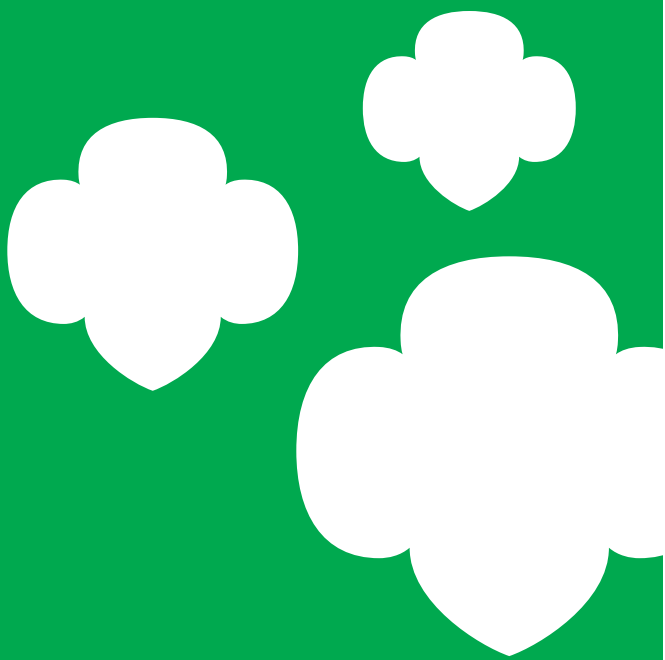


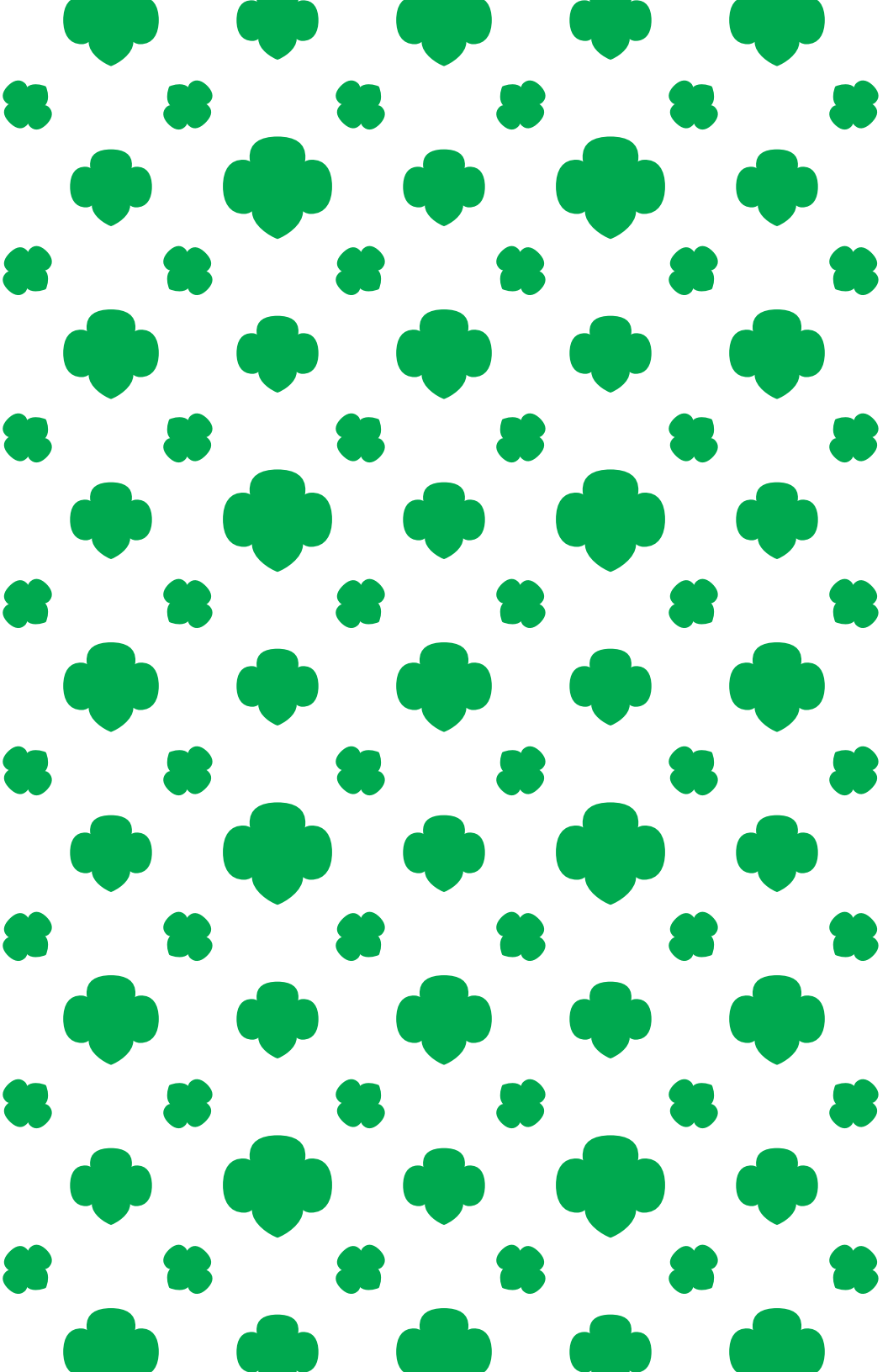


girl scouts
of southern arizona



the girl scout spirit of
inclusion

web module | part 1



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The Spirit of Inclusion Adaptations and Modification Modules were developed by Girl Scouts–Arizona Cactus-Pine Council.



what is inclusion?

The term “inclusion” closely follows the mission and purpose of Girl Scouting. In fact, Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona has our own inclusivity statement:

Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona values the diversity of the girls it serves and is committed to including girls in all aspects of the Girl Scout experience. GSSoAz actively promotes inclusivity within our organization and the world.

Inclusion means that all girls plan and participate in all activities, regardless of level of ability. Inclusion means girls with disabilities participate in activities alongside girls without disabilities, of the same age and in the same troop or group. The inclusion of girls with disabilities beside girls without disabilities benefits all girls. Everyone learns that she is more alike than different.

what is a disability?

The law does not define particular disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures the same basic civil rights for people with disabilities that people without disabilities already enjoy in housing, transportation, communications, and public access to buildings and activities – including in Girl Scouting.

The ADA protects any person who:

- » Has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity
- » Has a record of such impairment
- » Is regarded as having such an impairment

The ADA Title III

- » Requires places of public accommodation to be accessible and usable by people with disabilities
- » Prohibits discrimination by private businesses in the “goods, services, facilities, procedures, privileges, advantages, and accommodations offered to the public.”

Who is the girl with a disability?

- » A stranger’s daughter
- » A neighbor’s niece
- » A friend’s cousin
- » Your daughter’s friend
- » It could be your own child

