

How To Grow a Boy Scout

Parents should **encourage, remind, and facilitate** while empowering their scout to become independent and take ownership of their scouting career. As a scout enters Boy Scouts it is recommended that parents encourage their scouts to become more independent and let the scout learn and grow even if it means making a mistake every now and then. Learning from mistakes often makes a bigger impact on the scout and aids them in not making the same mistake again.

Does this mean that you let them forget to take their sleeping bag on their first camping trip with the troop? Absolutely not! A young scout first becoming a Boy Scout is in the early stages of learning and will need more guidance and reminders than a scout who has been in a troop for a year or more. What we recommend, however, is that as they've had a chance to attend troop meetings and participate in campouts, you **let them start taking more responsibility**.

If the troop is going on a campout and it is anticipated that it will be cold for that trip, instruction is provided to the troop concerning what to wear and what to take to stay warm. The same holds true for cooking instruction and other skills needed for a scout to function in a troop and as a patrol on outings. Encourage your scout to pay attention to these instruction sessions at the troop meetings as they will make his trips much easier and more pleasant.

During his first year of scouting you can work with your scout to help them to learn how to think about what they will need when packing for a campout or other troop trip, but once they've had this experience several times try to **step back and let them think it through for themselves**. Encourage independence!

Communication is another skill where boys can obtain a great deal of growth through the scouting experience. Scouts will be expected to notify the troop leadership if they plan to attend a Troop campout or other activity. Also, if a scout needs to have a Scoutmaster conference or a Board of Review they are responsible for calling the Scoutmaster, or in the case of the Board of Review the Advancements Chairperson, to schedule these activities. Encourage your scout to do this himself rather than doing it for him. You are helping him grow by **making him responsible for these necessary communications**. Encourage responsibility! Encourage confidence!

Boy Scouts is different from Cub Scouts. Boy Scouts can work on Rank Advancements and Merit Badges at their own pace. There is no set timetable. Let the scout set their own pace. Should you encourage them? Of course! Is Troop 212 leadership encouraging them to move forward in their growth as a Boy Scout? Absolutely!

However, there is a fine line between encouraging the scout and pushing them. **The boy should be responsible for what they achieve in Boy Scouts!** There is a debate even among Scouters how much "encouragement" the boys should be provided. If you have to bribe or threaten the Scout to achieve a certain Rank, then that is probably beyond "encouragement."

Support your scout. Support the troop in any way you can, but try to step back and let your scout learn and grow to their best potential as a Boy Scout in Troop 212.