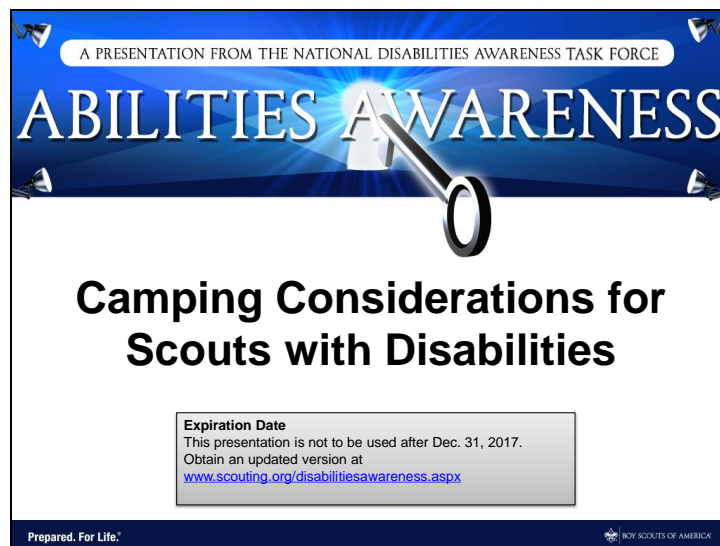


# Presenter's Notes

## *Camping Considerations for Scouts with Disabilities*



A PRESENTATION FROM THE NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

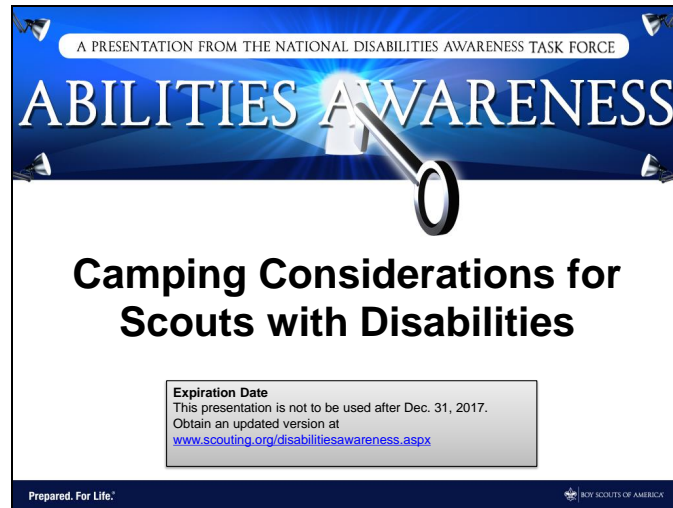
# ABILITIES AWARENESS

## **Camping Considerations for Scouts with Disabilities**

**Expiration Date**  
This presentation is not to be used after Dec. 31, 2017.  
Obtain an updated version at  
[www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx)

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Presenter Notes: Begin with a simple opening ceremony using the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Then state: *“Virtually every Scouting unit at one time or another will have the opportunity to serve youth with special needs. In fact, in a recent study in the Midwest, we found that 15 percent of the membership has some sort of disability requiring special attention or consideration from leaders.”*

Welcome and thank everyone for attending. State their presence here speaks of their dedication. [Presenter should limit the number of questions asked and control discussions.]

This presentation provides leaders, parents, and Scouts with key planning and logistical considerations prior to and during camping trips in order to create a positive outdoor adventure for all Scouts, including those with different abilities. The session takes between 60 to 90 minutes, and has an expiration date, after which it is not to be used. Upon that date a replacement session will be available at the URL shown above.

Presenters may want to have a flip chart, and should have at least one copy of the following publications for use during the presentation:

- *Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and Disabilities*, No. 510-071,
- *Scouting for Youth with Disabilities* manual, No.34059
- *Guide To Advancement*, No. 33088
- Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, No. 512-730),
- Individual Scout Advancement Plan (ISAP) No. 512-936
- Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility , No. 512-935

The National Disabilities Awareness Task Force welcomes any and all feedback at [disabilities.awareness@scouting.org](mailto:disabilities.awareness@scouting.org), but would ask that questions and concerns first be shared with local district and council volunteers or professional administrators.

