

# Beaver Linking Activities



*Encouraging participation in the Cub program, and beyond.*

January 2009 – By Stephen S.

## Looking through the eyes of a Beaver

*“I’ve been wearing this weird hat and jacket for so long! I hate wearing the hat- I tell Bubbles all the time, and I take it off every chance I can. Those big kids with their brown shirts and those badges – they look so cool!”*

*- Anonymous Beaver*

# Purpose

- Introducing Beavers to the Scouting world outside the Colony
- **Warming Beavers up to the idea of Cub Scouting**
- Sudden changes may create anxiety in Beavers
- **Gradually** exposing your White Tail Beavers to Cub Scouting, through **rewarding** experiences

The purpose of linking activities is to introduce and expose Beaver aged children to the world outside of the Beaver Colony. This is especially pertinent to White Tail Beavers, as a way of **warming them up** to the idea of Cub Scouting, and thus encouraging them to move up and into Cubs.

When swimming up to Cubs, the sudden change from Beaver Scouting to Cub Scouting can be abrupt, and may create a high level of anxiety. Think back to when you were a kid, going to a new school, or a new class. Seeing big kids and unfamiliar faces can be intimidating; you don't feel as though you belong.

Not having any friends can be scary and discouraging. Basically, a turn off! **Gradual** and **rewarding** exposure to the Cub program is the whole idea behind Linking Activities. We don't want to scare our Beavers; we want them to move on. And so, we can do that by making sure their experiences are rewarding.

## Things to keep in mind

1. Inform the parents
  - You want their understanding and support!
  - They need to know what you are doing to their kids
2. The world is your resource pool! Help is everywhere, don't be afraid to ask!
  - Other Scouters, Scout House
  - Local authorities, City Hall, Community Centres
  - School teachers
  - Parents
  - Don't forget that you can always ask the children/youth for opinions
3. Manage the risks
4. Sort any insurance liabilities, check with the By-Law, Principles and Practices (BP&P)

# What is a Keeo?

- A Cub Scout who shows responsibility, care for their peers, and leadership skill
- Has experience in Cub Scouting
- **Usually not a first year Cub**
  - but it does depend on the Cub, so use your discretion

One of the ways of exposing the Beavers to the Cub program, is by introducing a Keeo to the Beavers.

In *Friends of the Forest* (Ch.4 *Keeo and the Magical Light*), Keeo is a Beaver who was struck by magical lighting, and became a silver Beaver. He developed the the ability to talk to humans. You may find this to be a cheesy story, but 5-7 year olds don't mind at all; go ahead and read it to them, but be energetic!

Keos in our world, are Cub Scouts. They are those who have shown responsible behaviour in their Cub Pack. They may be Sixers or Seconds, and are chosen by Cub Pack Leaders.

# What do Keeos do?

- Help out in the Beaver Colony
- Help White Tails do more challenging activities
- Work with White Tails in more challenging activities
- Bridge the age gap between Leaders and Beavers
- Bridge the gap between the Beaver Colony and Cub Pack

In a way, the morals of *Friends of the Forest* do ring true here. Keeo's ability to talk to humans set him apart, in that he was able to bridge the communication barrier between Beavers and Human Beings.

From a 5-7 year old child's point of view, adults and older kids can seem like a different species. So in that regard, Keeos help bridge the gap between Leaders and the Cub pack as well.

# It's not hard to bring in a Keeo

- Kids enjoy playing “Big Brother” or “Big Sister.” They want to feel important, and responsible. Use that!
  - And Beavers will look up to, and listen to them
- You To have your White Tails make a friend in the pack
- To have someone can look up to
- Having a “go-to” person when they Swim-Up
- And thus, may help ease the transition from Beavers to Cubs
- You can even bring in Sixers or Seconds if you wish



## But, talk to the children first

- You need to have a talk with both Beavers and Cubs, to let them know what they're getting into
- Have a talk with your Beavers
  - Let them know what to expect
  - “We'll be inviting some Cubs to help us out! These big kids go camping all the time- they'll teach you a lot of stuff!”
  - Invite Akela and Keeo for a introduction
- Talk to the Cubs as well
  - Tell them about the great responsibility that's been entrusted in them
  - In other words... stroke their egos
  - “You'll be helping take care of the Beavers now, so do a good job!”

# Inviting Beavers to Cub meetings

Your White Tail Beavers can join Cub meetings after they have gotten to know the Keeos or Cubs.

- You can give your Beavers the Silver striped Beaver tail if you wish

Beavers can then...

- Be partnered up with Cubs
- Learn the Cub Salute, Cub motto, and promise
- Participate in the Grand Howl
- Listen to stories about B-P
  - Basically, completing a Cub's Tenderpad requirements

## And after that...

You can send your White Tails over to the Cub Section whenever they are playing games, or having a fun activity. Of course, let your group's Akela know ahead of time.

- **Continue to make sure your Beavers feel important and helpful**
  - This goes for Cubs, too
- Watch out for the Steamroller Effect: A child who tries to do everything themselves, or is a bully
  - It's a negative experience for children - not good if you want to keep your Beavers!



# Introducing the Badge System

- Cubs have a badge system, and are encouraged to earn awards and badges
- Adds a new element to rewarding experience – and that is, personal achievement
- In contrast, Beavers do not have a badge system
- Curious Beavers will feel the need to ask about cool looking badges – use that!
  - A storytelling (aka bragging) session is okay because it may perk their interest.
- Start planning Beaver activities where Beavers earn badges
- Some groups and Areas have their own badge system – steal their ideas!
  - Eg. North Shore’s event badge system



## Earning Cub Badges

- Beavers are allowed to earn Cub badges, provided that they understand they cannot wear it until after Swim-Up
  - But don’t finish the whole Cub program! The idea is just to **entice** your Beavers
- Morale boost - “I have a big kid badge!”
  - Extra incentive towards personal achievement
- Have White Tails join Cub activities that results in the earning of a badge
  - Woodworking fulfills Carpentry badge requirements
  - Many extracurricular activities fulfill badge requirements

# Other ideas

## **Kims**

Like Keeos, but they are Scouts who help out the Cub Pack. You can let them help the Beaver Colony instead. This exposes Beavers to the Troop Section, and is a good first experience for shy Scouts.

## **Venturers or Leaders in Training (LIT)**

Have Venturers or LITs help out in the Colony, but have them take on roles such as activity coordinators, quartermasters, treasurers, or secretary. The Colony program is good way for Venturer aged youth to get used to a future role on your leadership team. And of course, exposing your Beavers to Venturer aged youth is beneficial as well.

- Special year and events and gatherings where Beavers get to play with children and youth from other sections
- All section camps
- Attending Cuboree is a great idea too! But parents have to attend also.

# References for further reading

- The Beaver Leader Handbook
- The Keeo Book
- The Cub Handbook
- Beaver Jumpstarts
- Scouting Life and Leaders magazine – free, and delivered to your door!
- BP&P
- Google
- Your own creativity
- Kindergarten crafts
- Michael's, Daiso, dollar stores