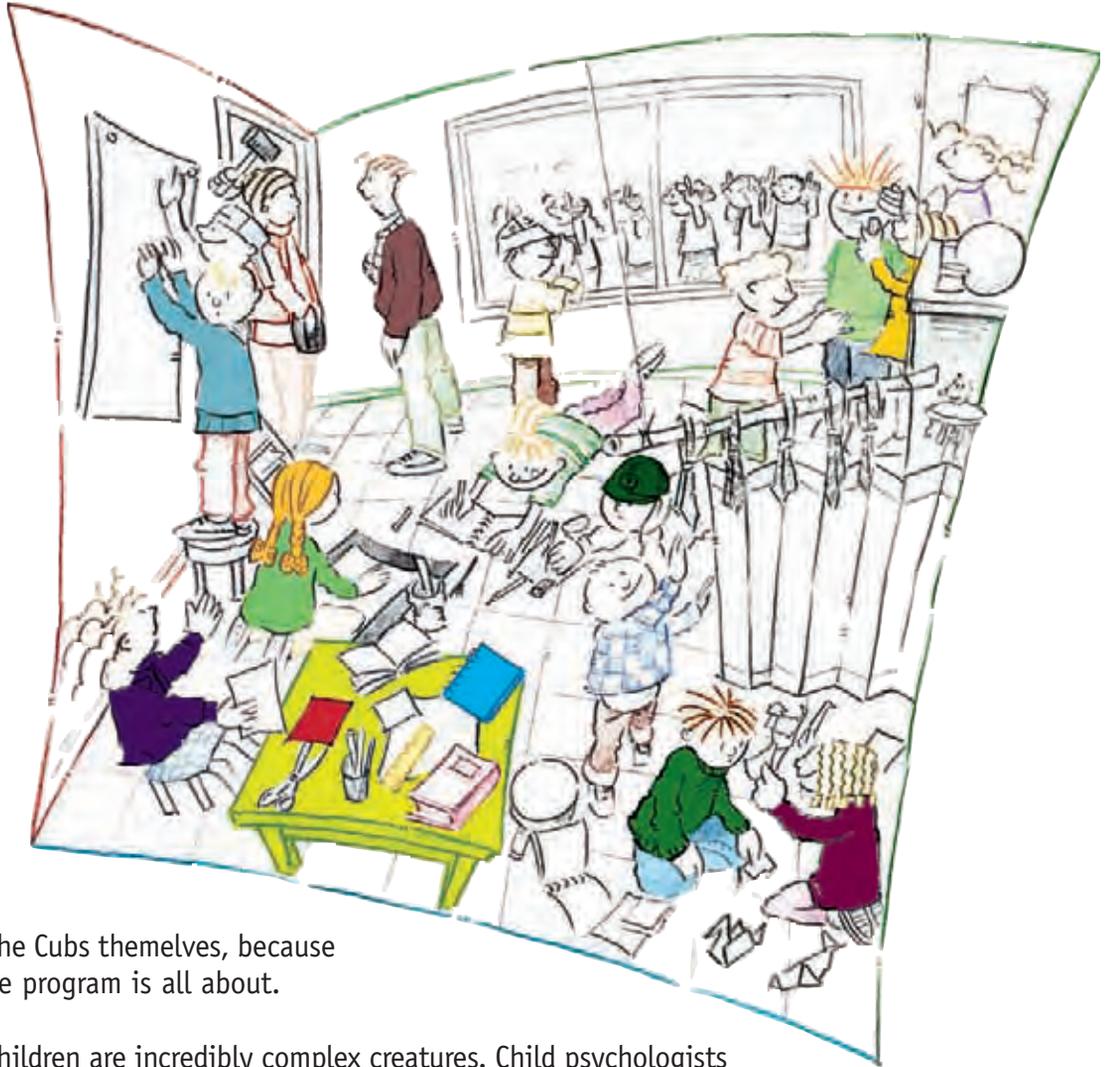


# Chapter 3 - Understanding and Involving Cubs



Now we look at the Cubs themselves, because they are what the program is all about.

Like all people, children are incredibly complex creatures. Child psychologists and other professionals study for years to learn what makes them tick. How can Cub leaders with little training hope to deal with them successfully? It's quite simple, really.