Strive for unity with inclusion. It’s not about “those girls,” it’s about “our girls.”

ability on continuum

Within each Girl Scout troop or group is a world of diversity and a wide variety of talents and abilities. Some girls can run fast and some cannot. Some girls do well with activities requiring attention to fine detail such as jewelry-making and illustration. Others excel in tasks like archery and canoeing. Some girls are outgoing, and others are more introverted. All of the differences within the troop or group add to the excitement and rewards for the girls and the leaders. The challenge is to blend the differences together into a cohesive whole, while allowing each girl to remain an individual with her unique interests, talents and strengths.

In an overall sense, the girl with a disability is not different from a girl without a disability. Simply, a girl with a disability is placed at a different location on a particular continuum. It is a mistake to think that the disability will affect all continuums. An effective Girl Scout leader will see each girl as having a combination of high and low skill levels, and must shape activities so that all girls, regardless of their positions on the continuums, may participate. All Girl Scouts, both with and without disabilities, challenge the leader to be creative, sensitive, and energetic.

As a leader, you may have noticed that each girl in your troop or group functions according to her individual ability in a particular area. These ranges of ability form continuums and apply to girls with disabilities as well as girls without disabilities. Each girl's level of skill will be located at a certain point on each continuum. Five major continuums are important to the Girl Scout leader:

1. Learning: the ability to understand new ideas and to master new skills.
2. Communication: the ability to read, understand, and convey ideas through speaking and writing.

3. Motor and physical ability: the ability to move about, use tools, and manipulate objects.
4. Emotional adjustment: the ability to accept personal strengths and weaknesses and to react to situations in a socially appropriate manner.
5. Sensory abilities: the capacity to hear, feel, see, smell and taste.

