

# Strategies and Notes on Scouts with Disabilities and Special Needs

## Northern Star Council's Special Needs District: Polaris

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### Notes:

- Scouts in every troop cover a spectrum of maturities and behaviors
- One in 8 kids have an invisible (behavior-affecting) disability or other issue.
- Know your Scouts: personal meeting with parents of incoming Scouts.
- Accommodations: Timing, Scheduling, Setting, Presentation, Response
- Being strategic about tantrums and meltdowns
  - Tantrum is acting out but still paying some attention
  - Meltdown is a loss of control and attention to outside
- Calming strategies

Additional materials:

At Scouting.org: <http://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx>

Abilities Digest: <https://ablescouts.com/>

The following 5 pages of notes are based on material taken from the presentation handout materials that accompany the “Program Planning for Scouts with Disabilities” and “Camping for Scouts with Disabilities” presentations posted at [Scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org).

# Know Your Scout

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## About the Scout

Scout's Strengths: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Scout's Challenges: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How the Scout learns best: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Important information for Leaders to know: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Equipment/Assistive Technology: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things to avoid: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Overall health: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Special Event Care Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone for day of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Pack/Troop #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Caregiver Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone for day of event: \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Needs:

1. Transportation to and from the event parking lot

\_\_\_\_\_ van/bus \_\_\_\_\_ lift van/bus \_\_\_\_\_ pick up at vehicle

2. Program areas want to attend

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. Assistance needed to participate. Describe:

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4. Camping

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, area: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ No, just attending Saturday

5. Estimated Length of Stay:

\_\_\_\_\_ Camping all weekend

\_\_\_\_\_ Camping Friday night and programs Saturday

\_\_\_\_\_ Saturday only; arrival time: \_\_\_\_\_ departure time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Week long Camp

6. Personal Care needs:

- There will be portable units in the camping area ADA approved.
- There is a changing area in the Special Needs Center.
- This center will serve for their personal care and sensory needs.
- This is an information center to request additional help for a program area and transportation needs.

	Tantrum	Meltdown
<b>What It Is</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An angry or frustrated outburst.</li> <li>● The Scout might yell, cry, lash out, and hold his breath.</li> <li>● The Scout typically has some control over his behavior during a tantrum.</li> <li>● The behavior tends to stop when he gets what he wants. (But tantrums can become overwhelming and evolve into meltdowns.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A reaction to feeling overwhelmed.</li> <li>● The Scout might yell, cry, lash out, run away or shut down and withdraw.</li> <li>● The Scout cannot control his or her behavior during a meltdown.</li> <li>● The behavior tends to stop when he wears himself out or when there's a change in the amount of sensory input he is experiencing.</li> </ul>
<b>What Triggers It</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A desire to get something, avoids something, or elicits a specific reaction.</li> <li>● Frustration.</li> <li>● Sudden changes in routine or expectations.</li> <li>● Not being able to communicate needs and wants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sensory, information, or emotional overload.</li> <li>● Intense frustration.</li> <li>● Sudden changes in routine or expectations.</li> <li>● Not being able to communicate needs and wants.</li> </ul>
<b>Signs You May Notice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You know what the Scout wants or is reacting to.</li> <li>● The Scout is choosing to engage in the behavior.</li> <li>● He's able to pay attention to what's going on around him.</li> <li>● He watches other people's reactions and adjusts his behavior to match it.</li> <li>● He may be trying to bargain for a solution while he's yelling.</li> <li>● Behavior ends once he gets what he wants or realizes he <i>won't</i> get what he wants by acting out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You may not know what the Scout wants or is reacting to.</li> <li>● The Scout doesn't seem to have control over his behavior and appears panicky.</li> <li>● He is shutting down or trying to escape. He's not able to process what's going on around him.</li> <li>● He doesn't respond to people's reactions or attempts to talk to him.</li> <li>● He loses his ability to problem-solve and negotiate solutions.</li> <li>● He needs time to calm down and recover, even after a situation has been resolved.</li> </ul>

## Accommodations for Scouts

In order to insure success for our Scouts with special needs, sometimes accommodations may be necessary to help assist with completion of a task. Some guiding principles are: not all Scouts with special needs require accommodations, ask parents for guidance as they may have ideas you haven't thought of, be respectful of the Scout's culture and ethnicity, and integrate accommodations into meetings and outings. Sometimes using an accommodation may require other actions. Using these accommodations will hopefully decrease frustration for the Scout, although it may not necessarily eliminate the frustration.

Use **Timing** accommodations WHEN:

The Scout requires more time to read text, write responses, use electronic devices or require assistance to stay on track. Accommodations: Allow more time to complete a task, change the time when subject is presented, or allow the Scout to complete the task in small time blocks.

Use **Scheduling** accommodations WHEN:

Coordination with the effects of medication needs to be considered or for Scouts who have a low frustration tolerance. Accommodation: Schedule task when medication is most effective, utilize active participation during times when the Scout is likely to move around, and provide frequent breaks.

Use **Setting** accommodations WHEN:

A Scout has difficulty focusing attention in a group setting, and other Scouts may be distracted by the accommodation. Accommodations: Personal assistance including supervision and cues, preferential seating, lighting and other environmental factors, and possibly a different location.

Use **Presentation** accommodations WHEN:

A Scout has specific sensory needs, difficulty reading or understanding assignments, or following directions. Accommodations: Change the group size, determine the rate of introduction of new skills, lecture, or demonstration. Teach prerequisite skills, provide visual/ auditory cues, or use BookShare or Braille. Adapt existing materials, provide additional resources, use games, simulate role-playing, or activity-based lessons.

Use **Response** accommodations WHEN:

There is a physical or sensory disability that limits the Scout's ability to respond, memorize, put things in sequence, orient direction, organize things, or other problems that may interfere with successful performance. Accommodations: Allow the Scout to record answers, respond orally, use assistive electronic devices (computer, communication device, etc), make projects instead of written papers, shorten assignments, reminder prompts, scribe answers, use adapted materials such as colored ropes, or use light weight equipment. Allow the Scout to point to answers or give multiple choices instead of giving open-ended responses.

## **Calming Strategies for Sensory Issues**

### **Things to put in their mouth:**

Chewing gum  
Eat gummy candy or sticky candy  
Chew aquarium tubing  
Chew coffee stir sticks or straws

### **Ways to Move:**

Squeeze squishy ball  
Squeeze hands tightly and release  
Hand fidgets  
Bracelet on arm or rubber band  
Pushing your thumb into the palms of both hands for 10 seconds  
Jumping on ground or trampoline  
Heavy work break (heavy ball, bungee cord, fitness tubing)

### **Avoid Distractions/Loud Noises:**

Earplugs or headphones, music to reduce noise, distractions  
Giving them a break- go to another area, chair, beanbag, walk  
Get a drink  
Take a deep breath  
Count backwards from 10  
Ask others to stop in a calm voice  
Positive self-talk  
Ask to speak to an adult  
Turn eyes away from the distraction  
Cool down zone to chill out, calm down, no one talks