

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
NATIONAL SPECIAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES COMMITTEE

SND 100 Essentials in Serving Scouts with Special Needs & Disabilities



Course Objective

Assist leaders in developing a positive and inclusive program that caters to all youth in the Scouting program, including those with diverse abilities and challenges.



Course Topics

- Recognizing Disabilities
- Inclusive Practices
- Collaborative Efforts
- Adaptive Approaches
- Advancement Support
- Conflict Resolution
- Training & Resources
- Available Support



“We are more alike than we are different”

- Maya Angelou

It is essential to recognize that youth with disabilities share the same requirements for success and acceptance, both socially and emotionally, as their peers.



What is a disability?

A disability is a condition that may limit a person's movements, senses, or activities.

Examples of Disability Categories

- Physical
- Learning
- Cognitive or Developmental
- Emotional
- Social



Offering Support to Scouts

- Be proactive
- Seek ways to support Scouts facing difficulties, even if they have not received a diagnosis or if their situation has not been disclosed to you.



Offering Support to Scouts

- Encourage Positive Interactions
- Provide Clear Instructions
- Develop Individualized Strategies
- Promote Inclusivity



Emphasizing Character Development

- **Trustworthy:** Encourage all Scouts to be dependable in their interactions with others, regardless of their abilities.

- **Helpful:** Promote a culture of helpfulness and support, where scouts willingly assist each other without regard to differences in abilities.

- **Brave:** Instill courage in scouts to stand up for inclusivity and to advocate for the needs of all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

- **Reverent:** Foster an environment of respect and reverence for all individuals, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or challenges.



Every Scout Deserves a Leader

Who exemplifies the Scout Law and Oath by being...

- Inclusive and Supportive
- Effective Communicator
- Empathetic and Compassionate
- Adaptable and Flexible
- Safety-Conscious

But most of all.... Is passionate about Scouting



Partner with Parents

“How can we ensure the Scout is successfully experiencing all that Scouting has to offer?”

- Have a Joining Conference for Scouts
- Meet regularly with parents
- Praise successes and encourage
- Encourage parents to become active in the unit



Partner with the Scout

- Communicate respectfully with the Scout
- Collaborate to gain insight
- Encourage the Scout to help create solutions
- Encourage self-advocacy
- Offer flexibility
- Do not gossip or complain



Partner with Peers

Peer buddy is an ongoing, supportive relationship between Scouts.

It is **NOT** the same as the Buddy System.



Planning Events

When planning events, consider the following:

- Accessibility
- Sensory Considerations
- Clear Communication
- Peer Involvement
- Safety Measures
- Individualized Support



Adaptive Approaches

Unit leaders can make accommodations for **timing, scheduling, setting, presentation, and response** when helping a Scout with his/her advancement.



Possible Adaptations

- Materials Adaptation
- Architectural Adaptation
- Leisure Companion Adaptation
- Cooperative Group Adaptation
- Scheduling Adaptation
- Environmental Adaptation



Advancement Support

- Cub Scout, Scouts BSA and Venturing advancement
- [Alternate Rank Requirement](#)
- [Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges](#)
- [Participation Beyond the Age of Eligibility](#)
- Time extensions to earn the Eagle Scout rank



When Conflicts Occur

- Don't make snap decisions.
- Remain Calm
- Communicate Clearly
- Offer Support
- Find Solutions Together
- Seek Guidance



Corrective Action

A disability is not an automatic excuse for poor behavior. Corrective action should build...

- Self-awareness
- Coping and adaptation skills
- Maturity
- Wisdom



Resources

- National Special Needs and Disabilities Committee
 - <https://www.scouting.org/resources/disabilities-awareness/>
- National Special Needs and Disabilities Roundtables
 - <https://ablescouts.org/tag/snd-roundtable/>
- Inclusion Toolbox
 - <https://ablescouts.org/toolbox/>
- Able Scouts website
 - <https://ablescouts.org/>
- Able Scouts Newsletter - Abilities Digest
 - <https://ablescouts.org/subscribe/>



Support

- Social Media Accounts
 - Facebook: No Scout Left Behind: A Guide to Working with Scouts with Disabilities
 - Instagram: No_Scout_Left_Behind
- National Special Needs and Disabilities Committee Chair email (for answers and assistance for any Special Needs questions/issues)
 - SpecialNeedsChair@scouting.org



In Conclusion

- Thinking about this experience,
 - Does my Scouting unit, district, or council practice this type of inclusiveness?
 - How can I change my current approach or prepare others to be better prepared to support the youth in our program?

