# Deaf & Hard of Hearing Leader Training

girl scouts greater los angeles

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# Training Guide Contents

This training guide is intended to support troop leaders in providing the best Girl Scout experience for girls of all abilities.  If you have a scout in your troop or service unit who is deaf or hard of hearing, this trianing guide will:

- Define Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Explain difficulties your scout might encounter during meetings, outings, and overnight trips.
- Provide a list of strategies, techniques, or equipment that will assist you in providing the best Girl Scout experience for a scout with hearing loss.
- Provide a list of other resources that might be helpful.

## Create a Welcoming Girl Scout Troop

# What is Deaf and Hard of Hearing?

**Deaf or Hard of Hearing** is a physical disability that impacts a person's ability to hear sounds within the normal limits of hearing. It can be a partial or total inability to hear and can result from problems with the ear (outer, middle, and/or inner), the vestibulocochlear nerve (i.e., cranial nerve eight or CN VIII), and/or the auditory system.

Some scouts who are deaf or hard of hearing might wear hearing aids, cochlear implants, or require the use of other amplification devices to assist in hearing.  If a scout is completely deaf or has a significant hearing loss, they may use sign language to communicate and would need the assistance of an interpreter.





## Impact of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can impact troop meetings, community outings, outdoor activities and overnight activities. A girl with hearing loss could miss parts of things spoken during these events; she could feel confused when conversations are happening all at once around her. Background noise and distance from the person speaking, especially when outdoors, can also impact her ability to fully comprehend. Some girls with profound hearing loss may use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary language and would need to have an interpreter at the meetings and outings. Overnight trips might have added impact if the scout sleeps without her hearing aids or cochlear processor. The scout with hearing loss may sleep more soundly and may need a physical cue to wake up in the morning or for emergencies.

## How to Help Mitigate Hearing Loss

In order to provide a girl with hearing loss equal access to being a Girl Scout here are some helpful strategies to help mitigate her challenges.

1. Talk with the girl scout and her parents to fully understand the extent of hearing loss and their suggestions for making the Girl Scout experience successful.
2. Use a personal microphone for those who wear hearing aids and cochlear implants to have the speaker's voice directly input into their devices and decrease the impact of background noise and distance.

3. Allow peers to also use the personal microphones in interactions in groups and with others, especially when outside.
4. Always bring extra batteries and/or have access to electricity to charge devices.
5. Have an interpreter for girls whose primary language is ASL (American Sign Language). It would be helpful for other girls to learn ASL to help her feel included and interact with her peers.
6. Look directly at the person with hearing loss so they can see your face clearly and speak in a normal rate of speed.
7. Have good lighting in order for the girl with hearing loss to see faces.

## Additional Resources for Leading Scouts with Hearing Loss

| Books | Video Links | Websites |
|---|---|---|
| The Girl With Hearing Aids<br>by: Now Hearing<br><br><br>(Children's book) | Hearing Loss in Childre...<br>Hearing Loss in Children: Strategies for Better Communication- Boston Childrens Hopsital<br><br> | Supporting Success for Students with Hearing Loss<br><br> |
| Dina the Deaf Dinosaur<br>by: Carolle Addobbo<br><br><br>(Children's Book) | Tips for Children with a Hearing Loss<br><br> | Supporting Peer Relationships for Children with Hearing Loss<br><br> |

# Conclusion

The Girl Scout experience should be accessible for girls of all abilities. If you need additional support to help with inclusion, please contact your local service unit or council.



**Girl Scouts for ALL Abilities**

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