

# Learning About Lions



The Lion program is an introduction to Cub Scouting for boys who are in Kindergarten (5 years old by September 30th and not yet 7 years old) from September through May, when they'd cross over into Tigers.

Like Tigers, each boy is accompanied by an adult partner who attends all meetings and outings, as there is no Lion den leader.

The den is coordinated by a Lion Guide, an experienced person from your pack who oversees the den and mentors adult partners.

## Welcome to Lion Cub Scouting – now what?

So your kindergarten son and his friends all want to be Cub Scouts, you are game and ready to play, but what does that mean?

### Cub Scouting is a community parenting program.

Every parent puts some effort into the process and the boys benefit from the best we all have to offer. The curriculum provides opportunities for EVERY parent to participate. (even if you've never gone camping, or you are not too crafty) The community of parents also extends beyond your 8 – 10 kindergarten families. Your group is also part of a larger group of families also involved in Cub Scouting in your area. The rest of the Cub Scouting community is made of your neighbors who have boys between K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade (*these neighbors make up "the Cub Scout Pack"*). This means, during your time in Scouting you'll get to know the moms and dads of the older kids in your community, as well as your peers. These relationships can prove very valuable throughout the course of your child's elementary school years. Often parents meet through Scouting and then find themselves working together for PTA, little league, soccer or carpooling to band practice or a host of other enrichment programs that he'll be interested in over the years.

The Scouting program follows and supports all those interests! Boys who are interested in Sports will earn Sports badges, and the same is true for boys interested in science, crafts, music, or dozens of other activities. As a Lion Cub, the families and the boys are slowly introduced to all these activities – as well as camping and the outdoors which is at the forefront of our program. Baden Powell the founder of the Boy Scouts used to refer to Scouting as "a game with a purpose." For Kindergarten Scouts – think of it as a "playgroup with a purpose." Each parent takes a turn hosting the play group and each play group gathering has a theme. Look to the different parents in your group to match up their skills with the various themes. If a parent is in the military, government, or service sector they might be in charge of the citizenship activity. That parent would teach the boys about the flag, how to hold it, when to salute

etc. similarly a parent who works in a healthcare profession (Nurse, Dr, EMT etc) might be charged with teaching first aid. In this way the “meetings” (play groups) progress throughout the year.

### **What about those skills we don't have? He's so young – I can't imagine him camping!**

Lions and Tigers often participate in camp activities for a day or an afternoon. We have two year-round facilities that provide age appropriate outdoor activities. One in the northern suburbs and one just outside of Boston in the Blue Hills. When the parents get together for a “play group with a purpose” the parent who is hosting runs the program and the other parents help out. Just like a play group. On the field trips days to camp – the staff runs the program and the parents help out. For example we have small bow and arrow sets for him to learn, and parents learn too! By the end of the afternoon both parent and child are hitting the target and feeling great about their accomplishments. The same is true for learning how to cook outside, light a fire, swim, identify plants and animals and so on. Additionally at the end of each afternoon, the Scouts are earning badges!

### **What about his Sister? Or friends who aren't Scouts?**

Bring them along! The camps are designed to serve all school age kids and families. You'll see older kids on the ropes course or rock climbing right next to the young ones who are digging in the dinosaur pit to



find fossils! The Camps operate with Activity Scavenger Hunts called Trails. The play group can just grab a Trail list, (please see the attached samples) and do all the activities outlined in the list. When the families are done with the trail, you can stop by and pick up another trail. A typical group of 6 – 10 kindergarten boys and their families will accomplish one trail in an afternoon, and along the trails they'll get to do a bunch of the highlight activities!

### **How often do we host a “playgroup” vs how often do we go to the camp?**

The balance of meeting places and locations vary. But twice a month is recommended. Basic afternoon admission to the camp is **FREE** with his annual membership. Making it easy for families to attend weekend camp as often as possible. Also some activities will be coordinated by the more experienced Scout families (Pack). Things like the annual Blue and Gold Banquet – where he feels special because he gets all the awards he's earned! Or the Pinewood derby – a great craft and activity rolled into one big night!