

A Parent's Guide to the Life To Eagle Process



- How to help your son earn his Eagle Scout Rank. As much as you want to ensure his success, your son needs to meet **all** of the requirements.
- Things that help.
- Things that don't help.
- Guaranteeing his success.
- How to help him join that top 4% of his peers nationwide who will earn the Eagle rank.

Encouragement

One of the most important things you can do is to provide encouragement. Many young men get discouraged while others get distracted. They may feel pressure from their peers that Scouting isn't "cool". You can encourage him, and remind him that earning the Eagle Scout rank will have more long-term significance throughout his life than almost anything else he does as a boy. He must make the decision to reach for this accomplishment, but your support and encouragement often makes the biggest difference. Help him set deadlines, timelines, goals, and waypoints so that he does not run out of time to complete the process. Remember: **There are no exceptions to the "Prior to your 18th Birthday" deadline.**

Life to Eagle Seminar

You and your son should attend the Life to Eagle Seminar together. You will receive the same information he does, and can help him absorb all the information presented. This seminar covers all seven requirements, and concentrates on the planning and carrying out the Eagle Scout leadership service project. Attendance will save many hours of work and frustration. Make sure he has the Eagle Scout Packet before the seminar. Read the packet so ensure you understand the process.

Finding a Project

When your son is ready to find a project, help him to evaluate ideas in light of his skills and interests. Whatever he chooses to do, he will have to teach and lead a group of youth how to carry out the project. If he has worked with tools all his life, a construction project might be a good choice. If he is a computer expert, he might consider using those skills. If he has a green thumb, a landscaping project might be the best choice. Suggest he talk to other Eagle Scouts, his Scoutmaster and other Scout leaders. The restrictions on what makes an acceptable Eagle project are detailed in the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook. If your son has a question, have him call the Weekly Coordinator.

Learning the Skills Needed to Carry Out the Project

Your son may need to learn new skills. You can help your son find people who can help him learn these skills. Remember that he will need to understand these skills well enough to teach others while leading the project. You may have skills and information that he needs. Other Scout leaders or parents may be able to help him out. In some cases your son may need to contact a professional for help. The library is always a good source of information, from basic construction to landscaping and horticulture to designing events for younger children.

Writing the Proposal

Once your son has decided on a project, and learned the skills to plan, develop, and lead the project, he needs to write up the project in the Workbook. **He** needs to write this. Writing up the details is an important step in the planning, and demonstrating to himself and others that he is ready to lead the project. You can help with reading, spelling, formatting, and editing. Make sure he follows the instructions carefully. The project should be written well enough and in enough detail that the project can be carried out using only the written instructions.

Reviewing the Proposal

Your son should be able to tell to you, step by step, what the boys working on the project will be doing. He will be leading the project. The boys working with him probably will know much less about how to carry out the project than he does. You can take him through the project step by step. Ask questions such as: *“On the first day of your project you are at your site, you have a pile of materials and tools, and a group of boys ready to work. What do you tell them to do?”* *“How should they do it (remember these are boys, not skilled craftsmen)?”* *“What next?”* And so forth through the entire project to completion. Ask, *“when you go to buy the materials, exactly what materials, types, sizes, and quantities will you buy?”* All these details should be laid out fully in the Workbook project plan details. **These are the same types of questions he will be asked when he is ready to get his proposal approved by his Scoutmaster, Troop Committee, and the District Eagle Board of Review.**

Carrying Out the Project

You and other adults in the troop should have very little to do while your son is actually carrying out the project. Be careful not to take over running the project. This is **his** Eagle Project. You may need to be involved with transportation. Only adults can operate certain tools and machinery. Scouts may operate power tools with appropriate explanation and supervision. Don't decide which scouts can use power tools based solely on age – maturity matters more. Beyond these few specific activities, the most helpful thing you can do is to bring a lawn chair, a good book and a camera. Stay close enough that you can be reached in an emergency, but far enough away that he (and his workers) will not be tempted to turn to you with questions that he needs to answer.

Writing the Report

Here again, you can help with encouragement, review, and ideas for improvement. Help him to be sure he has covered all the points listed in the Workbook under “Project Report”. Remind your son that this report is a key piece in demonstrating that he should be one of that top 4%. It should be the kind of report he would turn in at school for a yearlong project with the expectation of receiving an A+ grade. For most of the Board of Review members, this is the only exposure they have to his project and the basis for approving the project he has carried out.

Recognition

While your son and the troop are planning the Eagle Court of Honor, work with them to help make this event have the importance and lasting significance to your son that is appropriate for the accomplishment he has achieved. If your son is not sure what he wants, he can talk to other boys and troops about what they have done for an Eagle court of honor. The troop will balance your needs with the needs of the troop. This is a celebration not only for your son but for his unit as well.