

## CHARACTERISTICS OF CUB SCOUTS

The six-year-old **TIGER** is embarking on a brand new journey. The Tiger Cub program purposefully includes an adult partner in every activity. **TIGERS** have a limited attention span and need a lot of feedback as to what they should be doing. There is also a lot of variation in dexterity, some boys can cut well with a scissors while others may be still struggling with handedness. Having one-on-one attention is essential.

The program is planned around the concept of “Shared Leadership” in which each tiger team has a rotating role in working with the Den Leader to plan and lead the meetings. The boys especially like when their parent is “in charge” and they can be part of the planning process.

Your **TIGERS** enjoy taking on new roles and responsibilities but require much direction. They are now readers and can understand some of their handbook. They still like to move a lot and begin to play organized games.

Your seven-year-old **WOLF** has had at least a year's experience at school. When it was new he did not question authority. But now he has begun to explore the limits of authority by rebelling. He will trip, push, distract and procrastinate just to see how much you can and will endure.

As a den leader, you will find yourself becoming upset with this threat to your authority. Remember, this rebelliousness is seldom a sign of anything serious, and that there is more noise than substance to the seven-year-old rebellion. A child who feels loved and accepted more than rejected, will be more eager to be good than to be "bad".

**Seven-year-olds** seldom get into honest-to-goodness bloody fights among themselves. They usually engage in name calling and pushing of chest forward as a weapon of defense. Names such as Fatso, Skinny, and Four Eyes are commonly heard coming for the first time from the usually polite child.

The hallmark of sevens is the explosion of the tall tales. Boys of seven want more adventure than our mundane society has to offer. As a substitution for the missing adventure, he makes up some of his own. He either exaggerates something real, imagines an experience or just plain brags. For example: “I saw a million birds (actually two) in the trees.” “I knocked down (bumped into) two older boys at school.” Remember these tall tales are not lies, but are merely a reflection of their emotional needs to be big, strong, brave, and free, when in reality, they are only seven. A successful Den Leader is one who can use this thirst for adventure to make the **WOLF** year one of fun and exploration of new worlds.

A **BEAR** age boy now knows what life is like, where he stands, and has begun the process of accepting it. He has begun to respect and accept authority and its rules. He sees his Den Leader as a person in his/her own right, rather than merely a parental stand-in. They are looking for a friend, and many times they discover that the Den Leader is that friend. Bears enjoy a leader who can even share friends without too much pain, as long as they are assured that their friend “still likes them best”. Remember, friends always tell the truth.

**BEARS** like to collect anything and everything. Bottle caps, cards, string, pebbles and junk become the interest of the eight-year-old. Value is less important than the number and quantity. While a few may organize their collection, most will merely keep them.

**BEARS** like to show off by telling what they know to more sheltered children. They like to shock listeners so that everyone will know how “grown-up” they are. Their horse-play and yelling can be easily diverted toward constructive play.

**BEARS** are now aware of differences in the way of life of his friends and his own home. He starts to make comparisons and will use them to manipulate others. This comparing will be used at its fullest in the teen years, but this is where he gets his “Basic Training” in “Well, Johnny can do it, why can't I?”

**Nine-year-old WEBELOS** have a great desire to be useful, needed, and to be like adults, and yet keep scurrying back and forth to the protection of adults. The inner world of the nine-year-old is one of confusion. He knows that he is still a child, yet is aware of the grown-up world just over the hill. He weeps easily when frustrated. He has a great urge to belong to a group of children, and finds any exile from the group almost unbearable.

**WEBELOS** like loosely organized group games. The nine-year-old is curious about what is happening in other parts of the world, in discoveries, inventions, science, movies and books. Intellectually they feed on everything. Creative activities, like painting, music or writing seem to disappear (at least for a while). They become self-conscious about their efforts and stop producing. They now have high standards and inadequate techniques. Comparisons with others are hard at any age, but at nine, it is especially difficult. Praise is seldom received without the praiser feeling like they need to justify the praise, as if the boy resents the praise. Remember that when they are most unlovable, they need love the most, and when they appear the most understandable, they need understanding the most.

The **second-year WEBELOS** bring you ten-year-olds with a wide range of development and behavior. Some of the boys are physically developed; others are trying to catch up. Some are responsible and stable; others are immature and younger in relation to their years. Some stand on the threshold of adolescence retaining the ways of youth, while others are looking far beyond the horizon and rushing into older behavior.

**Ten-year-olds** make a real distinction between “their world and your world”. The old problems of authority return, and if they feel that the authority is oppressive, they rebel. At times, it appears that he is almost compelled to obey the authority of “their” world (peer group), rather than the regulations of the adult world. The existence of a beneficial group, such as a **WEBELOS** den, can be of infinite help in shaping the ten-year-old's attitudes. Through a “good group”, a boy can be led into constructive, rather than destructive, group activities with his peers. Your **ten-year-old** is yearning for responsibility, to be useful and important. What an opportunity for leaders to introduce new interests and new ways of doing old things!