Vision Impairment 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 a vision impairment, this training guide will:

- Define low vision and blindness
- 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 vision impairment.
- Provide a list of other resources that might be helpful.

Create a Welcoming Girl Scout Troop

Every scout deserves to feel included, capable, and valued. By making small adjustments and focusing on clear communication, accessibility, and kindness, troop leaders can ensure that scouts with vision impairments have the same opportunities to participate, lead, and thrive.

What is Vision Impairment?

A vision impairment is a physical disability that affects a person's ability to see. This can include partial vision (low vision) or complete blindness. Vision impairment may impact clarity, field of vision, depth perception, or sensitivity to light.
Some scouts with vision impairments may use glasses, magnification tools, or assistive technology. Others may read Braille, use screen readers, or rely on orientation and mobility skills (such as using a white cane or guide assistance) to navigate their environment.





Impact of Vision Impairment

A vision impairment can affect participation in troop meetings, activities, outings, and overnight trips in a variety of ways.

A scout with a vision impairment may:

- Have difficulty seeing written materials, demonstrations, or visual instructions
- Need more time to navigate new environments safely
- Miss nonverbal cues such as facial expressions or gestures
- Have challenges in low lighting or very bright outdoor settings
- Need support locating materials, supplies, or group members

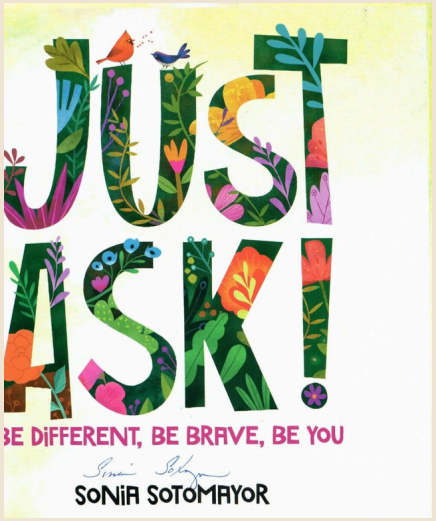
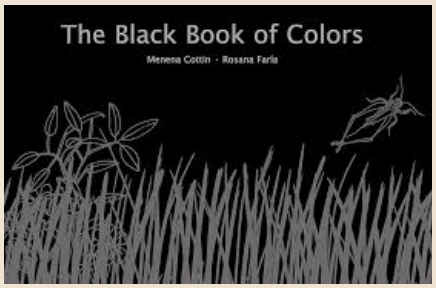
During outings or overnight trips, unfamiliar spaces may require additional orientation. Safety considerations (like obstacles, uneven ground, or dim lighting) are especially important. However, with appropriate supports, scouts with vision impairments can fully participate and succeed in all activities.

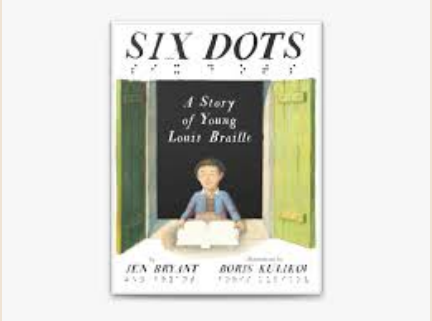
How to Help Mitigate Challenges Realated to Vision Impairment

In order to provide a scout with a vision impairment equal access to being a Girl Scout, here are some helpful strategies:

1. **Communicate with the scout and her family** to understand her specific vision needs, preferences, and supports that work best.
2. **Use clear verbal descriptions** when giving directions or explaining activities. Describe what is happening instead of relying only on visual cues.
3. **Provide materials in accessible formats**, such as large print, high-contrast text, Braille, or digital formats that can be used with assistive technology.
4. **Keep environments organized and predictable.** Let the scout know where items are located and avoid moving materials without telling her.
5. **Offer guidance when navigating spaces**, such as describing surroundings or offering an arm for guided walking if needed (always ask first). When hiking, trekking poles or tether ropes can be beneficial.
6. **Explore assistive technology devices** that might help in experiencing the world around them. Some outdoor apps and monoculars, such as Merlin (for birding) and Lazarillo and Blindsqure for hiking are great options.
7. **Ensure good lighting and reduce glare** when possible, while also respecting individual sensitivity to light.
8. **Encourage peer support and inclusion**, such as having other scouts introduce themselves when speaking and include verbal descriptions during group activities.

Additional Resources for Leading Scouts with Vision Impairment

Books	Video Links	Websites
Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You by Sonia Sotomayor  (Children's book)	 How to Talk to Kids About Being Blind. (Adult Resource)	 Inclusive Teaching: Blind and Vision Impaired
The Black Book of Colors by: Menena Cottin  (Children's Book)	The Braille Song  (Child's resource)	 Visual Impairment, Including Blindness [et_pb_section fb_built="1" admin_label="section"... parentcenterhub.org Center for Parent Information and Resources
Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille by Jen Bryant		



[Seeing Eye Dogs for Kids]

(Children's Resource)

[Empowering Children with Vision Impairments]

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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