

## Early Adopter Program Q&A

**NOTE: This guidance and policy from BSA National has been reviewed by the Tidewater Council leadership and supplemental notes of clarification are added in italics where appropriate.**

**PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT IN ITS ENTIRITY AS IT COVERS ALL REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR PARTICIPATIN IN THE EARLY ADOPTER PROGRAM.**

**Q: What is the early adopter program?**

A: The early adopter program was introduced after overwhelming demand from, chartered partners, Cub Scout pack leaders, and local councils that are already prepared to provide the Cub Scout program to girls. Although our programs will officially launch to welcome both boys and girls in Cub Scouting during the 2018-19 program year, the soft launch for early adopters will allow eligible packs in participating councils to officially register girls (K-4) in Cub Scouts as early as January 15.

**Q: Why is the BSA offering the early adopter program if the official start date is later in 2018 to coordinate with program year?**

A: Although our program will officially launch to welcome both boys and girls in Cub Scouting during the program year, we are offering a soft launch for early adopters based on overwhelming demand from, chartered partners, Cub Scout pack leaders, and local councils that will allow eligible packs in participating councils to officially register girls (K-4) in Cub Scouts as early as January 15.

**Q: Which packs are eligible to participate in the early adopter program?**

A: If a council opts in to the early adopter program, it will identify chartered partners with Cub Scout packs that are in good standing and have the capacity to participate. The local council will then send those chartered partners an invitation to participate. The early adopter program is designed for chartered partners with Cub Scout packs that are in good standing, can create a compressed program calendar to ensure all Cub Scouts have the opportunity to earn their rank and have the capacity to develop a membership plan to take on new youth during this time of year.

*In Tidewater Council, after deliberation with the council leadership, it was decided that all chartered organizations would be provided the opportunity to determine if they would desire to participate in the early adopter program. Each chartered partner has been sent a letter to that effect and asked to contact the chair of the council Family Scouting committee, Dale Ward to indicate their intentions. The Family Scouting committee, in consultation with the chartered organization would evaluate that unit's readiness to proceed with the early adopter program.*

**Q: What is the deadline to decide about participating in the early adopter program?**

A: Councils have until February 15, 2018 to opt in to the early adopter program.

Here some additional key dates to keep in mind:

January 15, 2018 – Earliest date a pack can register girls via the early adopter program

February 15, 2018 – Deadline for councils to opt in to the early adopter program

March 15, 2018 – Deadline for girls to start participating in the early adopter program

May 31, 2018 – Deadline for early adopter participants to accomplish rank requirements

**Q: What are the early adopter program requirements?**

A: The requirements to participate in the early adopter program are:

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- 1) A local council decides to participate in the early adopter program.
- 2) The council will then reach out to chartered partners of units that are in good standing and have the capacity to participate in order to determine if the chartered partner is interested in opting in to the early adopter program. (*See answer to question above for TWC's approach.*)
- 3) Chartered partners and unit leaders confirm interest and agree to use the family pack model, and that they will:
  - a. Register a minimum of four girls into a new all-girl den of an existing pack, (Dens are formed with Cub Scouts in the same grade or required ages for the ranks of Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and first-year Webelos.)

*In Tidewater Council we believe the best approach, that provides the best chance of success for the Scouts and their families, is that all-girl dens be grouped in the same grade. That is, a den of a minimum of four girls should all be in the same grade, not a mix of grade levels. We strongly encourage units to follow this approach.*

- b. Use the current Cub Scouting program and resources,
- c. Uphold membership policies,
- d. Provide input and feedback about their activities and experiences to help improve the formal rollout; this information may also be used in marketing and earned media outreach.

*In Tidewater Council, this input and feedback will also be provided to the Family Scouting committee.*

- 4) The pack confirms that leaders are trained in their positions.
- 5) The pack agrees to develop a program plan to ensure that participants can accomplish all rank requirements by May 31, 2018.