Like all people, Cubs need one thing more than anything else from you – recognition that they are people who are important. If you can give your Cubs individual recognition, your success as a leader is virtually guaranteed.

It probably doesn't seem that simple the first time you stand in front of 20 or 30 young strangers wondering what to do with them. How do you start? Perhaps the best way is with an attitude that each Cub is unique. As quickly as possible, try to learn everyone's name. Some people find this easy, others don't.

If you have difficulty learning names, try some of these tricks:

1. Have everyone wear name tags as long as possible.
2. Play the Name Game. Here's how: Cubs and leaders sit in a circle. The first Cub says, "My name is John." The Cub on his left says, "His name is John; my name is Pierre." The third says, "His name is John; his name is Pierre; my name is Cindy." Carry on all around the circle. When someone has difficulty recapping, another Cub or leader can whisper the names to the person having trouble.
3. Try to associate the name with another attribute of the Cub. Sarah has red hair. Samuel is the tallest Cub in the pack. Mario wears glasses. Marc is a sixer.
4. Learn the names of the Cubs in one six at a time. If each leader starts with a different six, very soon every Cub will be known by name by at least one leader.

Once you know the names of Cubs, use them as often as you can. Make a point of speaking to each Cub at least once during every meeting – not always an easy job in large packs. If you can, say "hello" as the Cub enters the hall or, failing that, the first time you notice the youth. Ensure that a leader calls parents when Cubs are absent to let them know the pack missed them.



Cubs also need affection. Generally, it's easy to like them at this age. They're cheerful, friendly, open in their emotions, and curious about everything.

Usually, it's easy to show Cubs that you like them. All it takes is a smile, a friendly word, a pat on the back, or a "high five." Some leaders are more reserved than others and find it difficult to show signs of affection. That's okay, too. Be yourself; that's the important point. Show them you like being with them by paying attention to what they're saying, providing a happy, cooperative pack atmosphere, and planning fun, exciting activities.

Cubs need to feel they are full and valued members of the pack. You can foster this feeling of belonging by involving them in all aspects of pack operations. When you ask them their ideas for future activities, hold regular meetings of the Sixers' Council, and give them chances to run activities and do things for themselves, they feel that the program belongs to them.

Be patient! There's no doubt you could run activities more efficiently by doing all the planning and work yourself, but that makes the pack yours, not theirs. Make sure the Cubs are involved at every opportunity.

Cubs need to grow steadily more independent, which means they need the chance to try new things, make decisions, succeed and sometimes fail. As they grow older, they need more challenging activities because 8-year-olds shouldn't have to suffer the frustration of attempting things beyond them, while 10-year-olds don't want to be held back to younger levels.

Give them as little help as possible in their activities. It's their own effort, not yours, that builds their self-confidence. Just as important, by allowing Cubs to try things on their own, you show that you trust them to do their best.

Instead of too much help, give every Cub lots of encouragement. Encouragement is not the same as praise, which is a kind of reward for success and can sometimes backfire, especially if Cubs don't think what they've done is all that great. Encouragement, on the other hand, shows them that you appreciate their efforts, even if some are not yet very "successful."



**Mowgli Says:** Just watching or hearing about something is an ok way to learn. But we get really excited when we can touch, try, taste and smell. Hands-on stuff is awesome! Make sure you have enough that we all have a chance to try!

## Discipline in the Pack



Cubs need to know the rules or limits of acceptable behaviour. Discipline or, if you don't like that word, a standard of conduct, keeps the pack running smoothly and lets your Cubs know where they stand.

Packs vary widely in how strictly they apply their discipline. You and the other leaders, with help from the Sixers' Council, need to decide on the rules for your pack. Take into account the number and personalities of your Cubs, the number of leaders, the nature of your meeting hall, your activities, and how your activities will affect other groups who meet in the building.

The leadership role becomes much easier once you've established certain discipline procedures in the pack; it's wise to do this right at the start of the year. What we're talking about here is not a forced discipline commanded by fear of punishment, but rather what Baden-Powell described as "an expression of loyalty through action."

To become good citizens, Cubs must begin to recognize that some kind of order is essential to a good program. They often will set their own standards of pack discipline and put pressure on their peers to conform to these standards. Good pack discipline comes from within the Cubs. They will conform because they want to, not because they have to do it.

