

# Lion Pilot Program for Kindergarteners

Lion pilot program for kindergarteners off to a roaring start, with exciting changes coming for 2017-2018

August 14, 2017 Bryan Wendell Cub Scouting 39



“It’s fun, hands-on and active.” “It’s simple and easy to implement.” “It’s age-appropriate, builds character and develops new skills.”

That’s just a glimpse of what parents and youth across the country are saying about Lions, the BSA’s pilot program for kindergarten-age boys.

Lions answers the call for fun, character-building after-school adventures for boys 5 or 6 years old or in kindergarten. Lions begins its second season as a nationwide pilot program in the 2017-2018 Scouting year.

Pilot is the operative word here. It means this program is evolving based on feedback from parents and BSA professionals. Based on that feedback, as well as surveys and focus groups, the BSA has some changes to announce for this fall.

I'll share those changes a little later in the post. First, let's take a quick look at what people are saying about Lions so far.



**What did families think of Lions in**

## 2016-2017?

Lion Guides, parents, and youth agreed that the program content was enjoyable, effective and engaging.

“Overall, the Lion program was a big hit with our pack,” one survey respondent wrote. “In my opinion, this is the best idea the BSA has come up with, next to allowing girls to join Venturing.”

Many said they got the training and support from council and district volunteers to help make their Lion experience a success.

Other highlights from the survey:

- **61 percent** of Lion parents indicated they have no other child in Scouting. This means Lions is both recruiting new families to Scouting as well as serving siblings of existing Scouts.
- **90 percent** of parents said they liked the uniform T-shirt, shared-leadership model, age-appropriate activities, youth Adventure book and immediate recognition stickers. They're also pleased with the meeting duration, frequency and content. They said the Leader Guidebook was simple and easy to follow and that the Adventures were engaging for the boys.
- **91 percent** of parents say their Lion will be moving to Tigers. This is probably the best indicator of all that the pilot program is success.





## What's new in Lions for 2017-2018?

- **Pack meetings and activities will be open to Lion families who want to participate.** Lion families said they wanted more pack involvement, and now they have the option of being included in program, skits, and more.
- **Pinewood Derby open to Lions.** Packs have three recommended options for implementing this:
  1. Integrate into the pack Derby with other Cub Scouts.
  2. Use the wedge car from the Scout Shop to eliminate cutting.
  3. Have Lions participate in a Veggie Car Derby, where potatoes and cucumbers replace wood blocks.
- **Fundraising will be allowed as a family option.** Although they don't want mandatory levels of funds to raise, Lion families indicated they do want to have the option to

raise funds. Spring fundraising is encouraged. If popcorn is sold by Lions, a show-and-sell approach where older boys and parents are also present is preferred. Door-to-door selling would only be appropriate if the parent is by the youth's side.

- **Uniform T-shirt won't change, but families can buy button-down if they want.** Parents and boys love the required Lion T-shirt and optional cap. But this change allows families to buy official blue Cub Scout button-down shirts and blue pants as desired for special occasions and pack ceremonies.
- **A Lion-specific page in *Boys' Life*.** Parents can use this great resource to help unlock the world of reading for their child.