*In Tidewater Council, prior to the unit taking any action to implement the early adopter program, a written program plan to accomplish this is to be provided to the Family Scouting committee for review to determine if the unit is eligible to participate in the early adopter program.*

*We also believe that if a unit has decided to participate and has not identified the minimum of four girls and two new leaders to participate, then the likelihood of their being successful by May 31, 2018 as an early adopter is slim. The unit should consider waiting for the roll out in the fall.*

**Q: Will the early adopter program welcome Webelos that would need to crossover in 2018?**

A: No. The early adopter program will only allow participating units to register girls (K-4) to avoid the situation where a girl does not have a troop to crossover into after advancement.

**Q: What if my council is not opting in to the early adopter program, but my pack wants to start now?**

A: The early adopter program can only be offered to chartered partners with Cub Scout packs whose council has opted in; however, packs that have strong interest in inviting girls can take steps now to engage families by identifying, recruiting, and training leaders in addition to promoting Cub Scouting to the community so that you are ready to go as soon as your 2018-19 council program year starts.

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*Tidewater Council has opted in to participate.*

**Q: What if my pack is not interested in participating in Family Scouting?**

A: Every chartered partner chooses which Scouting programs to utilize for their community, and each unit should work with their chartered partner to discuss which approach is best for the youth and families they seek to serve. If a unit wants to remain an all-boy pack with all-boy dens, that decision is entirely welcome.

**Q: Will girls that register in the early adopter program need to register again later in the year?**

A: Those who register in the Spring of 2018 are charged the prorated membership fee based on their unit's next recharter. For example, if a new Cub Scout registers in February and that pack has a December recharter, then that Cub Scout registration fee will be for 11 months and they will need to re-register with the pack along with the other members of the pack in December.

**Q: What should we tell families with girls ages 11-13? How do we keep them involved as a "full family" while there is a gap in program offerings?**

A: We recommend you handle interest from these families the same way you would handle interest from families with children who have not met the age requirements for other programs such as Venturing. For instance, introduce them to Scouting U and local resources such as Roundtable to prepare them be fully engaged when their daughter is eligible to join. They could also be a resource to help establish a new program with a new chartered partner.

**Q: How should we approach a chartered partner that does not want to offer Family Scouting? Should we start a separate pack nearby?**

A: Chartered partners can choose which programs to offer and whether they want to offer Family Scouting or remain focused on all-boy programs. If the chartered partner has made a well-informed decision to focus on all-boy programs, we recommend working with your district or council membership teams to identify new unit development opportunities.

**Q: Is there an incentive for units that offer Family Scouting programs?**

A: There will not be an incentive to offer Family Scouting, but we are looking at options to commemorate those who participate in Family Scouting program in this first year.

**Q: What are the council's responsibilities in offering programs to girls?**

A: The responsibility of the council does not change with the invitation to girls to join our programs. Just as before, a council will be expected to uphold membership and program standards, market analysis, support units, seek opportunities for new units, and developing and training leaders to offer a quality program.

**Q: Will there be a process to notify the council, district and/or unit if a girl is interested in joining?**

A: The BeAScout location tool has been updated to create a visual icon to indicate which packs are All Boy, Family, and All Girl. The lead generation system will be the same for boys and girls. All leads go into the Invitation Manager, and all applications go into the Application Manager. Council and district personnel can drill down to view lead details. For the early adopter program, dashboards will not be changed to track gender.

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*In Tidewater Council, in collaboration with the council Family Scouting committee, each chartered partner will be asked if it will or will not participate. If determined that the unit is eligible, then the appropriate changes to BeAScout should be followed.*

**Q: What is the application process to register girls?**

A: The online registration system will be ready to accept girl applications for units that have been identified as eligible by their councils and chartered partners. If online registration is not possible due to technology restraints or where paper applications have already been completed, the registrar are welcome to contact member care at the National Service Center for any support they need in processing the applications.

**Q: Can Scoutreach units participate in the early adopter program?**

A: Yes, Scoutreach units that are supported by participating local councils can participate. They are to follow the same conditions as the other early adopter packs.

**Q: How will BeAScout help identify which units are welcoming girls?**

A: The unit pin will have an indicator if the unit is accepting girls. This flag on the pin will be set in the organization manager settings where the COR or IH agrees that the unit can invite girls to join in a family pack. In turn, the distinction will be depicted on BeAScout.

