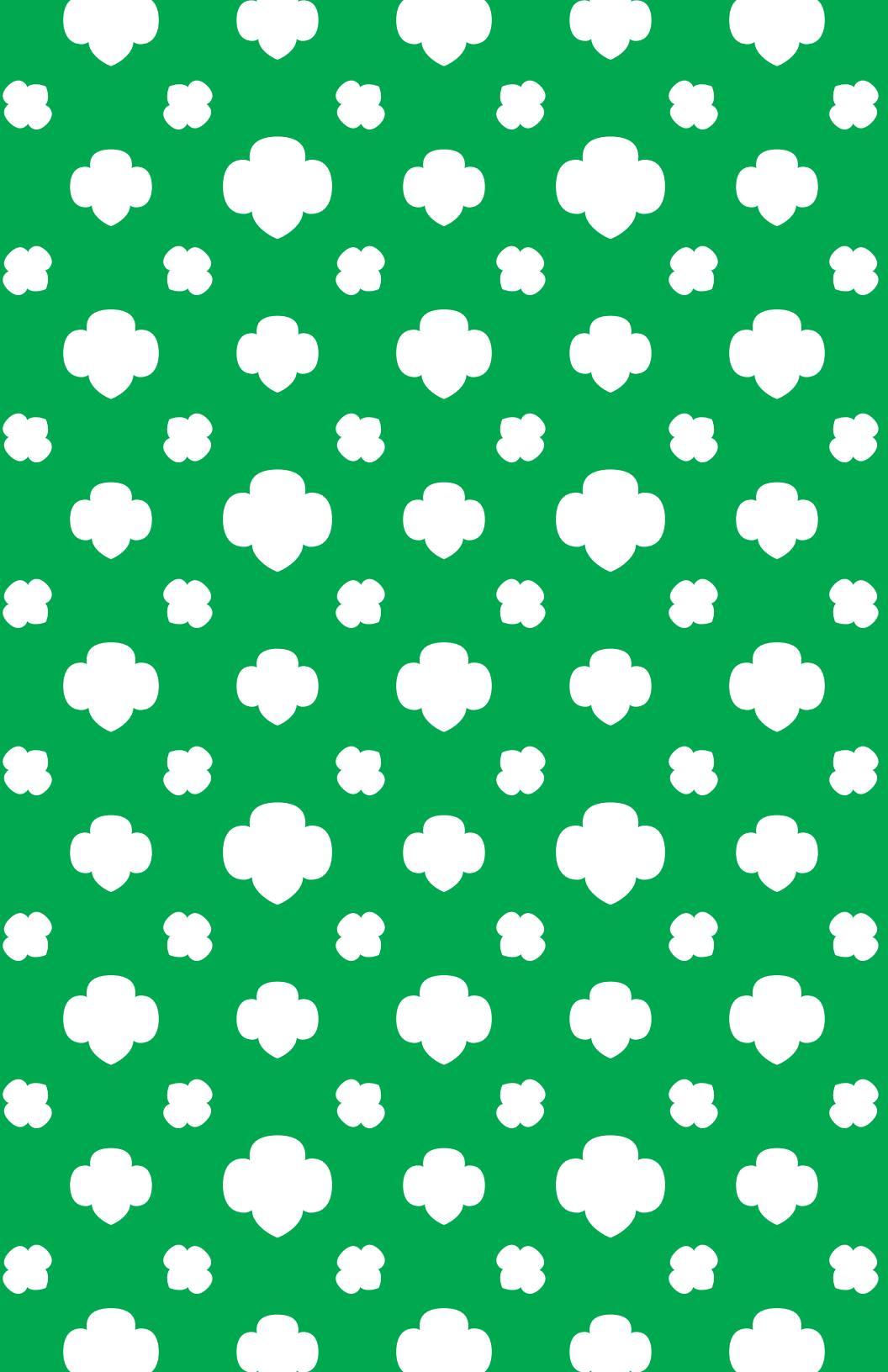


**adaptations &  
modifications**  
**inclusion**

web module | part 2



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# fostering diversity

Respecting differences and cultivating a commitment to pluralism is an important part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Volunteers like you play the largest and most important role in ensuring that all girls feel safe, welcome, and valued in Girl Scouting. Fostering diversity is a critical part of ensuring the success of every girl in your troop or group.

