

Alternate Advancement Considerations

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This is an ongoing collection of experiences of Scouters from around the world. While each situation is different, we hope that these pages provide an example or an idea that can be useful to you.

Remember, these requirements must first be approved by the Council Advancement Committee BEFORE the Scout starts working on them. We have also included a sample of an Individual Scouts Advancement Plan that can be used and then forwarded for approval. This is an individualized achievement plan that is non-threatening and nonjudgmental. It begins as a basic "contract" which can be used for all Scouts, and is modified by addendum. The idea is that every Scout sees the "contract" as personal so that no segment is singled out.

Example of the Alternate Considerations Format.

The spectrum of physical and mental disabilities is broad. Among the conditions most widely known are: Developmentally Delayed; Blind or Visually Impaired; Communication disabilities; Emotionally disabilities; Deaf or Hearing Impairments; Mobility Impairments; and, Neuro-Muscular Disorders. Some Scouts may have conditions which fall under more than one category.

These, and others, are permanent disabilities though there may be medications or prosthetic devices which may mitigate the symptoms and allow the Scout to function with others. None should prevent the Scout from being a participating member of a Scouting unit.

The opportunities to develop alternative requirements is limited only by the imagination. To meet requirements a Scout must: "Know"; "Identify"; "Demonstrate"; "Light"; "Show"; "Take"; "Use"; "Explain"; "Tell"; "Discuss"; "Participate"; and, "Assist". How does one deal with these Verbs?

The simplest advice is to break down the stated requirements into increments and decide whether there are alternative approaches to achievement besides a frontal attack. The last three verbs noted above mean that the attainment of the skill is not solitary, the other Den or Patrol members should be helpers in goal attainment.

In addition, the solution may vary based on the Scout's condition. It is best to adapt the activities as needed to meet the needs and ability range of all the Cub Scouts. Use the least amount of change necessary to make the activity successful for all boys.

Further adaptations in advancement requirements may be necessary for boys who have special needs. Making changes in Scout activities requires skill along with knowledge of the boys. Parents can help you determine the need for adaptations and what kinds of adaptations would be the most useful. Areas of adaptation can include:

Materials Adaptation

Example: A Cub Scout has little hand strength and is trying to carve.

Solution: Substitute a bar of soap for balsa wood.

Rules Adaptation

Example: A Cub Scout is unable to throw horseshoes the standard distance.

Solution: Let the boy move closer to the horseshoe pit.

Architectural Adaptation

Example: A Cub Scout in a wheelchair is unable to go bowling because the bowling alley is not wheelchair accessible.

Solution: In advance, find an alley that can accommodate wheelchairs.

Leisure Companion Adaptation

Example: A Cub Scout cannot stay on task and runs around.

Solution: An adult or older youth can become a buddy for the Cub Scout.

Cooperative Group Adaptation

Example: A Cub Scout has difficulty remembering the sequence of steps in a project.

Solution: Cub Scouts can work in cooperative groups to ensure success and completion of activities for everyone.

Behavioral Adaptation

Example: A Cub Scout is unable to participate during a meeting because of low concentration levels.

Solution: Talk with parents/guardians about a behavioral plan.

Further examples as they apply to specific rank or Merit Badge requirements can be found on this site. If you have alternates that you have used please forward them to the webmaster so they may be shared by others.

These are only some for each requirement. We hope the alternate considerations will assist you in developing your program for working with Scouts with disabilities. Remember, the final approval rests with the council advancement committee.