



Welcoming Girls with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) into Your Troop

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) is a neurobehavioral disorder. AD/HD is usually diagnosed in childhood, and the condition can continue into the adult years. Many individuals with AD/HD are undiagnosed until adulthood. The common characteristics of AD/HD are impulsivity, inattention, and/or over-activity. There are three subtypes of this that can be diagnosed depending on primary symptoms presenting.

Some suggestions and strategies for preparing for and including girls with AD/HD in your troop:

1. Provide clear expectations and structure of the troop meetings (this can be done using a picture chart or written schedule, as well as utilizing a communal "troop rules" agreement that's visible to all)
2. For large projects or activities with long time commitments, break down the tasks/times into smaller parts
3. During troop meetings or activities, give verbal reminders of the schedule as needed to keep everyone on task
4. If possible, an outline of each meeting or activity beforehand will set expectations if the activity will involve a long time commitment or attention span
5. When possible, start each meeting/activity with a brief summary of the events to come, and conclude each meeting/activity with a summary of the key points
6. Vary the schedule or routine as applicable to keep attention, but make sure to discuss the changes beforehand
7. Try to keep meetings or activities open to many physical outlets or options (ex. eating snack during story time or working on a craft while learning about something in the community)
8. Be sensitive to attention spans and physical positioning limits-- do not expect the girls to hold the same position (ex. sitting in a circle) for too long while focusing on any one activity
9. Fidgets (something to hold in her hands and fidget with) can be provided for activities that are relatively still and require listening for a longer period of time; the whole troop can each have their own so no one girl feels singled out
10. Unless the girl and her parent/guardian prefer confidentiality within the troop, have the girl share about her differing abilities and special needs with the troop and allow the other girls to ask questions in a sensitive and caring manner. This will promote better understanding and allow everyone to work together as a troop to ensure that everyone's needs are met
11. Always consult with the parent/guardian beforehand to be sure you're providing for the girl's needs to the best of your ability- - they will know the best methods and strategies to help their child

For more help and information please visit American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/Home.aspx
and Special Education Guide <http://www.specialeducationguide.com/disability-profiles/>

If you have other questions or concerns you may contact GSEP via email at memberservices@gsep.org or via phone at 215-564-2030

This document is not intended to replace or supersede any doctor's instructions nor should it in any way be taken as medical advice or directions. This resource is a suggestion for GSEP volunteers to use while welcoming girls with special needs to their troops and is for informational and educational purposes only. Please follow a parent/guardian's instructions in the medical care of their child and make sure you always have the appropriate medical and troop permission forms completed and available for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel.