Intellectual Disabilities Leader Training

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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 with an intellectual disability, this training guide will:

- Define intellectual disability
- 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 intellectual disabilities.
- Provide a list of other resources that might be helpful.

Create a Welcoming Girl Scout Troop

Every scout learns in her own way and at her own pace. By creating a supportive, structured, and encouraging environment, troop leaders can help all scouts feel successful, included, and proud of their accomplishments.

What is an Intellectual Disability?

An intellectual disability is a disability that affects a person's learning, problem-solving, and everyday functioning. It may impact how a person understands information, learns new skills, communicates, and completes daily tasks.

Scouts with intellectual disabilities may learn at a different pace and may need additional support with understanding instructions, making decisions, or applying skills across different

situations. Abilities can vary widely, and many scouts can learn and succeed with appropriate supports, repetition, and encouragement.





Impacts of Intellectual Disabilities

An intellectual disability can affect participation in troop meetings, activities, outings, and overnight trips in a variety of ways.

A scout with an intellectual disability may:

- Need extra time to learn new skills or complete tasks
- Have difficulty understanding multi-step directions or abstract concepts
- Benefit from repetition and practice to build independence
- Need support with problem-solving or decision-making
- Experience challenges with social skills, such as understanding rules, expectations, or peer interactions

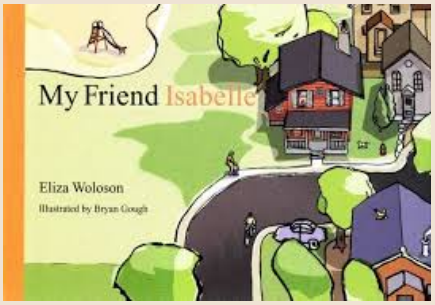
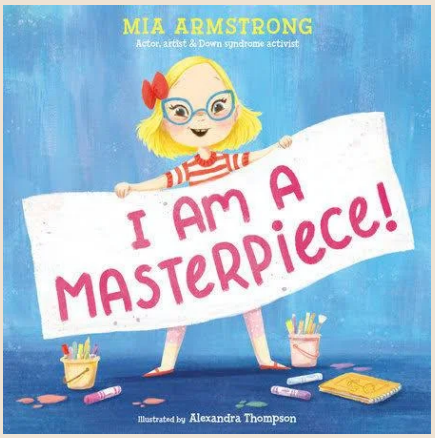
During group activities or outings, changes in routine or unfamiliar environments may require additional support. With clear expectations and structured support, scouts can actively participate and enjoy all aspects of the Girl Scout experience.

How to Help Mitigate Challenges Realated to Intellectual Disabilities

In order to provide a scout with an intellectual disability equal access to being a Girl Scout, here are some helpful strategies:

1. **Communicate with the scout and her family** to understand her strengths, needs, and effective supports.
2. **Use clear, simple, and direct language** when giving instructions.
3. **Break tasks into smaller steps** and provide support as needed.
4. **Use visual supports and modeling**, such as pictures, demonstrations, or examples.
5. **Provide repetition and practice** to help build understanding and independence.
6. **Maintain predictable routines** and give advance notice of changes when possible.
7. **Encourage positive peer interactions** and provide guidance for social situations. With parent permission, educate troop members about intellectual disabilities and how they can help fellow scouts with intellectual disabilities.

Additional Resources for Leading Scouts with Physical Disabilities

Books	Video Links	Websites
We Are All Wonders by R.J. Palacio  (Children's book)	 What is an Intellectual Disability? (Children's Resource)	Intentional Inclusion of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (Adult Resource)
My Friend Isabelle by: Eliza Woloson  (Children's Book)	 All About Down Syndrome (Children's resource)	 How to Be Inclusive of People with Intellectual Disabilities
I am a Masterpiece by Mia Armstrong  (Children's Book)	 Intellectual Disabilities and Understanding Social Norms (Adult's Resource)	 Outdoor Learning Activities for Special Needs Students (Adult Resource)

Conclusion

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



Girl Scouts for ALL Abilities

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