is built, and parents see how Scouting is for families like theirs, no matter what that family may look like. Plus families often enroll their boys right there on the spot. It’s a win-win situation.

### The Five Station Concept:

Your unit will hold a “sign-up” night at a prominent location in the community, ideally the elementary school your pack serves. At this sign-up night, you will provide basic information about what Scouting offers youth and families in the area. There are many ways families can be communicated to during your sign-up night, however this playbook outlines the most efficient way to communicate, sign-up, welcome, and educate new Scouting families in your Pack.

This playbook is the ideal and will act as your guide for planning, promoting, and carrying out a sign-up event in your area. Your unit will achieve the very best results in engaging new families and signing more youth up in the Scouting program.



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The online version and additional resources can be found at:  
[www.skscouts.org/membership](http://www.skscouts.org/membership)

Leadership Development Center  
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## Planning the Sign-Up Night:

The key to a successful sign-up event is thorough planning. You will need to work closely with the school or community center you are using, organize volunteers, and be prepared with any necessary materials such as information fliers, sign-up forms, and even treats. For best results utilize the school whenever possible as it is a central, neutral, and familiar location. Planning should begin at least eight weeks in advance of the event. Below is a suggested outline for planning your event.

■ **Get help** - Many hands make light work, so if you haven't done so already, assigning a unit membership chair and pack sign-up Coordinator is a great first step to a successful recruiting season. Or forget the title, ask a couple people in your unit to make sure this playbook happens!

■ **Set Goals** - Work with your chartered organization, unit committee and district membership personnel to discuss Cub Scout sign-up plans and set goals for your pack. How many youth and families do you want to sign up for Scouting? How will you do that? What resources are needed?

■ **Know your resources** - The Simon Kenton Council has many tools to assist your unit with getting the word out about joining Scouting. Fliers, stickers, postcards, posters, yard signs, and social media templates and videos are all available for customization at [www.skscouts.org/membership](http://www.skscouts.org/membership)

■ **Reserve your spot** - Sign-up events typically take place during the back-to-school recruiting season. For that reason, holding the event at a school is usually the best option. Typically, the school's scheduled back-to-school night is where you will be able to meet with the most families. Contact your local school principals or superintendents to discuss your Cub Scout sign-up event and get permission to attend

■ **Choosing a play** -The Simon Kenton Council offers the "Skate into Scouting" theme for many of the districts around the beltway area. Other areas are themed with the "Launch into Scouting" recruitment materials. Either way, be sure to utilize one of these themes and incentive programs. You may even consider investing in your pack's membership by creating additional incentives or activities that boys can participate in by joining your pack. Keep in mind all Simon Kenton Council camps have terrific fall programs that boys can participate in once they sign up in your pack.

■ **Organize volunteers** - Your pack sign-up coordinator should organize the sign-up event team for your unit, usually five to six people to act as "station chiefs." These are simple jobs that anyone can fill, but it's best to use parents of current Cub Scouts who can talk from the heart about what Cub Scouting means to their family and their kids.

■ **Have Fun!** - Keep the event quick, simple, fun and exciting. This not only makes it better for the parents attending, but also will make it easier for you, the organizer. Speak from the heart, don't stress, and just enjoy the opportunity to introduce new parents to Cub Scouting

## After the Sign-Up Event Is Over:

■ Turn in the applications and money. Unit leaders or designer should review and complete applications after the Join Scouting event. Applications, national registration fees, and one copy of the attendance roster are to be turned immediately following the sign up night to your district representative.

■ Welcome your new families and members. Don't wait! Be sure to invite all families to first-night den and pack events the very next week. Den leaders should make welcome phone calls to the parents of the new Cub Scouts and/or send welcome email messages with meeting dates, location, pack calendars, and any other important information.

■ Follow up with those families who did not sign up. This is where the sign-in sheet comes in handy. Check your applications against the sign-in sheet and call those families that did not join. However, some may not have signed up and it's important to address any concerns the person may have and offer to drop an application by their home, or invite them to the first meeting or one of the Simon Kenton Council's fall events so they can see Cub Scouting for themselves

■ Invite the families to a new parent orientation session that occurs 30 minutes before your next pack meeting. Here you can do a deeper dive on Scouting in your unit. Have leaders run a few short activities for the boys while the parents are going through more details about Scouting.

