

## Special Needs Scouting

1. Define Disability
2. Challenges
3. Developing a Plan
4. Advancement Guidelines
5. Resources & Strategies

## Occupational Therapy & Scouting

We learn by doing: people become builders by building and instrumentalists by playing instruments. Similarly, we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones...

It is a matter of no little importance what sort of habits we form from the earliest age---it makes a vast difference, or rather all the difference in the world. ---Aristotle

## Disability Defined by BSA

An Individual is considered to have a “disability” if she or he:

Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities ie. seeing, hearing, walking, independence in self-care, etc.

Has a record of or is regarded as having such an impairment

## BSA Classification of Disabilities

BSA has its own categorization of disabilities which is further defined in the “Scouting for Youth with Disabilities Manual”

1. Learning Disability (LD)
2. Cognitive Disability (CD)
3. Development Disability (DD)
4. Physical Disability (PD)
5. Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD)

## Challenges

- Communication
- Social Integration
- Planning inclusive activities & outings
- Adapting tasks and activities
- Accessibility & minimizing physical barriers
- Advancement

## **Making a Plan starts with Parent & Scout Conference**

- Two leaders (no more), the Scout and the parents.
- Speaking directly to the scout and include him in the conference.
- Guidelines for the conference p. 147 Scouting for Youth with Disabilities Manual

## **Parent & Scout Conference**

- Informed consent
- Goal of Scout
- Physical
- Cognitive/Intellectual
- Emotional
- Social
- Occupational (Activities of Living)

## **What are the goals of the Scout?**

- Fun
- Interact with other
- Make a friend
- Learn life skills (cooking, self-care)
- Learn outdoors skills
- Develop leadership skills
- Advancement

## **Physical Function**

- Sensory function (vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, vestibular)
- Mobility (gross & fine)
- Muscle strength
- Posture & Balance
- Coordination & Body awareness
- Energy level and tolerance for activity
- General physical health

## **Cognitive/Intellectual Function**

- Consciousness & Orientation
- Wide-range of intellectual function (High IQ to mental retardation)
- Attention
- Memory
- Perception
- Organization (executive function)
- Language processing

## **Emotional Function**

- Appropriate range and regulation of emotions
- Low frustration tolerance
- Understanding other's reactions or perspective
- Anxiety and fear

## **Social & Communicative Function**

- Engagement
- Purposeful Communication
- Creative & Spontaneous Language
- Logical Expression of ideas
- Friendships
- Bullying issues

## **Occupational Function**

- Self-care: personal hygiene & toileting, dressing, feeding, sleeping
- Life Skills: cooking, cleaning, sleeping, shopping, money management
- School & Work
- Leisure Activities
- Health & Safety

## What is Advancement?

- Rank advancement is one of the methods of the BSA program
- A badge is recognition of what a young person is able to do, not merely a reward for what he or she has done.

## Cub Scout Advancement

Advancement performance in Cub Scouting is centered on its motto: "Do your Best"

When a boy has done this---his very best---then regardless of the requirements for any rank or award, it is enough; accomplishment is noted.

## Eagle Award Statement of Belief

**Every boy in Scouting is a candidate for the Eagle Scout Award. The only limitation upon achievement of that award should be that boy's individual desire, focus and perseverance.**

## "Limited flexibility" in Boy Scout Rank Advancement Requirements

- Must "attempt" to meet all the requirements as outlined by the rank (Tenderfoot, 2<sup>nd</sup> class & 1<sup>st</sup> class)
- "Reasonable accommodation" can be made ie. extension of time, adaptation of facilities, use of equipment or devices
- Apply for "modifications" or "alternative requirements" which requires an application to be submitted and approved to the Council Advancement Committee

## Merit Badges

- Permanent physical or mental disability expected to last more than 2 years or beyond age 18.
- Earn as many of the required merit badges as his ability permits.
- Complete as many of the requirements of the required merit badges as his ability permits.
- Individual requirements for merit badges may not be modified or substituted
- Youth with disabilities may be approved for alternative badges they can complete. This is allowable on the basis of one entire badge for another.
- Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges