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Presentation Objective

To introduce Scouts, parents, and leaders to key planning and logistical considerations prior to and during camping trips in order to create a positive outdoor adventure for all youth in the unit, including those with different abilities.

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(**Leader:** discuss the differences between people with disabilities and people with special needs.)

**Disabilities:** A disability is a real and long-term condition that impairs functioning in one or more of the following areas: Physical, Learning, Cognitive, Emotional, and Social.

**Special Needs:** Some people may require additional accommodations due to special needs that **may or may not have a diagnosis**. Examples are; severe allergies, high energy levels, a significant life changing event, or display behaviors that are not acknowledged by a parent.


Youth with disabilities have the same needs as others - to be treated the same, be successful, and accepted. We must work with all youth to help them reach THEIR Scouting goals. Camping can provide many successes and experiences youth would never get to experience if not for Scouting. Camping with Scouts with disabilities can be challenging. Going into the experience with insight can make the experience more successful!

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Preparing for the Campout

Leaders' responsibilities (Adult and Youth)

- Know the Leader's Guide
- Organize a unit informational meeting
- Inform parents and Scouts of expectations and schedule
- Discuss pre-planning with the Scout who has disabilities
- Provide parents with all necessary information

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**Leader:** Make sure all youth and adult leaders have had the opportunity to review the Leader's Guide, and go over appropriate content with the Scout prior to the activity. Then, encourage the Scouts to organize a unit informational meeting about the upcoming camp out. It is important the Scout and parents have a schedule in advance they can review together in order to plan for the trip. This enables them to discuss how to plan and prepare for possible changes to the schedule while at camp.

Make sure you have done pre-trip research such as determining travel time to and from camp. There are other things to consider. Will the length of the trip have implications for fatigue or emotional outbreaks? Will the Scout require a quiet car? Will frequent stops be necessary along the way? Always make sure that both youth and adult leaders have a pre-planned duty roster.


**Prerequisites.** Leaders should ensure the Scout has all prerequisites completed before leaving for the camp-out. This will help to avoid potential challenges that could occur along the way, but more important, ensure the Scout has a smoother, successful advancement experience.

**Utilize a Peer Buddy (Note:** This is NOT the same as the Buddy system which ensures no Scout is alone for safety reasons.) A peer buddy is someone known to have worked with that specific Scout. He or she often has specific knowledge about the Scout's special needs, and how to interact with him.

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Understanding the Scout's Disabilities

- What are the Scout's disabilities?
- What medications is he on?
- Are there safety precautions to consider?
- What is the size of the group for the campout?
- Has the unit dealt with Scouts with various disabilities before?
- Do you know your unit?

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**Leader Notes:** It is important to know the Scout's disabilities and behaviors he may display. The different categories of disabilities: Physical, Learning, Cognitive, Emotional, and Social are discussed in the *Essentials in Serving Scouts with Disabilities* presentation. So, how many Scouts in your unit have disabilities? When one considers the range, it's possible more Scouts than expected may have some form of special need.

Are there medications leaders need to be aware of? If so, become familiar with the instructions and purpose of the various medications. For example, Is the medicine long acting or time released (wears off at a particular time?) Information about medications is important for planning purposes.

Every Scout's safety is key at all times. Scouts with disabilities may have unique issues that must be taken into consideration. Are there triggers that cause a Scout to run off or disappear without letting others know? When frustrated, does he act out or is he prone to emotional outbursts? Find out from parent's what the known issues are and what has worked for them to mitigate the circumstances.

How large is the group you are working with? Group size may require a different approach depending on the Scout, and can determine how you plan your meetings and events. For some Scouts, working in small groups can be key to avoiding frustrations. For others, a large group may provide feelings of safety. Also, when planning an activity or event, look at the ages of your youth and the amount of experiences they have had. Older scouts may approach a situation with more understanding or maturity. Some Scouts' unique experiences may make them ideal as a peer buddy or know how to handle certain situations.

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Scout Input and Responsibilities

- Review the Leader's guide with an adult or Scout leader
- Include the Scout in your presentation
- Have Scout attend the informational meetings
- Fill out a *Know Your Scout* form
- What are the Scout's disabilities?

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The Leader's guide provides information about camp-outs, merit badges, prerequisites, and more. This will help the Scout with disabilities feel more included and prepared for the campout.