For example, girls who have difficulty using their hands are placed at the low end of the continuum on sewing and writing. However, these same girls may be able to speak in public very well and could be placed at the high end of the continuum when public speaking is the skill under consideration.

examples of continuums

Motor

using their hands

cannot
grasp objects

can handle
objects w/ difficulty

can manipulate
small objects w/ ease

< ----->

using their feet

cannot
use feet and legs

can walk
w/ difficulty

can walk and
run w/ ease

< ----->

Communication

using their voice

difficult to understand

easy to understand

< ----->

using the written word

difficult to understand

easy to understand

< ----->

examples of continuums (cont'd)

ability to see images

sees nothing	sees shadows	sees images	sees to read large print	sees to read typical print
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ability to hear sounds

hears nothing	hears loud noises	hears loud speech	hears most speech	hears speech/ sounds easily
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By providing the needed support, the Girl Scout troop or group can include all girls no matter the diversity of their abilities. Note that such support doesn't always or necessarily require expertise in special education or therapeutic recreation, nor does it always or necessarily require expensive adaptations or modifications (see inclusion module 2 for more information on adaptations).

Inclusion in Girl Scouting follows an Empowerment Model:

The Empowerment Model of Inclusion

- » The problem is in the lack of supports
- » The problem rests in the systems
- » The solution is to develop supports
- » The person in charge is the person with a disability
- » The outcome is interdependence

what's expected of a girl scout leader?

Ensuring that all girls in your troop or group feel included requires a willingness to get to know each girl, an interest in facilitating interaction, and a belief in the benefits of inclusion for everyone. Understand that inclusion is a process, not a product, and that it requires flexibility, creativity and advance planning. In short, it's what you're already doing as a Girl Scout troop leader!

As a Girl Scout Troop Leader:

- » Create an environment that values and respects diversity
- » Model respectful ways to interact with all people
- » Help facilitate friendships between the girls in your troop or group
- » Recognize that all children have value

It is important to understand that leaders do not have to be experts or know everything about a disability. All they need is a belief in the benefits of inclusion for everyone, a desire to make a positive impact on the lives of girls, and a willingness to be creative and make adaptations and modifications as needed.

what does inclusion look like?

Inclusion looks like a Girl Scout troop or group where girls with and without disabilities play, learn, and grow together. Inclusion means that regardless of ability, all girls in a troop are together, participating in the same activities, at all times. Inclusion involves girls with and without disabilities participating in Girl Scouting with peers of the same age, in the troop level corresponding to their school grade. Inclusion is invisible.

Inclusion

- » Promotes acceptance
- » Supports self-determination
- » Facilitates positive, healthy relationships
- » Embraces differences
- » Requires collaboration, creativity and flexibility
- » Respects the entire family
- » Involves same-age peers
- » Focuses on outcomes
- » Welcomes ALL

Remember, inclusion is not a privilege nor is it separate from the mission and values of the Girl Scout movement. Inclusion benefits girls with disabilities and their families, as well as girls without disabilities and their families, the entire Girl Scouts organization, and the community as a whole.

first person language

Everyone has unique personal characteristics. Emily is a child who likes to swim. Mayra is a child who likes to play basketball and has epilepsy. We are all different. Some of us wear eyeglass or contact lenses to help us see. Some people are short and some people are tall. We all look differently and learn differently. We should all be remembered for our accomplishments and our abilities, not our limitations. This is what makes us who we are and makes everyone valuable.

The Dos and Don'ts of Etiquette

Do refer to “people with disabilities.”

Don't label people with disabilities as a group.

- » “The disabled”
- » “The handicapped”

Do put the person before the disability, and only mention the disability when a girl needs special consideration or action to accommodate it. Do emphasize a person's abilities, not disabilities.

- » “Lily, the girl in my troop who is deaf, taught the troop how to sign the Girl Scout promise.”
- » “Katie loves to sing.”

Don't use a disability to describe someone. Don't mention the disability unless it's necessary.

- » “The deaf girl in my troop.”
- » “Katie's epileptic, but she loves to sing.”

Do allow a person with a disability to speak for herself. If a girl is not able to speak for herself, either she or her personal assistant will

let you know. If you want to know about her disability, ask her – not the person standing next to her. And if she doesn't want to discuss her disability, respect her wishes and don't keep asking.

