

Family Scouting FAQ

Q: What decision did the BSA make regarding girls' involvement in the organization?

Starting in 2018, families can choose Cub Scouts for their sons and daughters, enabling them to take advantage of the life-changing experiences provided through Scouting. A program for older girls will be announced in 2018 with projected implementation in 2019 to deliver the Boy Scout program to girls, allowing for participating girls to earn the highest rank of Eagle.

The Boy Scouts of America is committed to serving youth, families and communities through programs that deliver character development and values-based leadership training for young people. To that end, the BSA continues to evaluate how to bring the benefits of Scouting to the greatest number of youth possible — all while remaining true to our mission and core values, outlined in the Scout Oath and Law.

Q: Is this change a result of the BSA's declining membership numbers?

No. The BSA has experienced renewed interest in Scouting, and we believe that is largely in response to program innovation and a more thorough understanding of what families want and need when it comes to extracurricular activities. In fact, recent surveys of parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

Following an evaluation of what families and young people want and need when it comes to extracurricular activities and Scouting, the BSA welcomes girls into expanded programs from Cub Scouts to the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

Q: What research did the BSA conduct to inform this decision?

The BSA conducted extensive research, including two Harris surveys, as well as four research efforts that included input from nationwide family listening sessions. The results were overwhelmingly positive and supported the decision to welcome girls into Cub Scouts and provide a path to earn the Eagle Scout rank. The research found that parents not involved with the BSA showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts: 90 percent are likely to get their daughters involved in Cub Scouts and 87 percent are likely to get their daughters involved in Boy Scouts. The BSA also surveyed young girls and found that 90 percent of girls age 11-18 are interested in joining BSA programs. Plus, more than 90 percent of Scouting families and leaders, on average, believe the BSA programs are relevant to boys and girls.

Q: Is this change a departure from the BSA's core mission and values?

No. In fact, this aligns with our mission and values. After all, the values of Scouting as

outlined in the Scout Law — trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent — are relevant and important for both young men and women.

Our mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. To achieve our mission, we create innovative programs and evolve existing ones that respond to the needs of today's families and deliver them through dedicated volunteers in communities across the nation.

Q: How will the BSA respond to parents who don't want coeducational troops/programs? Do chartered organizations or local councils have a choice whether or not to adopt the expanded program?

The BSA is committed to identifying and developing program options that will align with the needs of today's families and young people. It comes down to providing parents with important choices that meet the character-development needs for their youth. There is research that indicates boys and girls together at the Cub Scout age in a nurturing environment have more benefits than single gender. At the same time, there is research that shows strong single-gender benefits – and we know parents have diverse perspectives on the topic, so we want to provide options with what best meets their needs.

When girls join Cub Scouting in fall 2018, packs may welcome them right away. An existing pack may choose to recruit girls or remain an all-boy pack. When creating a new pack, a chartered organization may form an all-boy pack, an all-girl pack or a pack of girls and boys.

Cub Scout dens will be single-gender — all boys or all girls. Cub Scout packs, meanwhile, can include any combination of all-boy or all-girl dens. The choice is left to individual pack leaders in consultation with their chartered organizations.

This hybrid model builds on the benefit of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Q: What updates to youth protection will be implemented to ensure the safety of boys and girls?

Youth protection and safety is paramount in all of the BSA's programs. We invest resources and time to continuously strengthen our youth-protection program. At the Cub Scout level, the program is already designed for the family, and we've had sisters of Cub Scouts participating in activities for several years. As we deliver the program for older girls, we will be evaluating any changes needed to ensure the safety of all youth.