

# Leadership Techniques for Working with Special Needs Cub Scouts

April 27, 2020

Sam Houston Area Council – Big Cypress Virtual Scouting Week

Please make note that the presentation uses both the he and she pronouns throughout the slides. We are referring to all Scouts, regardless of the pronoun.

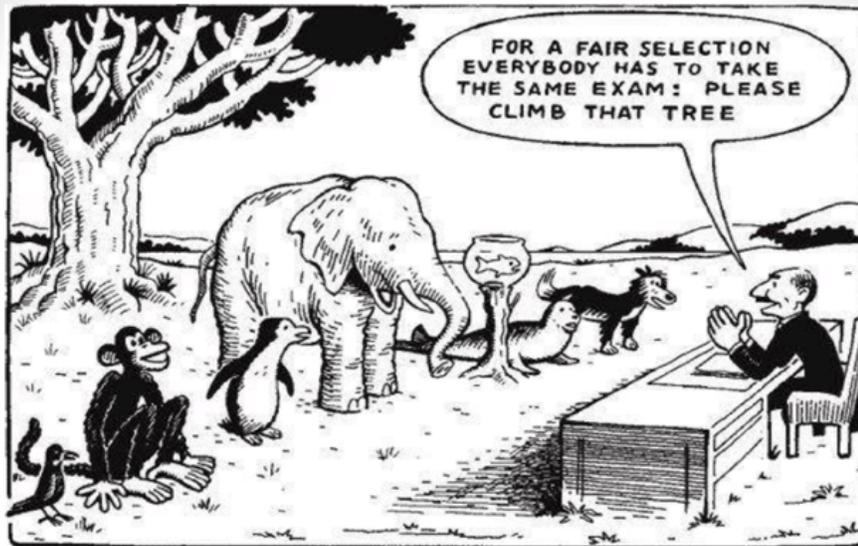
Handouts to accompany presentation can be found on our web page under Special Needs in the pull-down bar at the top of SHAC's main page, under Resources.

Accommodations for Scouts

Tantrum vs Meltdown

Joining Conference

Know Your Scout



Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid. - Albert Einstein

[ 2 ]

- Of the 53.9 million school-aged children (aged 5 to 17) in the U.S. about 2.8 million (**5.2 %**) were reported to have a disability in 2010. For many of these children, the kinds of disabilities they experience may require special approaches to providing education or other accommodations.

• *(2010 US Census)*

- In 2020 the CDC estimated that **1 in 54** children is diagnosed with Autism.

Boys were more than 4 times as likely to be identified with ASD than girls.

{ 3 }

## Be Prepared

Wise leaders expect problems but do not consider them overwhelming. Though you may view the Scout with a disability as an individual with significant differences, he or she really is not. All Scouts have different needs. The wise leader will recognize this and be prepared to help.

{ 4 }

Each person has needs. We as leaders recognize this and respond to this “human condition” naturally in our relationships with people. Some leaders respond better and more empathetically than others. Some leaders are willing to learn the “psychology” of leading. Some leaders continue to do the leading the way they always have. As leaders we should be preparing ourselves to be prepared for guiding and empowering these young people who are entrusted to us.

## Joining Conference

Leaders should meet with the parents and the new Scout with a disability to learn about the Scout, her physical limitations, her abilities and preferences, and whether she knows any of the other Scouts in the unit. These meetings should be ongoing, especially during times where the Scout needs extra assistance. Brainstorming and mutual support are key factors to success.

{ 5 }

Some youths with disabilities will try to do more than they are capable of doing, just to “fit in” with the rest of the Scouts, which could result in unnecessary frustration.

Begin with the Cub Scout and his/her parents or guardian; seek guidance from them on how best to work with the Scout with special needs. The parents can help you to understand the Scout’s medical history as well as his/her capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, and the way they can support you as Scout leader. This will help you become aware of special needs that might arise at meetings, field trips, and campouts with the parents. To the fullest extent possible, Scouts with disabilities should be given opportunities to camp, hike and take part in all activities.

Accept the Scout as a person and give him the same respect that you expect from him. This will be much easier to do if you know the Scout, his parents, his background, and likes and dislikes. Remember, any behavior that presents difficulties is a force that can be redirected into more acceptable pathways—rather than erased and rebuilt.

[ 6 ]

The parents and possibly school personnel can be a great resource to you. Redirecting positively rather than negatively will reap better results.

## Living the Scout Oath and Law

*Example is a wonderful tool!*

Demonstrate personal discipline with respect, punctuality, accuracy, conscientiousness, dignity, consistency and dependability.

