

# Ability Awareness and Inclusion Patch

The Girl Scouts Ability Awareness and Inclusion patch is a reflection of our commitment to Girl Scout values to foster a community of justice, fairness, and inclusion. Girl Scouts prepares young people to be leaders in our world, to speak up, speak out, and take action for fairness, equality, civility, and compassion for all people; and to arm them with the courage, confidence, and character they need to make the world a better place.

A list of resources has been attached, with thorough information about multiple types of disabilities, as well as websites that can be used to educate oneself.



Girl Scouts can earn this patch by completing these activities.  
Patches are for sale in any Girl Scouts of WNY shop.

## Activities:

Below is a list of activities to complete this badge, divided into three sections: Discover, Connect, and Take Action. Please complete at least two from each section. Each section is divided into two subcategories: Awareness and Inclusion. Please complete one activity in each subcategory for each section.

## Discover

### Inclusion Discover Activities:

#### 1. Kindness Walk

- Walk in a group with your troop and make sure you look at, smile, and greet everyone you pass by. Saying hello to someone and being kind to them makes people feel happy and included.

#### 2. Strengths and Weaknesses.

- We are all unique and different in our own ways, everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. There are some things we do well, and there are other things we don't do as well as others.
- Make a list of your troop's strengths and weaknesses and discuss how each strength and weakness affects your troop.
- give every Girl Scout an index card. On one side have them write a personal strength, and the other side a weakness. Once finished, share and discuss as a troop.
- How did you feel discussing some of your strengths and weaknesses? Was it comforting to hear that other Girl Scouts had some of the same things on their lists?

#### 3. The Girl Scout Law: Its True Meaning

Recite the Girl Scout Law together.

- Talk about what inclusion means to you.
- Go over each line of the Law and discuss how it is applicable to inclusion. Focus on the last line of the Law and talk about what it really means to be a sister to fellow Girl Scouts.

### Awareness Discover Activities:

#### 1. *Person First Language*

- Complete the Person First Activity Worksheet.

#### 2. *Celebrity Trivia*

- Take the Celebrity Trivia Quiz located in the Resource Guide.
- After reviewing the answers, research the life and accomplishments of a famous person of your choice who has (or had) a disability.
- Share what you learned with the troop/group in your own creative way (for example, performing a monologue, using visual or audio aids, or reading fun facts).

### Connect

### Inclusion Connect Activities:

#### 1. *Spreading Positivity*

Write positive notes and affirmations on post-its and place them, at eye level, in areas around your school/troop location. This can include bathroom mirrors, water fountains, doors, windows, and walls. Make sure to write something kind and thoughtful that is applicable and inclusive of all people.

#### 2. *Make a Kindness paper chain*

Make a kindness paper chain by writing down kind words or deeds on each piece of paper. Loop the pieces of paper together and tape or staple them together to create a long paper chain of positive words. Hang this somewhere where your troop can always see it at meetings as a reminder to include and be kind to everyone.

### Awareness Connect Activities:

#### 1. *Sign Language*

- Review the American Sign Language alphabet hand out, and practice signing the alphabet letter by letter, while saying the letter out loud if you can do so. Talk about why some people may use ASL.

#### - Signing the Girl Scout Promise

- Complete the ASL alphabet activity above first.

#### Girl Scout Promise ASL

- Watch the YouTube video that details how to sign the Girl Scout Promise and Sign the Girl Scout Promise as a troop along with the video

## 2. Disability Quiz

Review the disability resource guide as a troop and complete the disability awareness quiz. Once everyone is finished, come together and discuss the answers as a troop.

### Take Action

#### Awareness Take Action Activity:

##### Barrier Free Building Survey and Letter

As a troop, or individually, complete the Barrier Free Building survey for the building that is hosting your Girl Scout troop meetings. Once completed, reconvene as a group and discuss the good and bad things you discovered after assessing the building.

After completing and discussing the results of the survey... Individually, or as a troop, write a one-page letter on what you think should be improved on the building and send it to the leader of the building. *This could be a good idea to take further as a higher award project*

#### Inclusion Take Action Activities:

##### Kindness Cards

Make thank you cards for people in your school, troop, and/or community who make you feel included. Write a sentence, or a letter, thanking this person for being a mentor to you. Be specific about how they made you feel included! And draw a picture on the front that shows what the thank you note says. Make sure to give your thank you card to the recipient.

