

'Webelos' Boy Scout Program

Seen as Dramatic Improvement

Major improvements in the Cub Scout Program of the Boy Scouts of America go into effect this month after a 5-year study, and the revisions are expected to increase Cub Scouting's natural appeal for boys and provide more help for volunteer leaders.

"The study findings brought out very clearly the vitality and soundness of the Cub Scout program," Darl S. Gleed, Scout Executive told the executive board of the Midnight Sun Council, Boy Scouts of America, this week. "There is evidence of genuine enthusiasm for the program on the part of boys, leaders, and parents."

The Cub Scout program was formally launched in 1930, and the last major changes were made in 1952. There are now over 2 million Cub Scouts in the United States.

Training in the improved Cub Scout program will be given to all Cub Scout pack leaders during the coming month.

One of the early steps before starting the series of studies and surveys was to prepare a "statement of purpose" related to Cub Scouting for the present day.

The basic statement that resulted is that "Cub Scouting is a program of the Boy Scouts of America for parents, leaders, and institutions to use with boys 8, 9, and 10 years of age."

Then, the purposes of Cub Scouting were listed: to influence the development of character and encourage spiritual growth; develop habits and attitudes of good citizenship; encourage good sportsmanship and pride in growing strong in mind and body; improve understanding within the family; strengthen

the ability to get along with other boys and respect other people; foster a sense of personal achievement by developing new interests and skills; show how to be helpful and do one's best; provide fun and exciting new things to do; and prepare boys to become Boy Scouts.

One of the key research projects was carried out in 1964 when a in-depth study was conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.

Researchers fanned out across the country to interview a scientifically selected cross section of families with boys of Cub Scout age—mothers, fathers, and the boys themselves—on the interests, problems, and activities of boys from 8 to 10 years old.

Highlights of the improvements include a new and different experience for Cub Scouts in their 10th year (the Webelos Scout program), a new leadership position of Den Leader coach in Cub Scout packs, revision of achievements and electives in the advancement program so that the 8-year old Wolf and 9-year-old Bear advancement patterns are no longer so similar, recognition through registration of assistant Den Mothers, and provision for a boy to enter Cub Scouting any time after he is 8 years of age or in the third grade.

The Webelos Scout program was described by Gleed as "a most dramatic and significant improvement." The 10-year-old's advancement program is based on 15 hobby and vocational subjects called "activity badge areas," although the requirements for the Webelos Award

remain basically the same.

The Webelos Den Leader will be a man, and meetings will be held weekly in the early evening or on Saturday morning.

There will be a broader outdoor program that for the younger Cub Scouts but not including the rugged activities reserved for Boy Scouts.