[ 7 ]

Live the Scout Oath and Law – demonstrate it in your leadership  
Start demonstrating EDGE method through your own behavior early in Scouting

- Become involved with the Scout in your care.
- Let her know that you care about her, difficulties and all.
- **Judge accomplishments by what the Scout can do, not by what someone says she must do or by what you think she cannot do.**

- Rewarding achievement will likely cause that positive behavior to be repeated.
- Focus rewards on proper behavior and achievement.
- A small word of praise or a pat on the back for a job well done can mean a lot to a boy or girl who receives little elsewhere.

[ 9 ]

Reward can be in the form of a thank-you, a recognition made by the group for helping the group perform at a higher level, a patch, a prize, or a chance to go on a trip or party.

## Providing Encouragement

- Reward more than you criticize, in order to build self-esteem.
- Praise immediately any and all good behavior and performance.
- Change rewards if they are not effective in motivating behavioral improvement.
- Find ways to encourage the Scout.
- Teach the Scout to reward himself. This encourages him to think positively about himself.



From a teacher perspective, if the kids are bored or are not drawn in to, they will be more likely to ignore what is being said and done in a den meeting. Normally, they have just spent seven or more hours in school and are DONE with school! Your job as a den leader (or Cubmaster) is to have FUN with the Scouts!!!! FUN is what it's all about, but rules need to be followed and consistently upheld. Period. So.... Discipline is important for each Scout. This helps them learn self-control. Done in a loving, gentle and CONSISTENT fashion, the meetings can go much more smoothly and then everyone really does have fun.

Seeing, doing, and experiencing are some of the most effective and quickest way to a child's heart and attention span!

The same goes for the online virtual meetings we are having. It's hard to hold someone's attention virtually, especially if there is no interaction amongst the membership. Try to make your meetings interactive, getting each Scout to participate in some way, shape or form. Games, respectful interaction during discussion (the mute key is a wonderful replacement for the talking feather), exercising in the living room, playing a game with a pet or another member of the family while the CM and other participants watch from the sidelines. A little karaoke may be fun as well. Creativity and thinking outside of the mundane box is important in order to keep everyone's interest.

Rewards, (ex) pizza party or they get to pick a favorite game to play or whatever, are

critical and are just as important as pats on the back or beads on a leather thong. An award ceremony within the den, that the Scouts run, will be fun and filled with laughter if done right. Use creativity, but stay within the guidelines of BSA, YPT, the Guide to Safe Scouting and at this point CDC.

## Giving Instruction

- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction.
- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with instructions.
- Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.
- Make sure the Scout comprehends the instructions before beginning the task.
- Allow time for the Scout to “process what you say”
- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.
- Help the Scout feel comfortable with seeking assistance.

# Using Visual Cues

## Cub Scout Information

-  For boys in Kindergarten
-  All boys earn this badge
-  For boys in first grade (or are 7 years old)
-  For boys who completed second grade (or are 8 years old)
-  For boys who completed third grade (or are 9 years old)
-  For boys who completed fourth grade (or are 10 years old)
-  Arrow of Light
-  Highest award in Cub Scouting  
For boys who completed fifth grade (or are 11 years old)



**CUB SCOUT SIGN**



**CUB SCOUT MOTTO**  
**DO YOUR BEST**

**SCOUT OATH**  
On my honor I will do my best  
to do my duty to God and my country  
and to obey the Scout Law;  
to help other people at all times;  
to keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight.



**CUB SCOUT SALUTE**

**WEBELOS MEANS:**  
"WE'LL BE Loyal Scouts"

**SCOUT LAW**  
A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.



**CUB SCOUT HANDSHAKE**

## Scout Law

A Scout is.....

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <br>Trustworthy | <br>Loyal | <br>Helpful  | <br>Friendly |
| <br>Courteous   | <br>Kind  | <br>Obedient | <br>Cheerful |
| <br>Thrifty     | <br>Brave | <br>Clean    | <br>Reverent |

## Summer Fun Schedule

|  |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>M</b><br>Make Something Monday!<br><br>Arts & Crafts | <b>T</b><br>Get Outside Tuesday.<br><br>Outdoor Activities (water table, sand box, pool) | <b>W</b><br>What's Cooking Wednesday.<br><br>baking, cooking | <b>T</b><br>Time to Read Thursday.<br><br>storytime at local library | <b>F</b><br>Go somewhere fun Friday!<br><br>Visit the zoo, aquarium, local museums, get out of the house! |
|--|---|---|---|--|

