

Summer Camp & Parents



Here's the deal about Boy Scouts and the out-of-doors: Boy Scouts hike and camp as Boy Scouts. This is not "Webelos III Family Camping." Boys of this age need to grow, and to form peer relationships, to individuate themselves, and to gain a sense of competence and independence. This absolutely cannot occur in a "family camping" environment.

If parents come along, they should be camping separately from the Scouts--literally out of sight and out of ear-shot. If they cook, they cook for themselves, with their own food. They don't "mooch" from the Scouts, or cook for them, or have any interactions with them. The Scouts and their Scoutmaster and an assistant (may be an ASM, a parent, or a committee member) are together, but any "extra" parents should be making themselves invisible.

A "Jamboree Troop" is a "model troop," from which we can draw lessons. There are four patrols of eight, one Senior Patrol Leader, perhaps one or two ASPLs, and four adults: Scoutmaster and three ASMs. That's it. Patrols cook and clean up for themselves, lead themselves, plan for themselves, and carry out daily activities for themselves. The four adults aren't the "leaders," they're the wallpaper, or safety-nets, if you will. All troops need to be organized in this general fashion.

Parents stay away. They pitch their tents away from the Scouts and do whatever they do during the day away from the Scouts. This is not a "Dad n' Lad" activity--That went the way of the buggy whips of Cub Scouting, and should no longer be present.

Any troop that doesn't do it this way is ultimately crippling their Scouts by keeping them subservient and "small." Boy Scouting cuts those apron-strings, and keeps 'em cut.

How "separate" should any accompanying parents be from their sons, while camping?

How separate? How's this: If the Scouts and the parents don't see one another from dawn till after dinner, that would be just about right. Boys and young men of Boy Scout age need to assert their independence and their reliance on one another without Dad and Mom "hovering."

From the US Scouting Project website's "Ask Andy"