- » Understand that each individual brings a unique – and important – experience to Girl Scouting, and embrace those differences.
- » Value, develop, nurture, use, and celebrate both group and individual diversity.
- » Strive for inclusiveness in all activities, removing barriers to participation for both girls and adult parents/guardians.
- » Challenge the biases of others.
- » Treat others fairly.

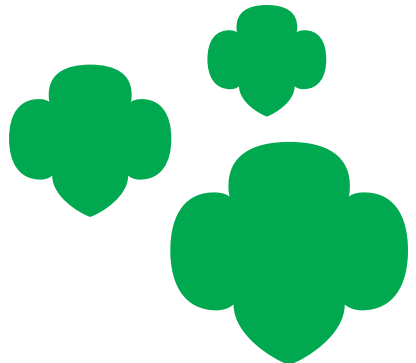
# learn what a girl needs

First, don't assume because a person has a disability, she needs assistance or accommodations. Probably the most important thing you can do is ask the individual girl or her parents or guardians what she needs to make her experience in Girl Scouts successful. If you are frank and accessible to the girl and her parents, it's likely they will respond in kind, creating a better experience for all.

It's important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts – not completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way. Here are a few examples:

- » Invite a girl to perform an activity after observing others doing it first.
- » Ask the girls to come up with ideas for how to adapt an activity.

Often what counts most is staying flexible and varying your approach.



# what's expected as a girl scout leader?

Making adaptations and modifications requires creativity and collaboration. Appropriate accommodations vary with individual circumstances such as a girl's age, disability, and Girl Scout setting (e.g. troop meeting, camp, or travel). Be sure to connect with a girl's caregivers to determine what has and has not worked for the girl in the past, as well as to determine her current needs, strengths and interests. Questions to consider include:

- » What adaptations and modifications worked in the past?
- » What adaptations and modifications does the girl currently use in the home and in the community?
- » Does the girl or do her caregivers know of any adaptations and modifications that might be helpful in the current setting?
- » Are there special events (field trips, performances) or different situations (bad weather, upcoming hospitalization) that may require specific adaptations and modifications?
- » Are the planned adaptations flexible for changes in health or medications?
- » Is regular and/or frequent communication between the Troop Leaders and a girl's caregivers needed? If so, is the method clearly defined?

Additionally, in order to ensure continuity of support, it is necessary to communicate with your Co-Leader(s) and Troop Helpers what adaptations and/or modifications are in place. Questions to consider include:

- » Are adaptations and modifications written clearly and specifically so they can be done consistently? Are they available to all adults supporting the troop or group?

- » Is it clear who is responsible for providing which one?
- » Is it clear who will communicate the adaptations and modifications to adults supporting the troop or group?
- » Are plans in place to address the necessity of assistive technology equipment?

# planning activities

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls' individual skills – bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry or under stress. For this reason, adaptations and modifications benefit everyone and not only a girl with a disability.

Trial and error, as well as personal experience and creativity, are key sources of ideas for adaptations and modifications. Everyone learns just as much from what does not work, as they learn from success. It is ok to make mistakes, the most important thing is to be creative and do what's right for the girls in your care.



# adaptations

Adaptations are made when needed so that everyone can take part. An adaptation is an individualized support that helps a girl to participate in Girl Scouting. An example of an adaptation is to provide extra time for a girl to complete an art activity. An exception, however, is excusing her from participation or changing rules or behavioral expectations. Using the example of an art activity, an exception would be allowing her to do art activities throughout the program instead of providing support to transition to the other activities offered. At times, you may question whether you are making adaptations or exceptions. It is helpful to remember an adaptation as a support for a girl so that she can follow the same rules and behavioral expectations put in place for all girls. It is also important to remember that adaptations benefit everyone.

Adaptations are changes in the ways the:

- » Program material is presented
- » Girls express what they have learned
- » Environment enables a girl to fully access Girl Scout program

Adaptations **do not** fundamentally alter the program or lower expectations or standards in instructional level, program content or demonstration of what has been learned.

Examples of adaptations:

- » Presenting information in a diversity of contexts.
- » Offering a variety of opportunities for girls to demonstrate learning.
- » Allowing for additional time to complete a task, or providing more breaks.
- » Increasing the ratio of adult and/or peer support for girls.
- » Changes in the environment.