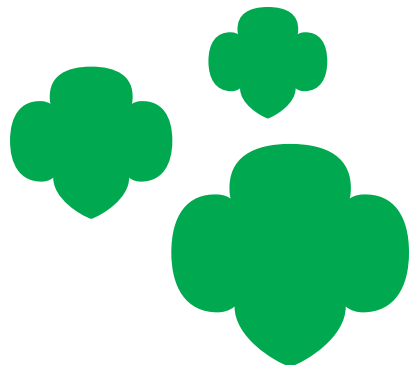
Don't assume someone can't speak for themselves.

Do get to know the whole individual.

Don't base your opinion of a person on their disability.

Always put the person before the disability. When you put the person first, you are not only being more concise but you are taking emphasis off a person's physical or mental characteristics. A good reminder is to use "have" verbs, rather than "be" verbs. Rather than saying a person "is blind," or "is quadriplegic," say the person "has a vision impairment," or "has a mobility impairment." Emphasize a person's abilities and not her limitations.

We do not use stereotypes with people that we respect. Think before you speak and remember the key concept is "person-first language."



examples of first person language

Say:

People with disabilities.

Jasmine has a cognitive disability.

Olivia has autism.

Shayla has Down syndrome.

Chloe has a learning disability.

Isabella has a physical disability.

Charissa is of short stature/she's a little person.

Nora uses a wheelchair.

Tania has a developmental delay.

Jenny communicates with her eyes/device/etc.

Claudia has a brain injury.

Allie receives special education services.

Mia needs... Or Mia uses...

Children without disabilities.

Instead of:

The disabled or handicapped.

Jasmine is mentally retarded.

Olivia is autistic.

Shayla's Downs, or she's a Downs person.

Chloe is learning disabled.

Isabella is quadriplegic or she's crippled.

Charissa is a dwarf, or she's a midget.

Nora is confined to a wheelchair.

Tania is developmentally delayed.

Jenny is non-verbal.

Claudia is brain damaged.

Allie is special ed.

Mia has problems. Mia has special needs.

Normal/healthy/regular children.

myths & facts about girls with disabilities

Myth 1: Girls with disabilities are brave and courageous.

Fact: Adjusting to a disability requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage.

Myth 2: Girls with disabilities are more comfortable with “their own kind.”

Fact: In the past, grouping people with disabilities in separate schools and institutions reinforced this misconception. Today, many people with disabilities take advantage of new opportunities to join mainstream society.

Myth 3: Girls with disabilities always need help.

Fact: Many people with disabilities are independent and capable of giving help. If you would like to help someone with a disability, ask if he or she needs it before you act. Anyone may offer assistance, but most people with disabilities prefer to be responsible for themselves.

Myth 4: All persons who use wheelchairs are chronically ill or sickly.

Fact: The association between wheelchair use and illness may have evolved through hospitals using wheelchairs to transport sick people. A person may use a wheelchair for a variety of reasons, none of which may have anything to do with lingering illness.

Myth 5: Wheelchair use is confining; people who use wheelchairs are “wheelchair-bound.”

Fact: A wheelchair, like a bicycle or an automobile, is a personal assistive device that enables someone to get around.

Myth 6: All persons with hearing disabilities can read lips.

Fact: Lip-reading skills vary among people who use them and are never entirely reliable.

Myth 7: People who are blind acquire a “sixth sense.”

Fact: Although most people who are blind develop their remaining senses more fully, they do not have a “sixth sense.”

Myth 8: The lives of girls with disabilities are totally different than the lives of girls without disabilities.

Fact: Girls with disabilities go to school, play sports, do chores, laugh, cry, get angry, have close friendships, have families, care about others, plan and dream like girls everywhere.

Myth 9: There is nothing one person can do to help eliminate the barriers confronting girls with disabilities.