Prerequisites- It is important the Scout completes all prerequisites before leaving for the campout. This will help avoid potential challenges that could occur and therefore enable the Scout to have a smoother, more successful advancement experience. Remind him to bring his blue card with him.


Scouts should learn to be their own advocates. They need to be aware of their own strengths and challenges and should share them with others. This may be difficult for Scouts. You may need to prompt a Scout to share information at first until he is comfortable advocating for himself. (Example- questions on prerequisites.)

Leader: Give participants the *Know your Scout* form. Find out what questions and concerns they may have. You may need to prompt the Scout to ask questions by providing him with examples.

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Inclusion

- Have the Scout or parent share the disability where appropriate
- Remind all members of the Scout Oath and Law
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Have a disabilities awareness event with your unit
- Promote inclusion within your unit

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It is up to the Scout and parent to decide how much information they wish to share with the unit leader. It is helpful to encourage as much knowledge and understanding so that Scouts in the unit can help each other in all aspects of Scouting. Some Scouts may want to share it with the unit themselves, while other times the parents will request that the leader share it with the group in the Scout's absence.

It is important to respect the Scout's comfort level with this sensitive and confidential information. You must keep in mind, if the parent does not want to disclose the Scout's disability (as obvious as it may be) **you must respect that choice of the parent and Scout.** Reviewing the Scout Oath & Scout Law helps all members to be accepting of others and to continue to build character.

Having a positive attitude is an essential part of Scouting. The Scouts will look to the leaders for guidance and modeling appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

**Leader Note:** (Time permitting) Brainstorm with your participants different disabilities awareness events and ways to promote inclusion.

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## Camp Accessibility

- Use the *Accessible Facilities checklist* form
- Dining hall considerations
- Trained camp staff

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Presenter Note: Give participants the *Accessible Facilities checklist* form.

Adult and Scout Leaders: this is the time to get further input from Scouts (and parents) of any accommodations that haven't been considered.

Work with camp staff (Camporee, long term, etc.) to make necessary accessibility requirements in advance so that the campout will be enjoyable for ALL.


Make sure camp staff members are trained for working with Scouts with disabilities.



NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Medical Preparation

- Administer the Scout's medicine
- Know your state's laws for dispensing medicine
- Be aware of potential side effects
- Know when the medicine wears off
- Ensure there's medical staff on site
- Review appropriate forms

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Coordination between the Scout, parents, caregivers and leaders is essential to maintain a safe environment not only for the Scout but everyone involved. If medical personnel isn't on site for dispensing medicine, it is incumbent upon the leader or a designated adult in the unit to make sure the Scout is taking his medicine.

Check your state's laws governing dispensing medication to others as they differ depending on where you live. The leader should follow-up with the parent and Scout regarding side effects on the medicine he's taking, and how long the medicine's strength lasts. This will be important for the unit leadership to know in order to provide a successful program.

Make sure all health forms are completely filled out with emergency contact information from the family.

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Accommodations

- Travel
- Advancement
- Program (handout)
- Sensory
- Resources

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**Presenter’s Note:** In this slide, please inform participants that the term “accommodations” refers to assistance provided to help one complete a task.

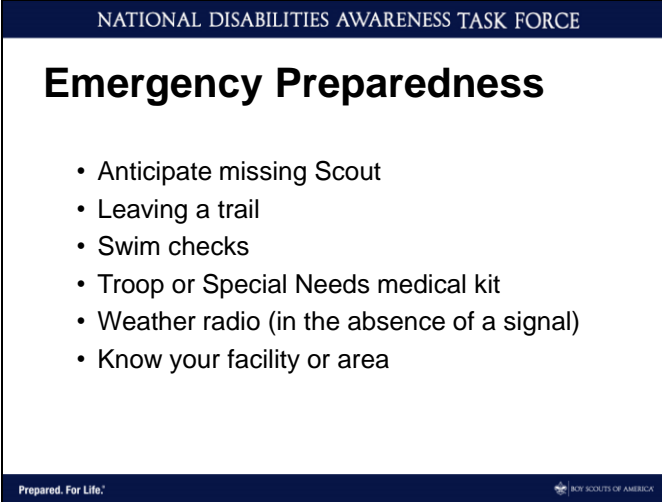
**Travel:** Determine travel time to and from the site. An additional, quiet vehicle may be needed to make frequent stops.