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# Den Discipline

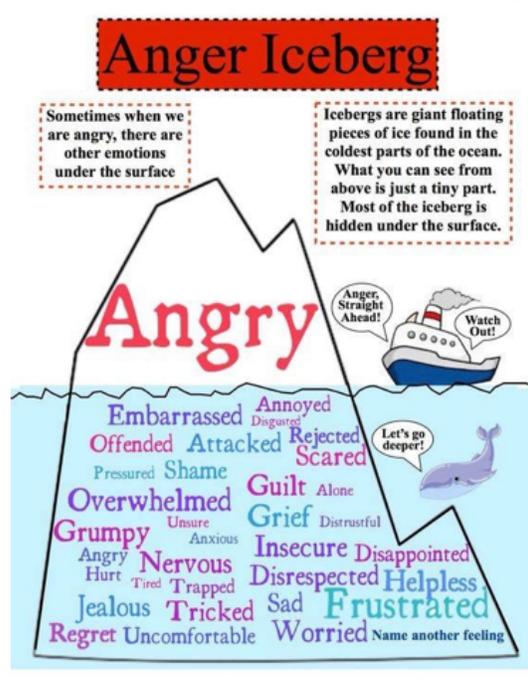
- Effective discipline is 90 percent preparation
  - Part of preparation is the awareness of what children are like at various ages.
  - Make assets out of their abilities and interests
- Planning appropriate activities
  - Having enough physical and human resources on hand to keep the group going for the entire meeting

## Encourage Positive Behaviors

- Expressing clear expectations of good behavior to the Scout and the family
- Developing a den code of conduct with the youth
- Using two-deep leadership, especially on trips and outings
- Having trained Den Chiefs help with den activities
- Following the suggested Cub Scout den meeting structure
- Using positive recognition or reinforcement aids

{ 15 }

Behavior is a form of communication. Look for what the behavior is saying (i.e., does the Scout want attention?)



# Reflection

- Take some extra time to reflect on each meeting and learn from your own experiences



[ 17 ]

Start with what went particularly well. What made it go? What part did you play? What parts did the Scouts and or the other adults play? How can this combination work again? Also focus on what didn't work well. What aspects of the meeting needed more planning, resources, and leadership? What could have been done to prevent problems? Could these ideas be put into action earlier the next time a problem comes up?

## Solutions to Problems

1. Define the problem
2. Determine the difficulties the problem is causing
3. Determine the kinds of solution that could fix the problem or make it better
4. Try a solution. If the solution doesn't work, try a different one
5. Evaluate the solution. How did it work?

{ 18 }

Be positive. Figure out what is not working quite right. Is it the meeting? Is it the meeting place? Is it the activity? Is it the Cub Scouts, or a particular Cub Scout? Now is a good time to work the youth on building group responsibilities and leadership skills.

Some youth have difficulty learning positive group skills. Try to support them by guiding them through some simple group decisions. If the plan isn't working, create a different plan.

## Advancement

Advancement is so flexible that, with guidance, most Cub Scouts with disabilities can complete requirements. The standard is, "Has the Scout done their best?" It may take them longer to attempt requirements and demonstrate this, but their accomplishments will be rewarding to them, their parents, and leaders.

## Advancement continued

When a Cub Scout's "best" isn't enough even to get a start, Cubmasters and pack committees may jointly determine appropriate substitutions that are consistent with the Cub Scout showing she can "do her best." Elective requirements could take the place of those required; in consultation with parents, other minor adjustments representing **similar challenges** could be made.

[ 20 ]

For example, a Scout in a wheelchair cannot pass requirements calling for walking or running. Remember, your support as a leader is essential.

## Resources

- *Cub Scout Leader Book*, No. 33221
- *Den Leader Guide*, No. 37003
- <https://cubscouts.org/library/leadership-techniques/>
- *Guide to Advancement*, No. 33088
- *Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and Disabilities*, No. 510-071
- *Scouting with Youth with Disabilities Manual*, No. 34059
- <http://www.samhoustonbsa.org/scouts-with-special-needs>
- <http://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx>

**“ MY SON IS A LITTLE BOY,  
HE IS NOT A HERO. HE IS  
NOT A VICTIM. SOMETIMES  
HE IS HAPPY. SOMETIMES  
HE IS SAD. SOME DAYS  
HE IS NICE. SOME DAYS  
(MOST DAYS?) HE IS NAUGHTY.  
PITY IS NOT THE SAME  
AS EMPATHY AND SEEING  
MY SON FOR WHAT HE  
CAN'T DO, RATHER THAN  
WHAT HE CAN, WILL HURT  
HIS CHANCES TO LIVE  
A FULL AND PRODUCTIVE  
LIFE FAR MORE THAN HIS  
DISABILITY EVER COULD.”**

Mary Evelyn Smith

It's how your perception of a Scout can change HIS reality that should make our volunteers stop and think.

[ 22 ]