## Celebrity Trivia

The famous people in this quiz all have something in common. Each one of them found a way to accommodate their disability and excelled in their profession.

- |                  |                       |                |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| a. Trevor Noah   | e. Stevie Wonder      | i. Carly Simon |
| b. Sofia Jirau   | f. Millie Bobby Brown | j. Cher        |
| c. Billie Eilish | g. Octavia Spencer    |                |
| d. Elton John    | h. Demi Lovato        |                |

1. This model was the first person with Down syndrome to be a Victoria Secret Angel.
2. This actor/comedian has a developmental disability called ADHD.
3. This singer started to sing because that was the only time stuttering wasn't a problem.
4. This singer/actor has struggled with a lifelong learning disability.
5. This singer has a visual impairment.
6. This singer experiences tics due to Tourette's syndrome.
7. This singer experiences seizures due to Epilepsy.
8. This Actor is hearing impaired and says that sometimes they can't hear the director yell "cut" while on set.
9. This actor/author published two books and has had many lead roles in movies despite having trouble reading due to dyslexia.
10. This singer/actor talks openly about experiencing mood instability due to bipolar disorder.

## Celebrity Trivia Answer Key

1. This model was the first person with Down syndrome to be a Victoria Secret Angel.  
(b) Sofia Jirau
2. This actor/comedian has a developmental disability called ADHD.  
(a) Trevor Noah
3. This singer started to sing because that was the only time stuttering wasn't a problem.  
(i) Carly Simon
4. This singer/actor has struggled with a lifelong learning disability.  
(j) Cher
5. This singer has a visual impairment.  
(e) Stevie Wonder
6. This singer experiences tics due to Tourette's syndrome.  
(C) Billie Eilish
7. This singer experiences seizures due to Epilepsy.  
(d) Elton John
8. This Actor is hearing impaired and says that sometimes they can't hear the director yell "cut" while on set.  
(f) Millie Bobby Brown
9. This actor/author published two books and has had many lead roles in movies despite having trouble reading due to dyslexia.  
(g) Octavia Spencer
10. This singer/actor talks openly about experiencing mood instability due to bipolar disorder.  
(h) Demi Lavato

Test your knowledge by taking the Disability Awareness Quiz  
Answer True or False

1. You can “catch” a disability from someone else. \_\_\_\_\_
2. People in wheelchairs cannot play sports. \_\_\_\_\_
3. People who talk slow or have a learning disability are not smart. \_\_\_\_\_
4. People with disabilities have the same feelings as people without disabilities. \_\_\_\_\_
5. People with disabilities cannot live by themselves. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Everyone who uses a wheelchair is unable to walk. \_\_\_\_\_
7. People that are blind or have visual impairments cannot read. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Athletes with disabilities cannot participate in the Olympics. \_\_\_\_\_
9. People who are deaf can still communicate. \_\_\_\_\_
10. People who are hard of hearing or deaf don’t like music. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Children with autism cannot communicate or understand. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Not all people with autism find eye contact difficult, but lots do. \_\_\_\_\_
13. People with visual impairments cannot do everyday tasks. \_\_\_\_\_

Disability Awareness Quiz answer key:

1. You can “catch” a disability from someone else.  
*False. A disability is not something that you can catch.*
2. People in wheelchairs cannot play sports.  
*False. Almost every sport you can think of has been adapted so that people in wheelchairs can play! From wheelchair basketball, to sled hockey, to rugby!*
3. People who talk slow or have a learning disability are not smart.  
*False. Just because somebody has problems vocalizing their thoughts or processing certain kinds of information does not mean that they are not smart.*
4. People with disabilities have the same feelings as people without disabilities.  
*True. Everyone has feelings.*
5. People with disabilities cannot live by themselves.  
*False. There are many people with disabilities who live independently. There are also many people that live by themselves but may have someone help them with more difficult tasks.*
6. Everyone who uses a wheelchair is unable to walk.  
*False. Many people are in wheelchairs because their legs are too weak to carry them long distances. They may walk for short distances or just for exercise, while some people who use wheelchairs are unable to walk.*
7. People who are blind, or have visual impairments, cannot read.  
*False. People with visual impairments can use brail as a way to read.*
8. Athletes with disabilities cannot play in the Olympics.  
*False. There are Special Olympics world games for people with intellectual disabilities. Paralympics is for people with physical disabilities. Both happen every four years like the Olympics.*