## Multiple Methods for Sharing Information

In addition to written and oral formats, additional opportunities to share information with girls exist. Be creative and experiment with different formats. You may discover that you're particularly skilled in developing visual representations of information. Or, quick research on resources in your community may reveal materials available in Braille. Because all children have different learning styles, ensuring availability of different presentation formats benefits all girls. Similarly, providing girls with multiple options to demonstrate what they've learned and express themselves, allows all girls to experiment with what is most effective, comfortable, and engaging for them as individuals.

- » Use visual aids.
- » Enlarge text.
- » Include concrete examples.
- » Use graphic representation of concepts.
- » Offer hands-on activities.
- » Place girls in cooperative groups.
- » Provide girls written directions, as well as oral explanations.
- » Structure the meetings so that girls can build on skills they've learned as they progress.
- » Give one direction at a time.
- » Provide girls with printed materials.
- » Encourage girls to verbally repeat instructions and/or guide each other.
- » Teach mnemonic devices (acronyms or rhymes).
- » Demonstrate rather than explain or write.
- » Use social media and interactive web tools.

## Environmental Considerations

Environmental strategies can help girls successfully complete projects, prevent distraction, and foster teamwork. They can be helpful for all girls, not simply girls with disabilities.

- » Allow additional time for completion of a task.
- » Create a “quiet zone,” or “relaxation spot” apart from the main activities.
- » Pair girls together for cooperative learning.
- » Provide frequent breaks during a task.
- » Use earphones to mask extraneous noises.
- » Have the girls hold hands or link arms when transitioning from one activity to another.
- » Use colored electrical tape to divide a meeting space into segments for different activities.
- » Create a “First/Then” and/or a “Choice Board” to represent the program visually.

# modifications

Modifications are changes in the content, standards, expectations and other aspects of Girl Scout program so that a girl may participate. Modifications help to provide successful experiences for girls with disabilities.

Unlike adaptations, modifications do fundamentally alter the curriculum or lower expectations in instructional level, program content or evaluation criteria to meet the needs of an individual girl. Although a girl may require modifications in certain topics or activities, she may not need modifications of all aspects of the Girl Scout program. For instance, a girl may be challenged with the writing portion of the haiku activity in the Brownie Quest Journey, but she may do very well helping to prepare the healthy recipes included in the same Journey. All girls in your troop or group should be provided with multiple options to explore Girl Scout activities, as well as to demonstrate their strengths and what they've learned.

A girl who requires a modification should work on the same subject area as the other girls in her troop or group at the same time, but with different material and/or a different measurement of success. For example:

- » Writing one paragraph while the troop or group works on an entire story.
- » Working on math facts while the troop or group is engaged in multiplication.
- » Developing a cheer for the troop or group while they work on a multi-phasic advocacy activity.

# what does inclusion look like?

Inclusiveness is an attitude that reflects how adults think about children with and without disabilities. As a Girl Scout volunteer, you have the ability to be a positive role model, actively embracing inclusivity. And doing so doesn't have to be complicated!

- » Ask questions of people who know each girl and have conversations with them about effectively supporting her.
- » Recognize the similarities in all children, acknowledge differences, and have curiosity about a girl's unique point of view.
- » Find creative ways to include all girls in Girl Scout activities that are flexible about the ways girls might participate.
- » Make a commitment to be as inclusive as possible – one girl at a time. This is not a statement about only about girls with known disabilities. Many children not categorized as disabled or having a particular syndrome can be a handful at times.
- » Think about supporting inclusion for each child by:
  - Greeting every girl with pleasure and curiosity
  - Noticing a girl's attention and energy
  - Acknowledging what you see and hear
  - Joining in, even briefly, following the girl's lead
  - Inviting a reasonable expansion on what the girl is doing or saying
  - Using a buddy system to connect girls with/without special needs
  - Encouraging peer relationships

# additional resources on inclusion

## **Kids Included Together**

[www.kitonline.org](http://www.kitonline.org)

## **Creating Links for Inclusion: After School Inclusion Project**

[www.californiaafterschool.org/c/@Yp3VfC24EvBBE/Pages/Inclusion\\_webinar.html](http://www.californiaafterschool.org/c/@Yp3VfC24EvBBE/Pages/Inclusion_webinar.html)

