

# YOUR FIRST DEN MEETING

The tone you set at the first meeting will determine, to a large extent, the success of your year. Key to setting the right tone is to consider the following:

- Wear your adult uniform to all meetings, and remind boys to wear their uniforms.
- Be completely organized before the start of the meeting.
- If you are new to running meetings like this, it is easier to think of it as seven short activities (see the parts of the den meeting section) rather than a single long event.
- Explain clearly to the boys the behavioral expectations. You may wish to use the “good conduct candle” approach (see this guide’s Appendix) and develop a den code of conduct. This can be hand-written on poster board, or a den code of conduct poster may be purchased at your local council Scout Shop (No. 32068). Be consistent, friendly, but firm with the boys.
- Explain that Scouts should bring their handbooks to each meeting.

If you are a new den leader, ask the assistant den leader(s) to arrive at least 15 minutes before the starting time of the meeting. He or she can help you with final preparations before the rest of the boys arrive. It is a good idea to have something constructive for boys who arrive early to do (known as the “Gathering” part of the den meeting plan) while you are making final preparation for den meetings; you might even have them help set up some parts of the meeting.

A snack at den meetings is optional. If you do serve a snack, offer fruits or vegetables to set an example of healthy eating. Be aware of any food allergies of den members and communicate these to adult partners who may be assisting with the snacks.



To encourage healthy snacks at meetings, you can work toward the SCOUT-Strong Healthy Unit Award as a den! Earn the award by following three healthy meeting practices, including providing fruits and/or vegetables for snacks (if snacks are served). Learn more about this award in the Appendix, under “Awards Cub Scouts Can Earn.”

One best practice to facilitate communication and involvement is to distribute a family information letter at the conclusion of each meeting. The letter tells families what was completed at each meeting and provides information on upcoming den and pack meetings and activities. Sample family information letters can be found at [www.scouting.org/CubScouts/Leaders/DenLeaderResources.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/CubScouts/Leaders/DenLeaderResources.aspx).