9. People who are deaf can still communicate.

*True. People who are deaf communicate by using Sign Language, and some can read lips.*

10. People who are hard of hearing or deaf don't like music.

*False. There are people who are hard of hearing or deaf that really like music. They can feel the vibrations that some of the instruments make to get a sense of the music's rhythm. And there is also a visual aspect to watching musicians as well.*

11. Children with autism cannot communicate or understand.

*False.*

12. Not all people with autism find eye contact difficult, but many do.

*True.*

13. People with visual impairments cannot do everyday tasks.

*False. They can do everyday tasks. They must make adjustments and modifications to help them perform them. They can use their other senses like touch to read Braille or hearing to listen for auditory clues. Some may also use mobility aids like a cane, or a guide dog.*

## Barrier Free Building Survey

Read and answer the following questions by circling yes or no, and filling out the table, as you assess the barriers of your building. Be sure to bring a tape measure!

### Parking

1. Is there an adequate number of parking spaces?  
Yes No

Total parking spots range	Total # of parking spots	Required accessible spots	Number of accessible spots observed
1 to 25		1	
26 to 50		2	
51 to 75		3	
76 to 100		4	

2. Is the parking close to the building?  
Yes No

### External ramp

3. Is it possible to reach the entrance without using steps?  
Yes  
No
4. Are there handrails on each side of the ramp to the building?  
Yes  
No

### Entrances and internal doors

5. Is there adequate free space on both sides of the doors (related to the type of approach, on both the pull and push sides)?  
Yes  
No
6. Are the door handles at a low enough height to reach and easy to grip?  
Yes  
No

### Corridors

7. Is there enough space for wheelchair maneuvering in the corridor/hallway?  
Yes  
No

8. Is there an absence of obstacles in the corridors/hallways?  
Yes  
No
9. Is there a guide strip along the corridor/hallway?  
Yes  
No
10. Is there an absence of steps and abrupt changes in level in the corridor/hallway?  
Yes  
No
11. Does the corridor/hallway have a firm, non-slipping and even floor surface?  
Yes  
No
12. Is the floor color contrasted with the wall color?  
Yes  
No

#### Elevators

13. Does each floor have adequate landing areas off of the elevator?  
Yes  
No
14. Are there both visual and a Braille indicator of the floor level adjacent to call buttons and opposite the elevator?  
Yes  
No
15. Is the opening of the elevator doors wide enough for a wheelchair?  
Yes  
No
16. Is the elevator car at least large enough to fit a wheelchair and standing people together?  
Yes  
No
17. Does the elevator control panel have embossed numbers, contrasted colors and Braille indicators?  
Yes  
No
18. Does the elevator have an audible and a visual signal at arrival of each floor?  
Yes  
No



### Stairs

19. Are the stairs wide enough for two people to walk comfortably?

Yes

No

20. Are there adequate landing areas between each flight of stairs?

Yes

No

21. Are the rising steps on the stairs no higher than  $\frac{1}{2}$  ft?

Yes

No

22. Do the stairs have extended, easy to grip, and continuous handrails on both sides of the stairs with an appropriate height?

Yes

No

### Toilets

23. Does the stall door open outwards?

Yes

No

## Person First Language Activity

What is person first language?

Person first language of (PFP) is a positive and respectful way to refer to people with disabilities. Person First Language puts a person before their disability, describing what a person has, not who a person is.

Overview:

It is important to be aware of what we are saying and how we say things, to make people feel included and important. Many times, a phrase or term can be demeaning, even if that was not the speaker's intent. Person First Language is a great start to make others feel included and empowered.

Remember:

**Word Order:** When referring to a person with a disability, the person comes first, their disability comes after.

**Terminology:** as terminology evolves, we must make sure we are educated on what is appropriate to say. [USE THE RESOURCE LINK TO STAY UPDATED ON WHAT IS THE CORRECT TERMONOLOGY](#)

**Using Positive or neutral descriptions:** Speakers should avoid language that equates a person with a disability with negative connotations. Instead, keeping our language positive or neutral.

