



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 programs offered by the Greater Colorado Council. For continued access to current information, bookmark its link, which you can reach using the QR code to the right or at ScoutingColorado.org/SNFAQL.



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

Studies [such as this one](#) show that one youth in four has special needs. That tells us that a typical Scouting unit contains multiple members with such needs. Meeting those needs may require many things: dispensing drugs, dealing appropriately with ADHD and autistic spectrum disorders, arranging advancement accommodations, promoting disabilities awareness, preventing bullying, and so on. It's best to learn about your youths' needs early on, starting with the pre-joining interview, and be prepared to address them as need arises.

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, starting with the Training Modules and their presentations. Check out our video, [A Scoutmaster's Brief Introduction to Special Needs](#), which

is pertinent to all GCC programs, not just Scouts BSA. Also see our ScoutingColorado.org/SpecialNeeds website for further information, in particular its [General Resources](#) and [Resources by Disability](#) pages, and the [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 we make accommodations?

BSA policies allow certain accommodations for special needs, including the age of participation in various programs. The member may establish an [Individual Scout Advancement 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](#).

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

A good place to start is your unit commissioner. Alternatively, consult the [Special Needs Committee Roster](#) to find a member of our team from your district to assist you, or to contact the Assistant Council Commissioner for Special Needs or the Staff Adviser for Special Needs. When in doubt, email your question or 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 to see what they suggest.