## Resources

### Scouting:

Guide to Advancement 2013 <http://scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>

Scouting for Youth with Disabilities Manual <http://scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34059.pdf>

A Guide to working with Boy Scouts with DisABILITIES (Parent or Guardian Informed Consent form): <http://scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-730.pdf>

Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges <http://scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-730.pdf>

Individual Scout Achievement Plan <http://www.wswd.org/downloads/ISAP-WWSWd.doc>

PAC web-site <http://www.pacbsa.org/openrosters/ViewOrgPageLink.asp?LinkKey=38514&orgkey=240>

### Books:

**The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome** by Tony Attwood (This is an excellent resource with strategies for communication and social integration useful with any Scout with these challenges regardless of diagnosis)

**It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend: Helping the Child with Learning Disabilities Find Social Success** by Richard Lavoie

**101 Games for Groups** by Maxie Ashton B.Sc. (OT) & Lana Varga RN, RPN

This book contains games that energize, develop language and listening skills, encourage social interaction & promote teamwork. Many Games can be adapted for scouts with Special Needs.

## Strategies

### Facilitating Communication

- Use gestures to help communication
- Use visual demonstration to assist verbal direction
- One person to speak at a time
- Avoid noisy situations
- Allow the person more time to process and express themselves
- Repeat what was said to allow them to hear what you heard
- Ask them to repeat if you don't understand
- Allow them to rephrase or to paraphrase for them
- Co-facilitator to rephrase or paraphrase as required
- Ask short questions with a "yes" or "no" answer
- Model slow speech with short phrases

### Modifications for Scoutmaster Conference & BOR

Approved modifications might include:

- Giving the scout questions ahead of time to prepare written or verbal answer
- Parent or facilitator attend the conference or review to facilitate communications

### Teaching & Evaluating Concepts of the Oath & Law

- It is the practice of the concepts not the memorization of the words which is important
- The task is to convey to the scout the meaning of these words
- Be clear & concise
- Don't use complex sentences or difficult words
- Use pictures & graphic descriptions
- The scout law is behavioral so it can be illustrated through drama or video-presentations ie. A scout is helpful
- The concepts of the Scout Oath can be broken apart and taught separately
- An approved modification might be to evaluate how the scouts lives the oath & law and/or written explanation

## Promoting Social Integration

- Policy of “Inclusion”
- Buddy Scout
- “Patrol Method”: Guide & coach your patrol leaders on assisting & looking out for Special Needs Scout
- Adult mentor (anthropologist) who guides and models for the scout the social customs of the troop
- Assist the Scout in finding other scouts with similar interests and values
- Allow the Scout to limit the duration of socializing if necessary or have a place where he can “chill out”

## Tips for Adapting Tasks & Activities

### 1. Environment

- Accessibility
- Facilities readily available
- Safety (supervision & containment)

### 2. Equipment

- Adaptive equipment used by the scout
- Computers
- Alternative Gadgets & Tools

### 3. Steps in task

- Disabled may just need more time to complete and learn a task; or parts of a tasks
- The task may need to be broken into smaller parts; and repeated a number of times in order to be mastered.

### 4. Methods of task instruction (multi-sensory EDGE)

#### Explain:

- Auditory (verbal explanation and/or written)
- Visual (visual demonstration & pictures)

#### Demonstrate:

- Auditory (explain the steps)
- Visual (visual demonstration & pictures)
- Kinesthetic & Tactile (guide them through the movement)

#### Guide:

- Auditory (talk them through the steps)
- Visual (do it along with them)
- Kinesthetic & Tactile (“learning through doing”)

#### Enable:

- Practice, practice, practice until skill is mastered using the methods above

### 5. Adapting tasks:

- Change the way the task is done
- Using different materials to complete the task
- Positioning: arrangement of body and objects

### 6. Facilitation of task or movement:

- Partial independence leading to independence. Repeated tactile and kinesthetic guidance of task with graded reduction in assistance with repetition
- Buddy system where one scout assists the other scout with direction
- Proposed Modifications which require council approval may involve the assistance of a scout/leader/parent with task completion