

Simple Things That Will Help on the First Campout

There are a few 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 himself.

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. Have 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. He should also practice setting up his tent, in the dark, with the assistance of a tentmate. Advise him but don't do it for him!

On a campout, Scouts will cook meals with their patrols. Help your Scout learn to cook a few simple items at home. Typical items cooked for breakfast are breakfast tacos, eggs, and pancakes. Typical dinner items are hamburgers, sausages, hot dogs and fajitas. It's not gourmet but requires a little skill with heat control. It is also important that they are able to recognize when meat is fully cooked. By having this practice, your Scout can develop the confidence to jump into outdoor cooking.

One of the things that we constantly battle is how to do cleanup on a campout. Interestingly, at camp, it's not much different than many of us did it before we had dishwashers. To help him with this task, you might walk him through the typical steps for washing by hand. Scrape off the dishes, rinse small debris off, wash, rinse, and dry. Seeing it at home once or twice will help prevent frustration and give your Scout more confidence on campouts.

(If your family doesn't have much camping experience, contact your son's Patrol Leader or any Scoutmaster several days prior to the campout. They will be glad to provide assistance.)