## Measuring Success:

To measure your packs recruitment success, first determine how many youth were recruited at the first-grade level. This is the entry point of Cub Scouting and first grade tends to be the largest class of youth that signs up for Cub Scouting each year. A good measure of success is determining if one out of every three boys in first grade is served by Cub Scouts. Additionally review your pack's total recruitment. After the join-night is complete a pack should be serving one out of every four to five boys in the school/s. If your pack exceeded this number (20-25% market share) that's excellent. If you are showing a lower market share, think about alternative methods to recruiting or even consider 're-doing' your join-night. Perhaps more youth will come out to join if given a second opportunity.

Schools Served	Total 1st Grade Boys	# of 1st Grade Boys Recruited	Total 1st- 5th Grade Boys	# of 1st -5th Grade Boys Recruited



## Promoting the Sign-Up Night:

Families today are overwhelmed with advertising and marketing messages. To ensure families get the message that it's time to sign up, use various methods of communication throughout this playbook and be sure to have a plan. You should start to build the buzz at least six weeks out from your sign-up event(s). Your council or district will help get the word out, but the majority of your success will come from unit marketing. How much access you have to promote Scouting in your schools will help you decide the best ways to market your sign-up event. Here are some suggestions – but these are just thought starters. Don't limit yourself. The more ways you reach parents, the more success you'll have.

### **In School Promotion:**

If you have full access to promoting your event at the schools, you can employ any of the following best practices.

- Distribute sign-up event fliers the week before the sign-up event
- Posters and yard signs around school
- School rallies or boy talks at the school
- Back-to-school open house events, school carnivals, and conferences
- Electronic backpacks
- Invite current youth and parents to attend lunch at school in uniform
- Videos on in-school video networks
- School newsletter or website
- School marquee signs

### **Out-of-School Promotion:**

Here are several ideas for promoting the event outside of the schools. These tactics can be done either in tandem with your in-school promotions or on their own if you are not able to get full access to the schools.

- Ask current members to use social media to let their friends and family know about sign-up event nights. Utilize the templates at [www.skscouts.org/membership](http://www.skscouts.org/membership) to 'share' with your social media circles. Also think about other organizations with social media channels such as your school's Parent Teacher Organizations or your unit's chartered organization. Can they help you 'share' the message?
- Formally request the school's address roster and send a customized postcard home to all the families in the school.
- Personalized invitations, emails, and personal phone calls to prospective parents
- Door hangers and door-to-door invitations
- Recruit-a-friend and other peer-to-peer recruiting initiatives
- Fliers and boy talks at after-school programs or churches in the community
- Church and community websites, calendars, and bulletins
- Press releases
- Billboards, posters, and yard signs in the community (businesses, churches, etc.)
- Community fairs, parades, and other events

### **Boy Talks:**

Boy talks can make a huge difference when signing up new Cub Scouts! Schools that provide access to boy talks are the way to go. A **Boy Talk** is simply visiting each classroom and getting the boys excited about Scouting. The boy talk is where youth excitement is created. Boy talks work best by going class-to-class and giving a five-minute promotion on the fun that Scouting has to offer. Other methods such as school assemblies or lunch time talks can be as effective and offer less disruption to the school's curriculum time however, classroom talks are best. When speaking with the school, thank them for working with us in the development of youth and their community.

*Helpful hint: Consult with your district executive if you should need assistance with your boy talks. These energetic in-school presentations will dramatically increase the success of your recruitment!*

## The Timeline of Sign-Up Night:

### **SIX WEEKS PRIOR**

- Have your pack calendar, fee schedule, leaders' list and meeting times/dates/locations prepared
- Provide information to your unit commissioner, district sign-up chair, or district executive

### **TWO WEEKS PRIOR**

- Meet with five station chiefs (who are outgoing, knowledgeable, organized, friendly, and responsible)
- Coordinate with district sign-up night chair and district executive
- Review responsibilities with each station chief

### **DAY OF**

- Arrive one hour early
- Make sure station chiefs have their stations set up
- Act as a "greeter and floater" during sign-up night window
- Be available to answer questions
- Play traffic cop –direct families to next available station
- If back-up occurs, use your best judgment
- Coach station chiefs if they are keeping families at their stations too long – process is meant to be completed in 30 minutes or less
- Make sure station 4 (Check Out) does not get backed up
- CAPTURE APPLICATIONS!