*In Tidewater Council, the pin should not be changed unit the unit has been determined to be eligible to accept girls and doing so will be in compliance with the requirements of the early adopter program (e.g., minimum number of girls in a den and trained adult leadership in place).*

**Q: Can a unit that cannot meet the four-girl minimum offer the lone Scout program?**

A: The lone Scout program is not being offered as a part of the early adopter soft launch. After the official roll out, councils will determine the viability of the lone Scout program, just as they do now with boys.

**Q: Can a unit that cannot meet the four-girl minimum combine ages?**

A: The early adopter program is designed for packs that have the ability to provide a quality program AND have the capacity to work with the chartered partner and district leadership to develop a membership plan to invite girls to join the pack. Working as a team, the pack leadership, chartered partner and district leadership develop a membership plan that creates awareness in the community that the pack is now welcoming girls into Cub Scouting. With the right leadership and proper membership plan, we don't anticipate the four-girl minimum being a challenge for early adopter packs. We want to ensure that those who participate as early adopters have a full Cub Scouting experience, and part of that is being part of a den with other Cub Scouts who are working together towards the same rank.

In the rare occasion that the minimum requirement of four girls to form a single den cannot be fulfilled, packs will continue to have the option to combine grade levels to form a den as long as they are working on their respective ranks. For example, if you have two third-grade girls and two fourth-grade girls, you may combine into a single den as long as they are working on their Bear and Webelos, respectively.

*In Tidewater Council, as mentioned before, we strongly recommend that the approach with all-girl dens being in the same grade be followed. However the unit proposes to proceed with their den makeup, it must provide a program plan that ensures successful achievement of rank advancement by May 31, 2018 of all the girls in the den.*

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### Program and Materials

**Q: Will the program change to accommodate girls joining Cub Scouts?**

A: No, the activities that Cub Scouts do and the advancement requirements will not change; they will be the same as the current requirements.

**Q: Will there be separate handbooks for boys and girls?**

A: No. The advancement program will be the same for all Scouts.

**Q: Will there be a separate uniform for girls?**

A: Participants in the early adopter program agree to use all currently existing materials, including the current Cub Scout uniforms and handbooks.

All uniforms continue to be reviewed and adjusted to meet participant needs. While the fit and styling may be a bit different, the uniforms will remain fundamentally the same.

**Q: Will the advancement requirements or award names be changed?**

A: Requirements for Adventure Trails in Cub Scouting will not change. Two Arrow of Light Adventure Trails will be renamed: Outdoorsman will become Outdoor Adventurer and Sportsman will simply become Sports.

**Q: What resources will BSA offer leaders to help in the introduction of Family Scouting? When will the appropriate photos be available?**

A: Teams are working right now to develop materials to support Family Scouting. We will work with participating councils to develop needed materials for their local market. Preliminary Family Scouting collateral materials will be available starting in February with more available at the 2018 National Annual Meeting in support of the full launch.

**Q: What efforts are being taken to ensure that girls are welcomed appropriately into Scouting?**

A: The values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law should guide our actions, and Scouts and Scouters that live by those tenants will be well-suited to welcome all families and children into Scouting.

**Q: What is the BSA doing to change perceptions of Scouting so that girls interested in joining are not ridiculed by their peers for taking an interest in something that was previously just for boys?**

A: While the organization is looking into a number of opportunities to showcase the benefits and opportunities of Scouting for both young women and men, Scouts and Scouters in the local community are also able to make great strides through the acts of being friendly, brave, and kind that are the foundation of a Scout's character. Showing how Scouting builds character in leadership in youth is one of the best ways to explain why Scouting is appealing to both boys and girls.

The mission of the BSA is to instill values in young people, and the values we seek to instill are those found in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. These values are relevant for both boys and girls to become adults with strong character. With decades of serving young women in Exploring, Venturing, and Sea Scouting, we already have a great success stories that can be told by those women who benefited from these programs.

