

Cub Scout Breakout

Tuesday, October 13, 2026



Scouting  America
Northern New Jersey Council

Cub Scout Retention Best Practices

Why Families Stay — and Why They Leave



Retention is a family experience.

Youth stay when **adults feel confident, connected, and valued.**
If adults disengage, youth drop — even if the program is great.

First 60 Days: Where Retention Is Won or Lost

- Most drop-off happens early
- Provide a **simple “What to Expect”** overview
- Assign a **New Family Guide**
- Deliver a **hands-on, high-energy meeting** immediately
- Give families early wins: photos, first adventure loop, clear next steps

Adult Engagement = Youth Retention

Adults stay when they feel **informed, useful, and appreciated.**

Best practices:

- 15-minute monthly parent huddles
- No jargon or acronyms
- One simple at-home support activity
- Offer **micro-roles** (snacks, photos, attendance, setup)
- Thank parents every meeting; highlight small wins

Program Quality Drives Retention

Predictability:

- Publish a 90-day calendar
- Start/end on time
- Communicate changes early

Fun + Purpose:

- Movement
- Hands-on activity
- Skill development
- Pride moment
- Explain the “why” to parents (“Tonight builds teamwork and problem-solving.”)

Transition Points Are High-Risk

Retention dips at:

- Lion → Tiger
- Bear → Webelos
- AOL → Scouts BSA

Best practices:

- Provide a transition roadmap
- Introduce new leaders early
- Make the next step feel exciting, not confusing

District Membership Contacts

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For more resources and information check out our membership page on the ScoutingNNJ website:
<https://scoutingnnj.org/resources/membership/>

**Retention isn't about keeping youth
it's about keeping families.**

**Confident, connected adults =
thriving Cub Scouts.**



Monthly Program Helps



Four-Month Rank Advancement Roadmap

- A planning tool that helps packs organize the program year for timely rank completion.
- Simplifies planning for den leaders and pack leadership.
- Especially helpful for new packs, small packs, and multi-rank dens.
- Designed for small packs and multi-rank dens, covering foundational onboarding, family surveys, and initial meeting plans
- A structured roadmap to help leaders deliver rank adventures over a concentrated timeline



Full Year National Guide



Cub Scout Guide

- **Comprehensive 377-page manual:** Merges a full year of Scouting resources into a single, master PDF file.
- **Eliminates digital clutter:** Avoids the need for leaders to search through dozens of disconnected online portals.
- **One-stop volunteer resource:** Combines administrative role breakdowns, monthly pack meeting blueprints, and den lesson plans.

Multi - Rank Dens And Small Packs

- **Unified meeting strategy:** Built specifically to help smaller packs run activities that span multiple age groups simultaneously.
- **Streamlined lesson plans:** Provides step-by-step scripts for a single leader handling mixed-grade dens.
- **All 36 required adventures:** Covers every core advancement requirement from Lion through Arrow of Light in one timeline

Arrow of Light: How It Prepares Youth for the Scout Rank



Why Arrow of Light Matters

- Final rank of Cub Scouting
- Bridge into Scouts BSA
- Builds confidence, skills, and independence
- Ensures a smooth transition into a youth-led program

What AOL Is Designed to Do

AOL focuses on:

- Early introduction to Scouts BSA concepts
- Transition from parent-led to Scout-led
- Outdoor skills foundation
- Responsibility, service, and personal growth

Outcome: Youth enter Scouts BSA ready, not overwhelmed.

AOL Requirements → Scout Rank Readiness

AOL teaches:

- Scout Oath & Law
- Troop structure & patrol method
- Basic outdoor skills
- Leadership practice

Scout Rank requires:

- Explaining Oath & Law
- Understanding troop operations
- Demonstrating early skills

Direct connection: AOL builds the exact competencies needed for the Scout Rank.

Outdoor & Leadership Skills

Outdoor Skills

- Knots, fire building, cooking, first aid, navigation
- Jump-starts Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class

Leadership Skills

- Leading small activities
- Working with a Den Chief
- Participating in planning

These reduce anxiety and increase confidence in a youth-led troop.

Transition Activities That Matter

- Troop visits and meeting youth leaders
- Joint campouts with troops
- Exposure to patrol method
- Parent orientation on the shift to youth-led

Result: Youth and parents feel prepared for crossover.

What a Prepared AOL Scout Looks Like

A well-prepared Scout:

- Knows Oath & Law
- Understands troop structure
- Has basic outdoor skills
- Is comfortable with older Scouts
- Is excited for summer camp
- Has chosen a troop intentionally

Key takeaway: Arrow of Light is the beginning of the Scouts BSA journey.

Cub Scout Day Camp



Camp Yaw Paw

Cub Scout Day Camp

Mahwah, New Jersey
Scouts get bused to camp from
locations in our four counties.

- Week 1: July 5 – July 9
- Week 2: July 12 – July 16
- Week 3: July 19 – July 23
- Week 4: July 26 – July 30
- Week 5: August 2 – August 6

\$375 if paid by May 1

\$425 If paid after May 1



Upcoming Activities



Upcoming Cub Scout Activities

Council and District Cub Scout Activities

- 11/28/26 RV Klondike Build a Sled (AOLs)
- 12/28/26 Bowl-a-thon (3R & LT)
- 1/16/27 RV Klondike Derby (AOLs)
- 1/16/27 Tiger Tumble (Lions & Tigers)
- 1/23/27 3R Klondike Derby (AOLs)
- 3/6/27 Scouting for Food
- 4/3/27 3R Pinewood Derby
- 4/10/27 RV & LT Pinewood Derby

- 5/7/27 3R Camporee (AOLs)
- 5/15/27 Cub Family Weekend
- 6/26/27 3R Fishing Derby

**Check out the
Council digital
calendar for all
Scouting Adventure**



Take a Hike!



JENNY JUMP SUMMIT LOOP

Distance: 2.6 mi
Elevation: 450 ft
Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

A walk along the summit of the mountain at Jenny Jump. You get some great views and some scenic moun...

[DETAILS](#)[ALLTRAILS](#)

MILLS RESERVATION TRAIL

Distance: 2.1 mi
Elevation: 173 ft
Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆

This easy loop trail features fun ridgeline walking and city views....

[DETAILS](#)[ALLTRAILS](#)

Explore the Northern New Jersey Council Cub Scout Hike page to discover local trails, compare difficulty levels, and find the perfect outdoor adventure for your Scouts!