Fact: Everyone can contribute to change. You can help remove barriers by:

- » Understanding the need for accessible parking and leaving it for those who need it
- » Encouraging participating of people with disabilities in community activities by using accessible meeting and event sites
- » Understanding children’s curiosity about disabilities and people who have them
- » Advocating a barrier-free environment
- » Speaking up when negative words or phrases are used about disability
- » Accepting people with disabilities as individuals capable of the same needs and feelings as yourself, and hiring qualified persons with disabilities whenever possible.

additional resources on inclusion

Kids Included Together

www.kitonline.org

Easter Seals

www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl_homepage

Disability Is Natural

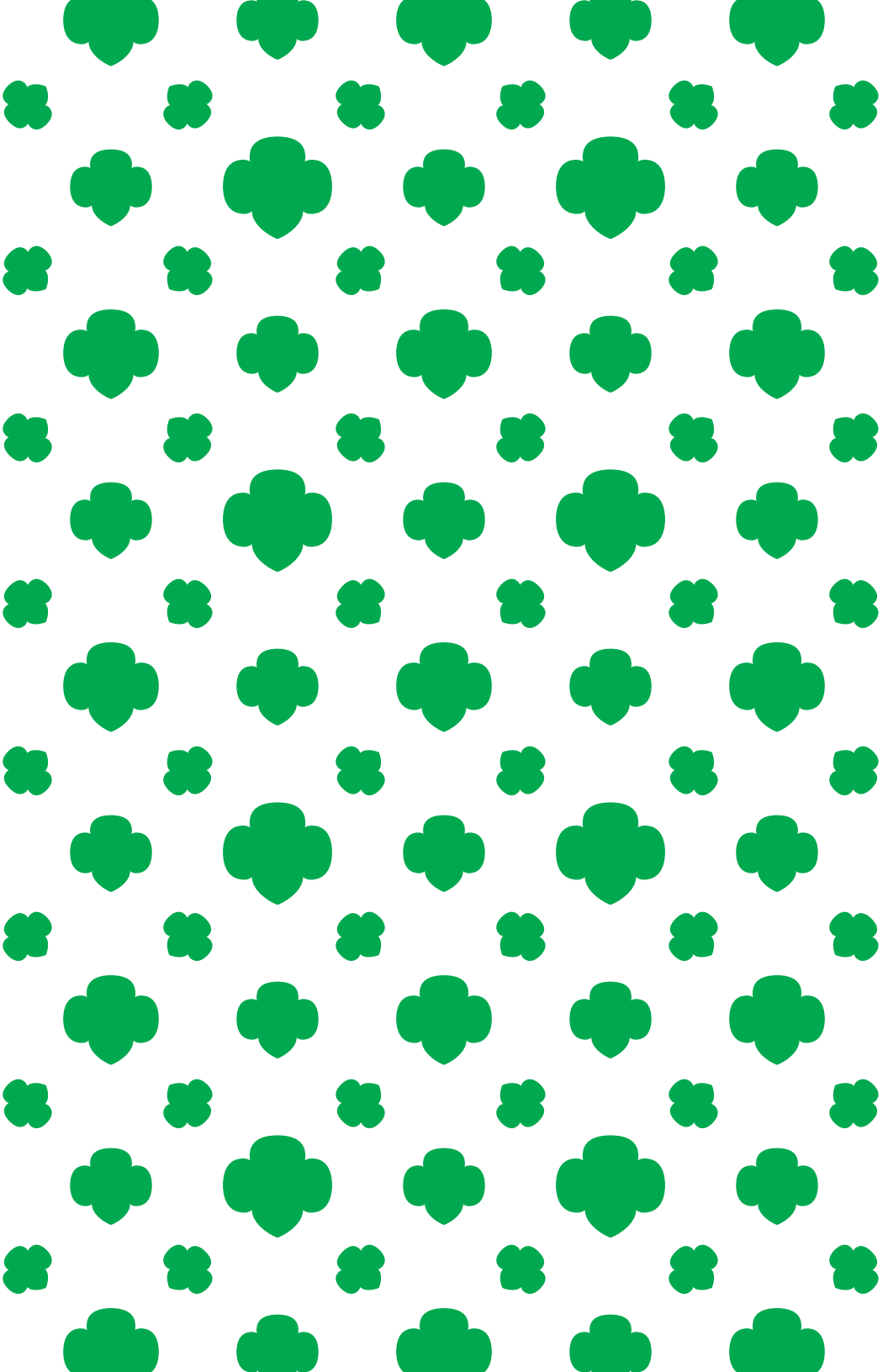
www.disabilityisnatural.com

The Center for an Accessible Society

www.accessiblesociety.org

Raising Special Kids

www.raisingpecialkids.org/default.aspx





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