WHEN TO USE SPECIAL NEEDS ADVANCEMENT RULES
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OBJECTIVE

An overview of how advancement accommodations work for scouts with special needs. Depending on the type or severity of a disability, scouts can have accommodations made to help them succeed in Scouting at all levels! For all adult leaders.
TOPICS

• Why Scouting for youth with disabilities?
• Issues you may encounter
• Cub Scout Advancement accommodations
• Boy Scout Advancement accommodations
• The Process
  • Documenting a disability
  • Individual Scout Achievement Plan
  • Alternate rank requirements
  • Alternate age requirements
• Resources
• Scenarios
• Q&A
Why Scouting for Youth With Disabilities?

• Scouting can have value for all eligible youth.
• Youth with disabilities often find challenges in social settings and live in isolation from the rest of the world.
• Scouting teaches skills that will help prepare them for life in as an adult our society.
• Scouting provides broader associations for all.
Some Examples of disAbilities You May Encounter

- Learning Disabilities
- Cognitive Disabilities
- Developmental Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities
- Emotional Behavioral Disabilities
Issues You May Encounter

• Should the youth be placed in a regular unit or in a special unit.
• Unhelpful parents.
• Overprotective parents and parents that do not disclose a disability.
• Attitudes and behaviors of others
• Activities that do not allow participation.
• Administering medications.
The standard is “Do Your Best.”

- Cubmasters and pack committees may jointly determine appropriate substitutions for youth unable to attempt a requirement.
- Parents can assist by providing input on their son’s abilities and challenges.
BOY SCOUT RANK ADVANCEMENT

Guide to Advancement, Topic 10.2.2.0

- Rank requirements are to be completed as written, no more and no less.
- Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class can be modified via a request for approval from the council advancement committee. (Guide to Advancement, Topics 10.2.2.1 and 10.2.2.2).
- Venturers and Sea Scouts working on Boy Scout advancement, and Varsity Scouts, are treated as Boy Scouts.
Can Merit Badges be Modified?

NO!
Alternative Merit Badges

Guide to Advancement, Topic 10.2.2.3

- Merit badge requirements **must not** be modified, but it is permitted to substitute one entire badge for another
  - Substitute must be “as challenging.”
  - Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, No 512-730, is required.
  - All required merit badges achievable by the Scout must be completed before applying
  - The Council Advancement Committee must approve alternative merit badges but can enlist the SNS committee
  - Enlist the SNS Committee to assist with the paperwork to expedite approval
    - This information is kept confidential
Boards of Review
Guide to Advancement, Topic 10.2.2.0

• Some responsible flexibility is allowed if a Scout’s disabilities could affect the outcome of a board of review.
• Inform board of review members ahead of time about the special circumstances.
• Be sure the unit leader is able to attend.
• Allow the parents or guardians to attend and assist with interpretation and insight.
Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility
Guide to Advancement, Topics 10.1.0.0 & 10.1.0.2

• Scouts may be permitted to stay in the program beyond the normal registration age provided:
  • Disability must be documented as permanent and severe
  • Arrangement is permanent; not an extension of time to earn a rank
  • Process applies in all BSA programs from Cub Scouting through Venturing and Sea Scouts
  • The Council executive board must approve and can delegate this responsibility to a committee.
    • WPC requests are reviewed by the Special Needs Scouting Committee and passed to the Council CEO for review and notification
  • Enlist the SNS Committee to assist with the paperwork to expedite approval
    • This information is kept confidential
Possible Criteria for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Blind or sight-impaired
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Cognitive disability
- Developmental delay
- Down Syndrome
- Emotional or behavioral disorder
- Physically disabled
- Traumatic brain injury
- Multiple coexisting disabilities
Documenting a Disability

Disability Diagnosis

Medical Assessment
(Use BSA Physical)

Document Scout’s Strengths & Limitations

Doctor’s Certification

Disability Documented

Educational Assessment
(IEP forms preferred)

Document Scout’s Strengths & Limitations

Educational Administrator’s Certification

Both
INDIVIDUAL SCOUT ACHIEVEMENT PLAN (ISAP)

- Allows parents/guardians to be involved in planning for and understanding how the Scouting program will assist their child.
- Like and IEP, but for Scouting
- Becomes a ‘contract’ for all to follow and evaluate from time to time.
- Assists district and council people in understanding how a boy has developed and builds a support and comfort level for them regarding the boys advancement and development.
Alternate Rank Requirements

Standard Rank Advancement Requirements

Does Scout Have a Disability?

No

Use Standard Rank Advancement Requirements

Yes

Document Scout’s Disability

Scout, Parents, SM and other Resource Individuals Craft Proposed Alternate Requirement(s)

(Follow steps in “Documenting a Disability”)
Alternate Rank Requirements (2)

1. Submit Request to Council Advancement Committee
2. Advancement & Special Needs Committees Evaluate Request
   - Yes: Authorize Use of Alternate Requirement(s)
   - No: Return to Scout/Troop with explanation
3. Notify Scout and Leaders
Alternate Rank Requirements (3)

Committee Submit Decision to Council Executive Board

Council Scout Executive Documents Executive Board Approval

Scout May Use Alternate Requirement(s)
Waiver of Age Limits

(allowing "registration beyond the age of eligibility")

Does Scout Have a Qualifying Disability?

Parents/Guardians submit:
1. Letter from selves and scoutmaster requesting change and noting permanence of disability
2. IEP
3. Full BSA Medical

SNS Committee chair convenes a special "board of review"

Council CEO notifies registrar and family of decision

Use Standard Membership Ages

Use "Documenting a Disability"
Resources

• Parents and guardians
• Teachers – special education?
• The disabled youth
• Your observations of the youth
Resources

• BSA Publications / Tools
  • Scouting for Youth with Disabilities (#34059)
  • A Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES: (#510-071A)
  • Individualized Scouting Achievement Plan (ISAP)

• Websites
  • SNS Committee
    http://www.wpcbsa.org/SNScouts
  • BSA
    http://www.scouting.org/specialneeds.aspx
  • Working With Scouts With Disabilities
    http://www.wwswd.org
SCENARIO 1

A Scout permanently uses a wheelchair. He needs to hike and wants to join his troop for a day hike. Is it considered “hiking” if he is in his wheelchair? Why or why not?
A Scout is well on the way to Eagle. He is planning on finishing by the time he is 17 ½ but at 17 is in an automobile accident. He is in the hospital and/or rehab for 6 months and cannot participate in Scouts. Can/should he apply for an extension of time for his Eagle?
SCENARIO 3

A Scout is 17 ½ and realizes he will not have enough time to finish Eagle. He has a learning disability and applies for an extension in time. Should this be approved? Why or why not?
A blind Scout claims he has completed astronomy merit badge. You ask him how he identified constellations. He replied, his SM punched holes in a paper plates, held them over his head, outside at night, in the right place for the night sky, and he used his hands to feel and identify the constellations. Should this be acceptable? Why or why not?
Summary

disAbilities = different abilities

- We all have them

- Youth who have disAbilities want the same personal growth opportunities that any youth does and it is our challenge to provide them.

- We have resources to help you make that happen.
QUESTIONS?

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Thanks for attending the WPC University of Scouting. To ensure a quality program for future events, please take a moment to fill out our survey. You do not have to put your name, but please let us know your position in scouting to assist us in our rating procedures.

Course Title: When to Use Special Needs Advancement Rules    Course # SN101

Trainer: Rob Levine

Feedback is a gift!