



# Inclusion in Scouting

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April Roundtable

# Scouting With Special Needs and Disabilities

Since its founding in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America has had fully participating members with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. James E. West, the first Chief Scout Executive, was a person with a disability. Although most of the BSA's efforts have been directed at keeping such youth in the mainstream of Scouting, it has also recognized the special needs of those with significant disabilities



# Recognition of Needs

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- The basic premise of Scouting for youth with disabilities and special needs is that they want most to participate like other youth—and Scouting gives them that opportunity. Thus, much of the program for Scouts with disabilities and special needs is directed at
  - (1) helping unit leaders develop an awareness of disabled people among youth without disabilities and
  - (2) encouraging the inclusion of Scouts with disabilities and special needs in Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, Venturing crews, and Sea Scout ships.



# What is Individualized Scouting

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- An Individual Scout Achievement Plan is like the Individual Education Plan that is used in Schools to map out the process to qualify a student for special education and identify objectives that should be accomplished.





# What is inclusion

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# Inclusion

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The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.



# Scouting for All

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- Youth with physical disabilities and youth and adults with developmental or cognitive challenges are welcome in the Boy Scouts of America.
- These youth do not need to join a special unit oriented to serving members with disabilities, although those exist and may be beneficial in some cases.

# Cub Scouts

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## Advancement for Cub Scouts With Special Needs

- Advancement is so flexible that, with guidance, most Cub Scouts with disabilities can complete requirements. The standard is, “Has the Cub Scout done his or her best?” It may take Cub Scouts with disabilities longer to attempt requirements and demonstrate their best, but the accomplishments will be rewarding to a youth, and the youth’s parents and leaders.



# Scouts BSA

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- The BSA's policy has always been to treat members with disabilities and special needs as much like other members as possible, but a local council may make some accommodations in advancement requirements if necessary. A Scout with a permanent physical or mental disability may select an alternative merit badge in lieu of a required merit badge if his disabling condition prohibits the Scout from completing the necessary requirements of a particular required merit badge.



# Venturing and Varsity Advancement

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# Important resources

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[Introduction to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and Disabilities, No. 510-071](#)

[Individual Scout Advancement Plan, No. 512-936](#)

[Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility, No. 512-935](#)

<https://stlbsa.org/training/special-needs-awareness/>

<https://www.scouting.org/resources/disabilities-awareness/>

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<https://stlbsa.org/special-needs-scouts/>



# THANK YOU!

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Abbi Mars

Information Specialist

Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center

Contact

[amars@fmptic.org](mailto:amars@fmptic.org) (217)318-3519