



Suggestions from seasoned Scouters to help you build a stronger Den Chief program in your Packs and Troops.

The Boy Scouts of America movement has developed the greatest leadership development program for our young men and delivered it in a fun wrapper called 'the great outdoors.' As we all seek to "Deliver the Promise" of Scouting, let us not forget that one of our key responsibilities is to provide male role models to mentor our boys and take them to that next step in their journey toward manhood. The Den Chief program is a great way to strengthen relationships between units, and to recruit more scouts, but most importantly it is an opportunity for trained adults to groom a young man for future leadership.

All too often, we focus on the SPL and ASPL's in our troop and let our young Den Chiefs and Troop Guides flounder without any guidance or support. Give these boys a chance. They may far exceed your expectations. As Bill Hillcourt often said, "it's the boy's game."

Den Chiefs

- Appointed by the Scoutmaster & Senior Patrol Leader
- Age 13 and First Class (exceptions can be made based on maturity level)
- Some SM's may place a mature 2nd Class Scout as Den Chief in a Wolf/Bear Den.
- Want Den Chief to work with den that is two years younger than his age.
- In the Troop, reports to the ASM-New Scouts and works closely with Troop Webelos Liaison if he is working in a Webelos Den
- In the Pack, reports to the Den Leader and Cubmaster or his/her Asst Cubmaster.
- Attends Council or District Den Chief Training
- The 'missing link' that provides the bridge between the pack & troop.
- Joins Webelos at Adventure Camp, Webelos Woods, and Advance-O-Rama's

Troops

- ASM-New Scouts or Committee member meets with Den Chiefs once every 3 months
- ASM-New Scouts builds esprit-de-corps among Den Chiefs by praising & supporting
- Presents the Den Chief Cord in a troop meeting.
- Follow guidelines listed in the "12 Principles" listed below

Packs

- Introduce new Den Chiefs at Pack Meetings with great fanfare.
- ACM meets monthly with Den Chiefs to be briefed on upcoming themes & activities
- ACM teaches the Den Chiefs a new game or song and allow Scouts to vent
- ACM gives tips on handling problems but stresses that discipline is the role of the DL
- Once a quarter, hold a Den Chief cookout with CM, Committee Chair, & Troop Leaders to gather ideas on how to improve the Den Chief program.

Principles

- Den Leaders use Den Chiefs as teachers, as leaders, not just another Cub Scout.
- Make the Den Chiefs feel important. They are your best recruiters and future leaders.
- Give the Scout a Job Description and have him sign it to establish accountability
- Make clear the Scout's primary duties are with the Troop, attending activities, and Troop Meetings. (ensure that Pack leadership supports this priority for the Scout)
- Den Leaders – a Den Chief is a limited resource and not a servant.

- Remember that these are older boys and have more homework & outside responsibilities
- Use them or lose them. Offer challenges and assignments for them to do. Be Creative.
- Place limits on Den/Pack participation.
- Limit the term of service to what is good for all concerned. In some cases it is necessary to limit the term of office to part of a year and rotate another Scout into the position. One of the dangers is that a Scout can feel cast away with a one-year sentence. Pack & Troop leaders need to help the Boy Scout to not 'burn out' and to stay fresh.
- The ASM-New Scouts or the SM must monitor the Den Chief's role. You have to be careful that he is being given leadership jobs and not merely treated as a go-fer helper. If he is not being given leadership duties – pull him out NOW! Nothing is worse than boredom and a feeling of being useless or unneeded. If you do pull out a Den Chief, use discretion to create a new Troop Leadership post for him – you can be creative, e.g., Scribe responsible for newsletters, ASPL for advancement, etc.
- The key is to take this leadership position seriously and promote it instead of having it seen by the Scout as a consolation prize.

Typical Den Meeting	Pre-Meeting:	Den Chief reviews meeting plan with Den Leader
	Pre-Opening:	Den Chief leads this activity (while DL checks advancements)
	Opening:	Denner
	Meeting:	Den Leader (Den Chief helps ADL as needed)
	Game Time:	Den Chief leads skit, game, or song
	Closing:	Denner
	Post-Op:	Den Chief helps with cleanup, discusses plan for next week with DL

How to know if your Scout feels like he is a part of the Troop's Leadership Corps

1. Is his name listed with the other Troop Leaders like the SPL or is his name buried in a Patrol on the Troop Roster?
2. At Courts of Honor, when SPL, ASPLs, etc. are recognized for leadership with a warrant certificate, certificate of appreciation, etc., is the Den Chief treated the same? Same goes for ceremonies with leadership changes.
3. Is he invited to the PLC?
4. Has he been given Den Chief Leadership Training?
5. Has he been given the chance to attend JLT like others?

Communication. Pack Webelos Liaison – contact for Webelos troop visits, training, Den Chiefs
Troop Webelos Liaison – contact for Webelos troop visits & outings, Den Chiefs



Resources for this document came from:

Scouts-L	Nationwide email list	Den Chief Packet	
Andrew Plyler	Den Chief Training	Etowah District	NE Georgia Council
Jerry Long	District Training Chair	Etowah District	NE Georgia Council
Jim Sleezer	Roundtable Commissioner	Paenee Bill District	Will Rogers Council – Stillwater, OK
Michael Bowman	DDC-Training	GW District	National Capital Area Council
Rick Covington	ASM-T713, ADL-P874	Circle Ten Council	Dallas, TX
Rick Hameister	Den Chief Training	North Fulton District	Atlanta Council

District Webelos Transition Page: <http://www.mindspring.com/~etowahdistrict> (*under development*)
BSA National Webelos Transition: <http://www.scouting.org/boyscouts/resources/18-086/pack.html>

~ Developed by the Etowah District Membership Committee ~