Your example sets a pattern for the pack. In setting that example, think about actions that will inspire your Cubs to self-discipline. Here are some thoughts to consider:

- Ask the Cubs for pack rule suggestions.
- Be straight and fair.
- Behave the way you expect your Cubs to behave. Be courteous, punctual and well-groomed. Show appreciation, understanding and trust. Be a good listener. Work in cooperation with other leaders.



- Insist on fair play at all times, and avoid developing favourites among individuals or sixes.
- Make sure that you explain all rules and instructions clearly and precisely. You can't expect people to stick to something they don't understand.
- Keep orders to a minimum, and ensure that you have the whole pack's attention before giving instructions.
- Use hand signals to catch attention. For example, in many packs raising an arm in the air and making the Cub sign means "stop what you're doing, be quiet, and make the same signal." If you occasionally lower your voice when speaking, you'll find the Cubs do the same. If your Cubs talk while you are talking, wait until you have silence. Remind them that they are wasting the valuable time of the whole pack.
- Keep your temper. Try not to display anger in front of pack members. You can let them know you disapprove by your tone of voice and attitude.
- Never say things you don't intend to carry out, or ask others to do things you would not do yourself.
- Use loss of privileges or a gentle but firm removal from a disrupted situation when you need to take disciplinary action.
- Wear proper uniform, and keep it neat.
- Consider scheduling periodic "washroom/fountain breaks" under two or more leaders' supervision.
- Keep all leaders involved with the Cubs at all times. If they aren't running an activity or preparing for the next, ask them to mingle so they can offer encouragement or intervene in case of difficulty.
- Cubs have short attention spans. Set short-range goals for their activities so they can visualize the result of their efforts. Finish each activity while they're still interested in it, then start the next one immediately.
- When speaking to a specific Cub, refer to them by name to ensure you have their attention.
- Alternate vigorous and quiet activities so your Cubs never have to sit still or run around for too long.
- If you must reprimand a Cub, take the youth aside with another leader (out of ear shot of other Cubs) to avoid humiliation. Don't be alone with a youth.
- Tell misbehaving Cubs you want their behaviour to change. Explain exactly what you expect and tell them what good things will happen when it changes, rather than what bad things will happen if it doesn't.
- If you must attach a negative consequence to misbehaviour, be very sure that you can carry it out. If you warn a Cub who is playing rough that you will remove him from the game unless he shapes up, make sure you follow through.
- When using "time outs", use up to one minute per year of the Cub's age. When they rejoin the pack, you must consider the issue that you stopped the Cub for as forgotten and allow them to join in fully.
- When listening to what a Cub is trying to tell you, paraphrase their statements to make sure you understand.
- Remember, a very small part of communication is what you say. Your body language says a lot – make sure it's consistent with what you want to express.
- The attention span of your Cubs is a lot less than an adult. Keep what you have to say fairly simple. Be prepared to repeat key messages and remind your Cubs what you have said.
- Everyone learns differently.



## Special Needs

### Learning Disabilities



You'll often meet Cubs who don't seem to fit in. They won't stop talking or can't sit still. Sometimes they do so poorly in games that the others don't want them to play. They may become frustrated easily and seem unable to stick to any task very long.

It's possible Cubs like these have a learning disability. They may live every day with special challenges at home, at school, and at play. If these children aren't getting the help they need to cope with these challenges, they will experience repeated failure and frustration.

Scouting has a place for them – sometimes the only place they have. Because the Cub program offers a wide choice of activities and bases achievement only on doing one's best, these youth can experience a measure of success that they can't find anywhere else. But you and other leaders will need to give these Cubs extra care and show extra patience to achieve this positive outcome.

Sometimes a Cub's parents can explain the disability, and tell how you can best help the youth to deal with it. Sometimes parents are unaware of any difficulties, or unwilling to talk about them. If they can't offer advice, you will have to try to determine for yourself how best to help. Try some of these ideas.