### **AT THE END OF THE NIGHT**

- Help Station 4 chief get Cubmaster signature on all applications
- Assist Station 4 chief in separating "Local Council Copy" from applications and record dollar amount for fees and form of payment on each application (check #, etc.)
- Gather sign-up night materials
- Make sure room is left better than you found it
- Contact district membership chair and district executive immediately following sign-up night to report your success and make arrangements for pickup of applications and fees

### **AFTER EVENT**

- Make sure EVERY FAMILY receives a welcoming phone call from their den leader, Cubmaster, committee chair, or your unit membership chair
- Remind parents of new Scouts of any upcoming council wide activities
- If your results don't achieve the pack's goal, have a conversation with your district membership chair and district executive about creating other opportunities for families to join Scouting.

## Volunteer Responsibilities of Sign-Up Night:

There are key individuals who play an important role in the success of your sign-up events, and they are:

- **Pack sign-up coordinator** - responsible for the pack sign up event
- **Station chiefs** - responsible for the five stations of the event.

Responsibilities: The pack sign-up night coordinator makes sure the pack is focused on registering new Cub Scouts and helps orchestrate the event. Here is an overview. Note: The dates may change depending on your schedule. It's important to start planning early.

## **Holding the Sign-Up Night:**

Many units and districts are now holding come-and-go events, which are strictly sign-up events. These are faster for today's busy parents. The key to making them successful is pre-planning. The following is an outline of how to execute this type of event.

This model features five stations that give parents information about Cub Scouting, get them signed up, and provide everything they need to know, including when the first meeting is, who the leaders are, and more.

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### **Sign-Up Night Stations**

Station 1: Welcome/Sign In

Station 2: What We Do

Station 3: Registration Form

Station 4: Check Out (complete applications)

Station 5: Den Leader Q&A

Below is an outline of what happens at each station. Note: Make sure that each station sign is clearly visible to help make sure things go smoothly!

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**Station 1:** This is the first place potential Cub Scouts and their parents will stop. Here they sign in while the greeter provides a brief overview of the process.

- Greet every family that comes to your station and ask them to sign in. Provide them with the “Parent Orientation Guide” and the on-boarding envelope.
- Tell each family that there are five stations that they will visit to complete the sign-up process and that it will take 20-30 minutes

#### ***Materials Needed:***

- Station 1 sign and “Welcome” sign
  - “Parent Orientation Guide”
  - On boarding envelope
  - Sign-in sheets, pen
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**Station 2:** This is where you will share the excitement of Cub Scouting and your pack activities. Introduce the leaders and talk about what makes your pack special. Leave plenty of time and be prepared to answer any questions.

#### ***Materials Needed:***

- Station 2 sign
- Pack calendar and event fliers
- Handout with meeting times and locations
- Listing of pack and den leaders with contact email and phone numbers.
- Scout Shop Guide to the Uniform
- Boys’ Life mini mags

**Station 3:** This is the sign-up station where the station chief helps parents complete the actual application.

- Have BSA Youth Application forms ready to be completed and have pens available.
- Have copies of “What Other Costs Are There?” and give these out.
- Be prepared to answer questions about pack fee payment plans and/or financial assistance.
- Discuss the “Parent Talent Survey” and begin to identify potential den leaders, especially for the seemingly vacant Tiger position that may need filed.

#### ***Materials Needed:***

- Station 3 sign
  - BSA Youth Applications and pen
  - Pack leadership handout
  - “What Other Costs Are There?” handout
  - Parent Talent Survey
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**Station 4:** Leaders at this station are responsible for final “check out,” including payment.

- Make sure the applications are properly completed.
- Collect the proper fee amount for BSA membership fee and Boys’ Life (if added).
- Forms and payments should be collected, signed by the Cubmaster, and put in the envelope.
- Ensure each family receives the current year’s promotion piece (Hotcard, Patch, Rocket, etc.)

#### ***Materials Needed:***

- Station 4 sign
  - Calculator
  - Envelope for applications and fees
  - Council incentive (Hotcards, Patch, Rocket, etc.)
  - Bring pack checkbook for national registration fees for new members- Make checks Payable to Simon Kenton Council, BSA.
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**Station 5:** Leaders at this station make sure parents know when and where the first meeting is and answer any other questions parents may have.

- Make an effort to have as many den leaders and assistant den leaders on hand to talk about their dens and give families a chance to get to know them.
- Answer questions about the type of activities their child will be doing.
- Discuss volunteer opportunities and parent involvement and Invite the families to a new parent orientation session that occurs 30 minutes before your next pack meeting. Here you can do a deeper dive on Scouting in your unit. Have leaders run a few short activities for the boys while the parents are going through more details about Scouting.

#### ***Materials Needed:***

- Station 5 sign
- ‘Giant list of little jobs’