**Advancement:** Section 10 in the *Guide to Advancement* provides leaders with good pre-planning considerations and information to ensure a successful program for Scouts with special needs. For example, merit badge requirements must be completed as stated. However, a Scout with a disability may apply for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges using application No. 512-730.

**Program – Presenter’s Note:** Please distribute the *Accommodations for Scouts* handout, and go over the resource with your participants.

**Sensory:** You will need to consider your setting (ie: weather, bugs, terrain, loud sirens or horns, etc.) It will be important to ask about sensory issues in your *Know Your Scout* form. (Presenter’s note: distribute the handout on calming strategies for sensory issues.)


Approach your unit, district, or council disabilities awareness committee for additional resources. You can also go to; [disabilities.awareness@scouting.org](mailto:disabilities.awareness@scouting.org) (This is an online question & answer forum provided by the National Disabilities Awareness Task Force). The *Essentials in Serving Scouts with Disabilities* presentation gives further in-depth understanding along with additional handouts.



NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Emergency Preparedness

- Anticipate missing Scout
- Leaving a trail
- Swim checks
- Troop or Special Needs medical kit
- Weather radio (in the absence of a signal)
- Know your facility or area

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Just like in the Emergency Preparedness merit badge, you will want to implement a plan for all potential challenges. Often times, Scouts with special needs don't always pay attention to where the rest of the group is, and may wander off. Teaching Scouts how to leave a trail may help them find their way back to camp.

Whether the camp has a pool or a lake, know the water conditions in advance. Try to have all swim checks completed before arrival at camp where appropriate.

Have a medical kit containing stress relieving or calming materials in case your campsite is not in close proximity.

Know your facility or area! Are you in the deep woods, Philmont, or in a local campsite? Do you have easy access to a vehicle for emergency purposes?

**Resource:** check with your state's Department of Natural Resources to see about getting a list of trails and parks in your area and descriptions such as: how long the trails are, the terrain, and location.

Make sure you have the proper gear for Scouts that may need it for sensory issues, mobility, etc.

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Contingency Plans for last-minute challenges that may arise

- Medications
- Physical needs
- Supervisory needs for the Scout
- Tool box of plans in place
- Cool down area
- Behaviors and triggers

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What does a leader do if medications run out, get lost or forgotten? Know the effects when the Scout doesn't take his medication. This is a good question to ask parents when preparing for any unexpected situations. Also, the Scout may require extra accommodations depending on his physical needs for various camping environments.

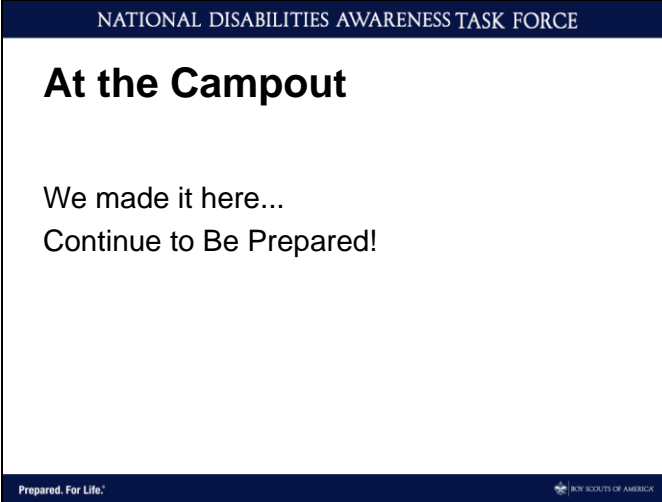
When the Scout requires more supervision than the leadership can provide, you may need to ask for a parent, caregiver, or someone else known to that Scout to attend the camp out. Review the *Know your Scout* form with the parents.

Allow the Scout to perform a task that's challenging yet not too difficult. If the Scout is unable to perform the task, have a buddy help or assign a different job. Some camping activities may seem endlessly boring to a Scout with an attention disorder or communication impairment. While leaders need time to explain the purpose of an activity and safety concerns, Scouts with limited attention span may struggle with long explanations.

