

Simple Things That Will Help on the First Campout

There were several simple things that Scouts may have a hard time doing on their first campout. An item as simple as rolling up a sleeping bag can become a problem. Leaders will only guide Scouts with their personal belongings when it becomes absolutely necessary but will not pack for them. Scouts should be able to set up as well as pack all personal gear without assistance.

Let's look at some things that can be done that will help your Scout with his gear. Prior to camping, work with him to gather the supplies he will need for the trip into one spot. Let him pack the supplies in his bag so that he knows exactly what is there. If there are items that have to be folded, rolled, or otherwise stowed, have him show that he can open it and close it without any assistance. It is important that gear that comes out of a bag be able to go back into the same bag. He should also be able to make up his bed without help as well as store and care for his clothes at camp. Advise him but don't do it for him!

Help your Scout learn to cook a few simple items at home. Even most of the adults will develop recipes and cooking skills in the controlled environment at home before bringing them out to camp. If you can work with your Scout to help him feel comfortable with simple meals like boys age 11-13 may cook that will be great. Typical items cooked for breakfast are bacon, eggs, and pancakes with instant oatmeal being another popular hot meal. Typical dinner items are hamburgers, spaghetti, and beanie-weanie type meals. As you can see, it's not gourmet but requires a little skill with heat control and in the case of bacon and hamburgers, preventing grease fires. By having this confidence, your Scout can develop the confidence to jump into the cooking.

One of the things that we constantly battle is how to do cleanup on campout. Interestingly, at camp, it's not much different than many of us did it before we had dishwashers. Most boys these days don't understand though since the dishwasher is an everyday companion. To help him with this task, you might walk him through the typical five steps for washing by hand. Scrape off the dishes, rinse small debris off, wash, rinse, and dry (on campouts we add a second rinse). Seeing it at home once or twice will help prevent frustration and give your Scout another chance to succeed.