1. A Cub who shows little skill in some activities almost certainly will be good in others. By offering a varied program, you'll discover what things the youth does well and can give the Cub special opportunities to succeed in them.
2. If a Cub forgets directions, give them to the youth one at a time. Use as few words as possible and speak face to face. If the youth can read, write down the directions in step-by-step order.
3. If a Cub becomes frustrated by a task, try to substitute a simpler job. Help the youth to start a task (such as a craft), and also put on the finishing touches. When your Cubs are working on a group project, organize the various jobs to give the child with difficulties one that is easy to handle.
4. Play cooperative rather than competitive games so that a team will not be penalized by a single Cub's mistakes. For all Cubs, cooperative games can be as full of challenge and fun as any others.
5. When you play competitive games, give the Cub a discreet advantage or let the youth sit out and keep score.
6. Be prepared to help a poorly coordinated Cub to take off and put on any outdoor clothing, or to get ready for ceremonies.
7. Like all Cubs, a youth with a learning disability is happiest when the meeting follows a normal routine. Because the Cub has greater difficulty coping with change, take the child aside before any special activity starts and describe what's going to happen. A Cub who is prepared will be able to handle it with a minimum of anxiety.



8. When a Cub becomes upset or over-excited, allow the youth to retreat to a quiet place away from the meeting to collect their thoughts. Ensure that the Cub doesn't see this "time out" as a punishment, more for reflection. If a situation tends to happen at every meeting, consider setting aside a regular time for the Cub to retreat for a period, perhaps to work with a leader on a favourite activity.
9. If a Cub often forgets to wear full uniform or bring permission slips to meetings, ask the youth's sixer to phone him before the meeting as a reminder. If the Cub seldom gets calls from peers, this kind of contact may help build self-esteem.
10. Consider placing a Cub with learning disabilities in a six with younger Cubs who match his maturity level. Or, you might put the Cub with mature Cubs (not necessarily older), ones who are better able to accept and help him/her. Cubs can be very kind and caring if they understand the difficulties that a peer faces.
11. At all times, let the Cub know what you expect from him or her, and what the youth can expect from you. If behaviour is a problem, help the Cub work towards small improvements; constantly encourage the Cub's efforts.
12. Remember that a Cub with a disability lives with difficulties every day, and may not get much help in coping with it at home or school. Make a place for the child in your pack, and let the child know he/she belongs there.



### Other Disabilities

Scouting has a place for Cubs with physical or mental disabilities. Like all Cubs, they want fun and adventure, and Cubbing offers enough variety to provide both.

Before enrolling a Cub with a specific disability, make sure all leaders agree and cooperate with the decision; then discuss it with your Cubs. They will need to understand how the disability affects the person and what they can do to help. You will need full information about special care from parents and, perhaps, the child's doctor.

### Making Adaptations

How much should you change your program to accommodate Cubs with physical or mental disabilities? As little as possible! They will belong to a six and be responsible with the other members for the duties of that six. In star and badge work, expect the same standards from them as you do from all the Cubs (i.e. do your best). Sometimes you may need to adapt or slightly change requirements, and parents can suggest alternatives. In making changes or adaptations, your aim is not to make things easier, but to provide challenges within their capabilities.

All Cubs enjoy playing games. You may want to adjust the rules of some games so Cubs with physical or mental disabilities can compete on equal terms.

Disabilities will not prevent Cubs from enjoying outdoor activities. Some may need a special partner to stay with them and help over the rough spots. Venturers or Rovers often make excellent partners for Cubs with disabilities, and many are eager to help if you contact them well in advance of your planned outing. Parents can advise you on any special safety precautions to take.

Cubs with disabilities need lots of encouragement to persevere and succeed. In that, they are no different from the rest of your Cubs. Each of them needs all the support and encouragement you can give.

Ask your Group Commissioner, Council office or Field Executive to help if you feel you need further support in working with a youth with disabilities. They may have suggestions or know of useful resources.

## Appropriate Behaviour Around Children



As a leader, you need to know how to conduct yourself appropriately, so you're able to provide children with the affection they need, without putting yourself in a compromising situation. For example, be sure that whatever hugging or touching you do is suitable for viewing by an audience. Avoid being alone with a child. If you must take a child aside to talk privately, try to stay within view of others (e.g. in a corner of the same room, or in an adjoining room with the door open, or a room with a window). When on outings or camps, travel in groups. Refer to *B.P.&P.* for direction on sleeping quarters when camping with Cubs.

For all children, leaders provide a positive role model and a friend. The Scouter must strive to be someone who is approachable and willing to listen if the child needs someone with whom to talk. This doesn't involve counselling, but just being supportive. (See Duty of Care in Chapter 2 for more suggestions.)

## Resources:

- See Appendix A – Child Abuse: A Guide For Scouters