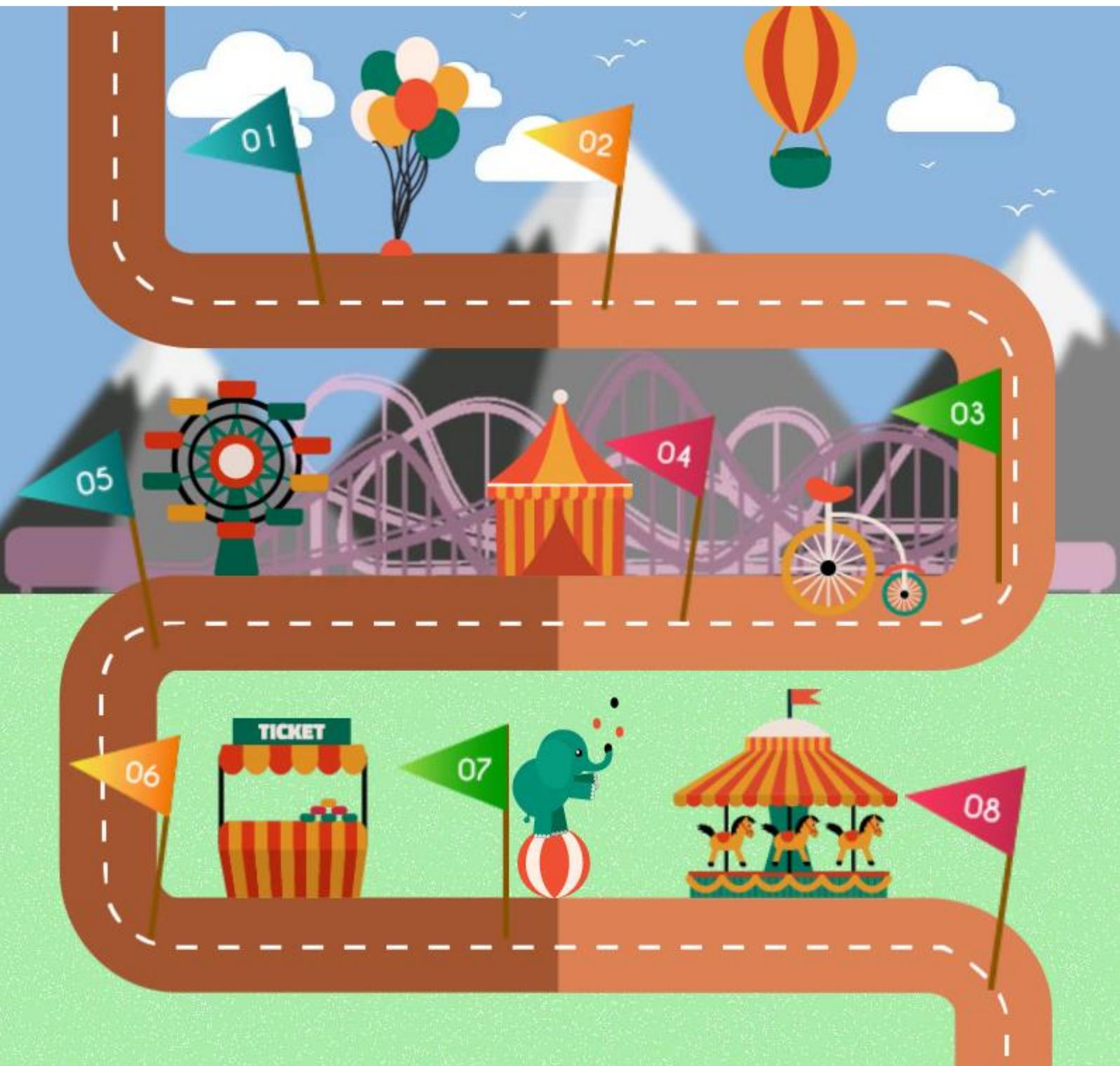


How to Prepare Youth for Linking



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Retention of young people is key to running a successful Scout Group. As leaders it is important that we encourage and support young people to continue their journey in Scouting. Each section offers new challenges and activities, along with badges and awards to earn. The Scouting Programme is designed to be progressive through the sections, with young people developing their skills as they move on.