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### Leaders and Training

**Q: Given that the decision to offer Family Scouting sits with the chartered partner, are councils expected to document their chartered partner decisions or rely on what is communicated by unit leadership?**

A: For the early adopter program, councils have been provided with communications tools and email templates to help facilitate communication between the council and chartered partners to ensure that there is alignment between the chartered partner and the potential participating unit. The council can use the same resources to engage chartered partners in broader discussions about offering Family Scouting beyond the early adopter program to ensure that we do everything we can to foster and grow the important relationships with chartered partners.

*In Tidewater Council, letters have been sent to all chartered organizations and units about the early adopter program and the requirements for participation. The Family Scouting committee and appropriate District Executives will communicate with the chartered organization and unit leadership to determine their desire to participate in the early adopter program and work closely with those that choose to participate. Our goal is to provide the resources and training to help make the effort a successful one for the new Scouts and their families.*

**Q: What structures at the council and district level do you recommend to support Family Scouting? Should we add a “Family Scouting Champion”?**

A: We don't see a need to add to the current district or council structure, especially considering that New Member Coordinators are already welcoming new families into our units. Membership teams on both levels should develop plans as to what marketing and recruitment plans will work best for each pack.

*In Tidewater Council, the council executive board has established the Family Scouting committee to communicate and work with the chartered organizations, districts and units in the implementation of the early adopter program, as well as preparing for the full launch in the fall of 2018. Dale Ward, the chair of this committee, may be contacted for additional guidance and help. He may be reached at [dale@daleward.com](mailto:dale@daleward.com).*

**Q: What new or updated training will be available for leaders?**

A: Training resources such as Den Leader and Cubmaster training are being updated to align with advancement changes that were made prior to welcoming girls into Cub Scouting. In addition, the images for the training will reflect the diverse markets we seek to serve.

### Youth Protection

**Q: What changes are anticipated for YPT as we welcome girls to packs?**

A: One of the requirements to be in the early adopter program is that packs that participate must have all leaders that work with youth trained in their position specific and be current in Youth Protection training prior to delivering the program. Pack and den leaders agree to uphold membership policies and the structure of all-boy dens and all-girl dens.

In Cub Scouting, overnight and outdoor activities are designed for the whole family. Parents attend overnight activities with their child. Male and female adult

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leaders must be present for all overnight Cub Scouting trips and outings, even those including parent and child, unless all youth and adults are the same gender. Both male and female adult leaders must be 21 years of age or older and currently Youth Protection trained, and one must be a registered member of the BSA. A parent may assist their child in matters of health and safety, as long as it does not infringe upon the privacy of others. Beyond these requirements, the BSA will be introducing an updated, module-oriented YPT program for leaders and parents in January.

*In Tidewater Council, current policy requires that all leaders in all positions be trained in their position and YPT prior to working with youth.*

**Q: Are female leaders required for packs that will include girl dens?**

A: Similar to policies that apply to Venturing, adult female supervision will be required for Cub Scouting activities that involve female Cub Scouts. This supervision can be a parent or legal guardian of a Cub Scout who is Youth Protection-trained, but does not need to be a registered leader.

**Q: Does this mean that a pack will have to bring at least four leaders on any activity to abide by two-deep leadership policies?**

A: No. If working with an all-girl den or pack, at least one of the leaders should be female or a Youth Protection-trained adult female must be present, so if you have an all-girl den that has two leaders who are male, then an adult female must be present.

### Camping

**Q: What facility changes will be made at camps?**

A: Current requirements for male and female adult facilities, as well as male and female youth facilities still apply.

In Cub Scouting overnight and outdoor activities are designed for the whole family. Parents attend overnight activities with their child. Our current tenting policies remains in effect and those are:

- No adult may share a tent with the opposite sex unless he or she is that adult's spouse.
- No youth may share a tent with an adult or person of the opposite sex other than a family member or guardian.
- Assigning youth members more than two years apart in age to sleep in the same tent should be avoided unless the youth are relatives.

Whenever possible, separate shower and bathroom facilities should be provided for male adult and female adults, and male youth and female youth. If separate facilities are not available, separate shower times must be scheduled and clearly posted.

**Q: What will happen at Day Camp if we only have a few girls and they are not of the same rank?**

A: Maintaining the all-boy den and all-girl den is an overall Cub Scout program requirement that extends into all activities; however, Day Camps can offer joint activities that are available to multiple dens.