**Tool Box:** A tool box is a resource filled with fidget items such as therapy putty, clicking pens, a strip of Velcro, or putty tin filled with Lego pieces might allow the inattentive youth to sit still long enough to listen. Hyperactive Scouts might also benefit when placed in an area that allows them to move around while still being able to listen to the leader. Scouts with language impairments might benefit from pre-written note or picture cards. All of these props can make a long activity or lesson run smoother. Be sure to consult with parents and engage them in providing these items so that their sons can participate fully in Scouting.

Check to see if your campsite or program area has a place where a Scout can cool down while still be in the leader's view. Lastly, be aware of situations that may trigger inappropriate behaviors such as loud abrupt noises, bugs, weather, lighting, and allergies. **Understand the difference between a meltdown and a tantrum** (distribute handout).


Slide 12



NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## At the Campout

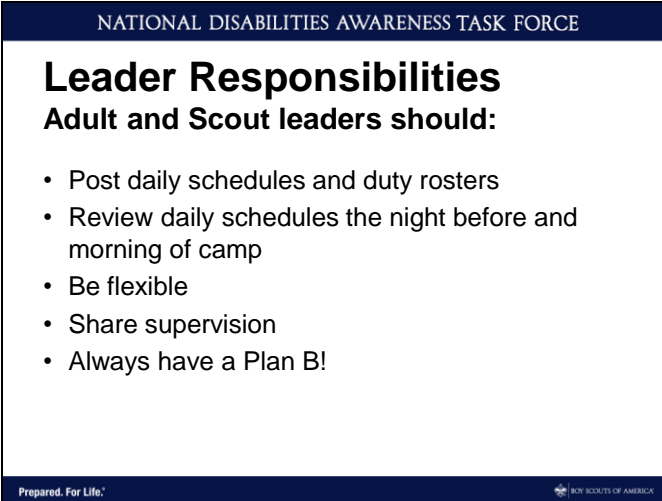
We made it here...  
Continue to Be Prepared!

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This slide features a dark blue header with the text 'NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE'. The main content area is white with the title 'At the Campout' in bold black font. Below the title, the text 'We made it here...' and 'Continue to Be Prepared!' is displayed. The footer contains the slogan 'Prepared. For Life.™' and the Boy Scouts of America logo.

Now that we've made preparations to go, LET'S GO CAMPING!

Slide 13




NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Leader Responsibilities

Adult and Scout leaders should:

- Post daily schedules and duty rosters
- Review daily schedules the night before and morning of camp
- Be flexible
- Share supervision
- Always have a Plan B!

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This slide features a dark blue header with the text 'NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE'. The main content area is white with the title 'Leader Responsibilities' in bold black font. Below the title, the text 'Adult and Scout leaders should:' is displayed. A bulleted list follows, containing five items: 'Post daily schedules and duty rosters', 'Review daily schedules the night before and morning of camp', 'Be flexible', 'Share supervision', and 'Always have a Plan B!'. The footer contains the slogan 'Prepared. For Life.™' and the Boy Scouts of America logo.


Schedules visibly posted give everyone insight on upcoming events and duties. It also lessens the element of surprise for ALL Scouts when pairings are announced. You may also want to provide pictures, copies of the schedules, or a more detailed to-do list as some Scouts need to check-off completed tasks or activities. This can also help the Scout with organization and time management. Review your schedules with the entire unit and not just the Scout with disabilities. **This promotes inclusion.**

We need to be rigidly flexible. You will always be making program changes as you progress through your camping experience! Shared supervision also affords parents and leaders a break from monitoring and supervising the Scout. He also gets a break from his parent, and feels connected more with the unit. Always have a plan B, C, & D....!

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Scout's Responsibilities

- Understand troop rules may be different from parent's rules
- Advocate for themselves
- Remember the Scout Law

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Troop rules are intended for the entire unit. Scouts may need to be reminded that these are different from individual or home rules for safety and program reasons.

Scouts should learn to advocate for themselves. They need to be aware of their own strengths and challenges, and should share them with others. This may be difficult at first. You may need to prompt a Scout to share his concerns with peers, sensory issues or frustrations until he feels comfortable advocating for himself.