Planning ahead can ensure that young people move at the right time for them, and flexibility in the age ranges offers the opportunity for young people to move up with a small group of friends. It may sometimes be appropriate to extend the flexibility in moving from the Joey, Cub, Scout or Venturer sections, for young people with additional needs.

It is important to establish and maintain links between the sections (in both directions) to give young people the support they need when moving on. For example, the transition between Scouts and Venturers may be more challenging, as there may not be a Venturer Unit within your Scout Group, so it is really important that Venturers are visible in the District and visit local Scout Groups.

Below we have listed some practical things that all Leaders can do to support young people moving between the sections;

- Regularly update your Group Leader on who in your Joey, Cub, Scout or Venturer section is getting ready to move on.
- For more information, talk to your Group Leader if you need assistance connecting with other sections in your Group. Your District Commissioner can point you in the right direction when helping to transition from Scouts to Venturers if you don't have a Venturer Unit in your Group.
- Attending District meetings or events will give you the opportunity to meet leaders in your local area.
- Joint activities, run together, help members of both sections get to know each other and feel comfortable with others outside their own section.
- Some young people may need a bit of extra support when thinking of making the big move. These may be particularly present in a young person on the autism spectrum, as this often involves increased anxiety about change or new situations.

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Moving from Joeys to Cubs

Moving from Joeys to Cubs is an exciting time for the little ones. They can look forward to more adventurous activities as well as going on camps.

As part of the linking, Joeys go to both Joey and Cub meetings for at least three weeks. You could set them a challenge, for example, to meet at least three new Cubs and remember their names.

If possible, try to move a Joey on to Cubs with their group of friends. That way, moving on isn't as scary.

The Cubs could spend an evening creating welcome invitations for Joeys joining their section. This will help to make the new Cubs feel more at home.

The Cub Leader could bring some or all of the Sixers, to a Joey meeting, helping the Joeys to get to know some of the more senior Cubs in a familiar environment. Give older Cubs the responsibility of supporting a new member.

Moving Sections can be scary for young members, so we should programme to take this into account. We don't want them scared to come back to Cubs after a rough first night experience.

Moving from Cubs to Scouts

It's easy for a Cubs to feel like a small fish in a big pond when they move onto the Scout section. It might be even more daunting for a young person with additional needs. Flexibility in the age ranges may sometimes be appropriate.

To prepare Cubs for the changes ahead, why not spend an evening completing part of a Scout Activity badge? Giving them a taste of the exciting things that lie ahead of them.

To achieve their Link Badge, Cubs visit a Scout Troop for at least three weeks, and take an active part in the Programme. Cubs may struggle with finding their voice in their new Troop. To combat this, challenge your Cubs to suggest a game for the section to play while on their visit. This prepares them for sharing Programme ideas and speaking to others in the section.

As a Scout Leader, you could ask Patrol Leaders to look out for younger Scouts by buddying them up.



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Moving from Scouts to Venturers

Scouts may have to venture a little further to meet with their new Unit. This creates an amazing opportunity for Scouts to widen their friendship circle and meet Venturers who have not been a part of their previous Group.

This transition between sections may be more challenging than others because Venturers may not be present in every Group so it's really important that Venturers are visible in the District and that Unit's visit local Scout Groups.

As a Scout Leader, you could get your Scouts excited about moving on by inviting a local Venturer Unit to visit the Troop for an evening.

A good first impression is important here. Choose an activity that reflects the freedom and adventure that Venturers have.

Moving from Venturers to Rovers and/or Leadership

When a Venturer turns 18-years-old, they are faced with some exciting options, and they should be encouraged to join their local over Crew and/or become a Leader.

There are also a wide range of different volunteer roles available, suited to different skill sets, preferences and time commitments.

The Group Leader should discuss the options available with Venturers as they come to the end of their time in the Venturer Section.