## **Questions for Parents to Ask about School Adaptations**

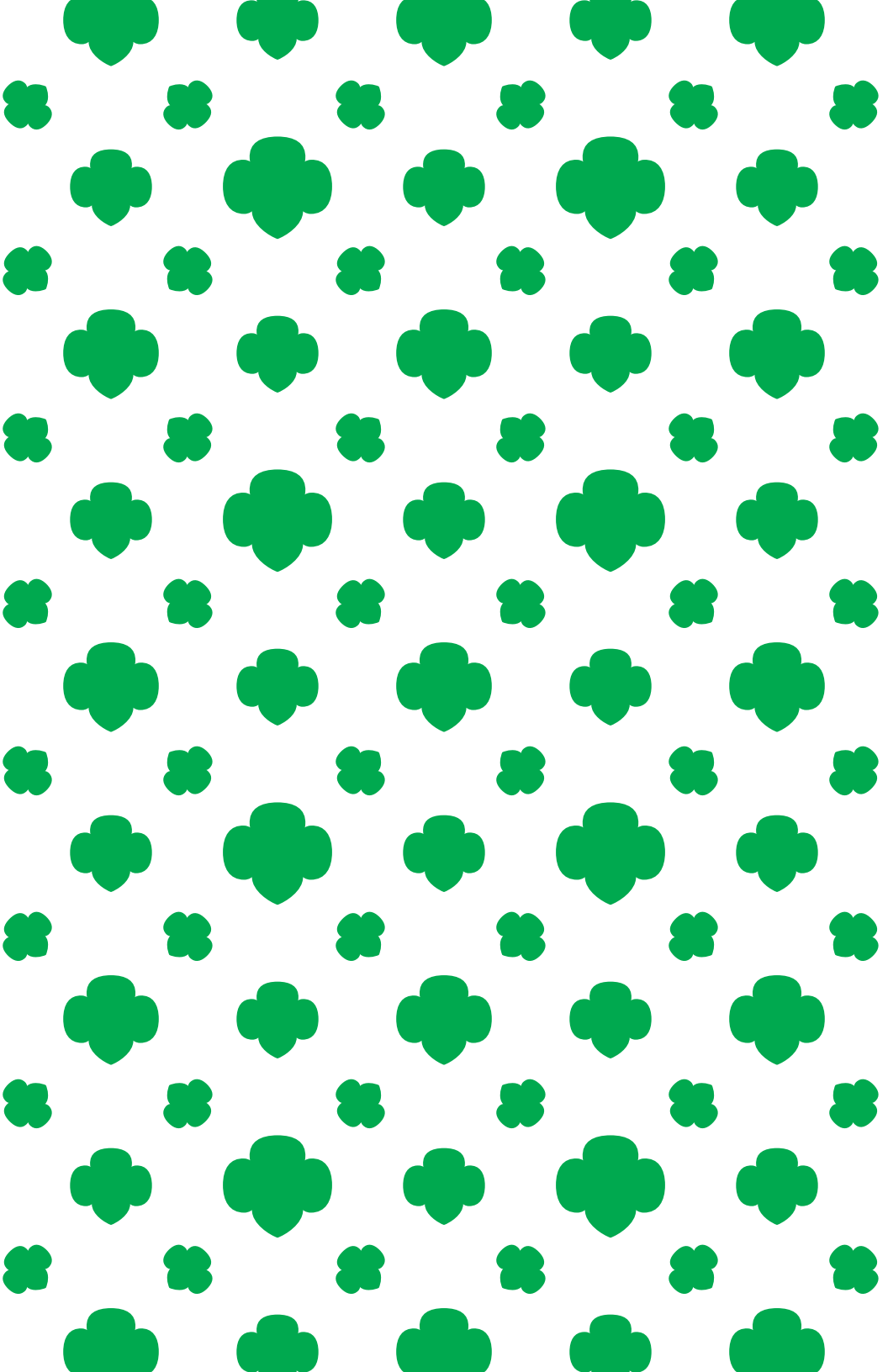
[www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c91.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c91.pdf)

## **Universal Design Alliance**

<http://universaldesign.org/>

## **The Center for Universal Design**

[www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/about\\_ud/about\\_ud.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/about_ud/about_ud.htm)





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