A Scout is Trustworthy- Scouts are expected to complete their assigned prerequisites and tasks.

A Scout is Helpful- Scouts are expected to lend a helping hand in completing daily tasks and activities.

Scouts may be tempted to use their disability as an escape from responsibilities. It is important to challenge the Scout yet make sure he is not overly frustrated if the task is too difficult. This is another opportunity for self-advocacy.



NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Advancement

- Have prerequisites completed
- Partial
- Merit badges
- Does all required work, no more, no less
- Camping is not all about advancement

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**Partials:** Partial merit badges are successes that should be celebrated along with any additional tasks or requirements completed. Remember to keep a positive attitude in promoting a successful camp-out.

**Break apart Merit Badges:** Depending on the Scout's abilities, you may need to breakdown badge requirements into smaller tasks. This helps to prevent Scouts from feeling too overwhelmed at any point in the merit badge process. Remember that these tasks need to be completed as written, no more, no less as modifying requirements is not allowed! You can, however, provide necessary accommodations such as breaking down tasks into smaller units. (Please see your Accommodations handout.)

**Leader Note:** If time allows, explain the difference between modification and accommodation, and encourage participants to give other examples.

**Accommodations:** Providing assistance to help complete the task without changing a requirement. For example: **Second Class Boy Scout rank requirement 8b** states:

"Demonstrate your ability to jump feet first into water over your head in depth, level off and swim 25 feet..." An accommodation would be to provide a flotation device for the Scout. Another example: A counselor helps a blind Scout complete Astronomy merit badge requirement 4a by punching holes in paper plates that resemble constellations. At night, he holds the plate over his head, and asks him to identify the constellation he is touching.


**Modifications:** Changing the wording of a rank requirement. (**Please note**-you cannot modify merit badge requirements, only a rank advancement.) Using the same rank example, a Scout who is paraplegic would demonstrate the swimming technique in a wading pool or bathtub to show his knowledge of the requirement. Another example: Second Class requirement 3b states, "...Sleep in a tent that you pitched." A Scout with physical disabilities unable to use his limbs, would instruct another Scout to perform pitching the tent to its completion.

Camping is not all about advancement. Make it fun for all! A Scout may not want to attend the camp out if they perceive that it is all work.

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Resources

- Parents, Scouts, and leaders in your unit, district, and council with experience in working with Scouts with disabilities
- District and council disabilities awareness committees
- [Disabilities.awareness@scouting.org](mailto:Disabilities.awareness@scouting.org)
- *Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and Disabilities* No. 510-071
- *Guide to Advancement* No. 33088

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Always check for resources within your unit, district, or council. It helps to promote disabilities awareness and inclusion. **Leader note:** (Time permitting) Opening the following links or print them out and share as a handout.

The [disabilities.awareness@scouting.org](mailto:disabilities.awareness@scouting.org) resource is an online question and answer portal operated by members of the National Disabilities Awareness Task force. They will provide answers to questions you submit.

*Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and Disabilities, No. 510-071*

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf>

*Guide to Advancement, No 33088, section 10 Advancement for Members with Special Needs*

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/~link.aspx?id=558A84DC139B42E3BE9368DB34612628&z=z>

Section 10, *topic 1*: Registration Beyond the Age

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/SpecialNeeds/RegisterQualifiedMembers.aspx>

Section 10, *topic 2*: Advancement Flexibility

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/SpecialNeeds/AdvancementFlexibilityAllowed.aspx>

*Essentials in Serving Scouts with Disabilities* educational presentation and leader notes

[http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/Handouts\\_for\\_Essentials\\_Working\\_with\\_Scouts\\_Disabilities.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/Handouts_for_Essentials_Working_with_Scouts_Disabilities.pdf)


Disabilities Awareness landing page: [www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx)



NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

## Summary

- Keep the trip fun!
- Talk to the Scout about his goals for camp.
- Include the Scout whenever possible.
- Celebrate each success no matter the size.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Pre-planning can make all the difference in a successful campout for all Scouts and Scouters

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Nobody likes to work all the time, leaders included!

Remember to always re-visit your contingency plans and accommodations. Changes occur throughout the entire process (from planning to parent pick-up!)

**Remember to remain rigidly flexible!! (Semper Gumby)**