



Frequently Asked Questions about Special Needs and Scouting

***** Adult Leaders Edition *****

Here are answers to questions that adult leaders often ask about special needs and the programs offered by the Denver Area Council. For best results use the online version of this document which contains

live links to online resources. Please bookmark it and pertinent links that it provides. You can reach it online by entering:



<http://www.specialneedsbsa.org/document/faq-for-adult-leaders/187292> or by using the short URL <https://goo.gl/FgzcWQ> or by using the QR Code to the left.

Why does an adult leader need to know about special needs?

Studies [such as this one](#) show that about one youth in four has special needs. That tells us that a typical Scouting unit contains multiple members who have such needs. Meeting those needs may require many things of you: dispensing drugs, dealing appropriately with ADHD or autistic spectrum disorders, arranging advancement accommodations, promoting disabilities awareness, preventing bullying, and so on. It's a good idea to learn about the specific needs of your units' members before the fact and be prepared to address their needs as situations arise. The Scouting experience helps those with special needs succeed throughout their lives, as with other youths.

Where can I find information about special needs and how they fit in with Scouting?

Visit the Boy Scouts of America's [Disabilities Awareness](#) page. Also see our council's [Special Needs Website](#), in particular the [General Resources](#) and [Resources by Disability](#) pages and our [FAQ for Parents](#).

What are some good ways to educate myself and my unit about special needs?

Please see our [training page](#).

Scouting has many rules about the ages at which youths can participate and the criteria for advancement. Are these hard and fast or can accommodations be made?

BSA policies allow certain accommodations for special needs including the age of participation in various programs. The member may establish an [Individualized Development Plan](#) analogous to the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of public schools. A youth never "gets a pass" on a requirement but must meet its spirit by doing something equivalent that they are physically and mentally capable of doing. The governing document is the [Guide to Advancement](#) with its section on [Advancement for Members with Special Needs](#). For more specifics and contacts within DAC also see [this flier](#).

Who can I contact if I need help in meeting the needs of unit members who have disabilities?

A good place to start is the unit commissioner for your unit. You can also consult [Special Needs Program Roster](#) to find a member of our team to assist you. You will find there representatives from your own district. You can also contact the Assistant Council Commissioner for Special Needs or the Staff Adviser for Special Needs; or send an email about your question/concern to: AskSpecialNeeds@googlegroups.com.

I'd like to volunteer to help with the Special Needs Program. Who should I talk to?

Please consult your District Commissioner and see what they advise.