Don't Say	Do Say!
The disabled person	A person who has a disability
A learning-disabled student	A student with a learning disability
A person who suffers from cerebral palsy	A person who has cerebral palsy
IEP kids	Students who receive Individualized Education Plans
A person confined to a wheelchair	A person who uses a wheelchair

*For Your Information:*

*Not everyone agrees with these terminology choices, and terminology will continue to change. But it is good to practice using person first language as a default to avoid offending or upsetting your students, peers, friends, and family members.*

*Person First Language does not apply to autism.*

Activity:

1. Determine which of the items below are acceptable and which are not.
  - Students with disabilities
  - Wheelchair users
  - A hearing-impaired infant
  - Crippled students
  - A student with a speech impairment
  - A developmentally delayed toddler
  - A student with ADHD
  - A mentally deficient child
  - The deaf person
  - An epileptic
  - A child with a visual impairment
2. Conduct a search of news stories about individuals with disabilities in a variety of formats (newspaper, magazine, Internet). Note the use of appropriate and inappropriate terminology
3. **Discussion Questions:** read through the discussion questions and discuss your answers as a group.
  - a. In your search of news stories, what did you discover? Were you surprised by any of your findings? Explain.
  - b. Imagine that you overhear one of your peers using an inappropriate term to refer to another student who has a disability. How would you respond and why?
  - c. Reflect on your own day-to-day use of accessibility and inclusive terminology. Does your current behavior reflect your belief in people-first philosophy? If not, what needs to change?

## American Sign Language Activity

What is American Sign Language (ASL)?

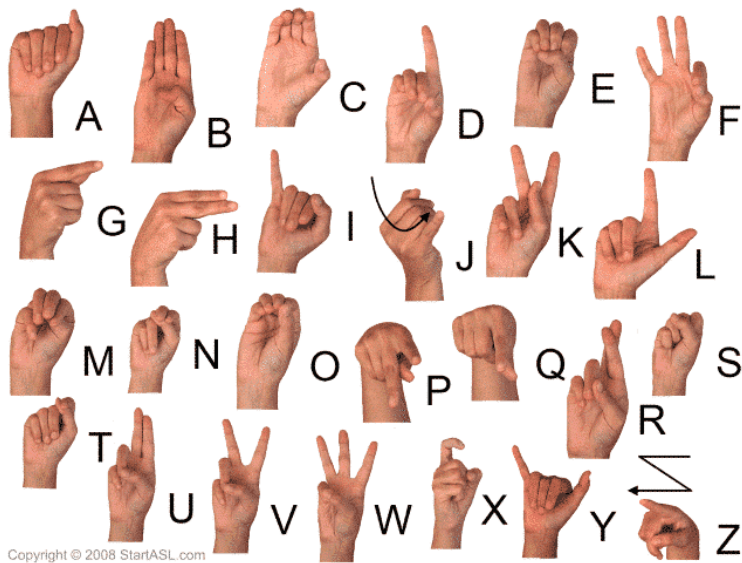
American sign language is a natural language used by most of the deaf and hard of hearing community in the United States and is used by some hearing people as well. ASL is communicated by movements of the hands, arms, and face.

Activity:

Watch the video below. Follow along practicing the letters. Try Reciting the American Alphabet in Sign Language!

[Learn ASL Alphabet Video](#)





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## Resources

### Types of disabilities:

Visually impaired or blind people experience some degree of vision loss, whether that be loss of color vision, partial loss of vision, or total loss of vision. This is a spectrum of blindness. Some people can't see color, or see everything very blurry, or only see a little bit of a big picture, or many more.

Blind people may use mobility aids like a walking cane or a seeing eye dog, to help them move around.

Physical disabilities include a range of physical disabilities and neuron-muscular disabilities that affect someone's ability to use their motor functions.

Physical disabilities include paraplegic and quadriplegic: the inability to access two limbs, inability to access all 4 disabilities.

### Developmental Disabilities

Autism spectrum disorder: a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. Some people with autism have a known difference, such as a genetic condition. Other causes are not known yet. Scientists believe there are multiple causes of autism that act together to change the ways people's brains develop.

Children with autism look like other kids, but if you met them, you would find they are different in some ways. It may be hard for them to play, to make friends, or to learn new things. Some may have trouble talking or understanding what people say. Some may talk a lot about a favorite topic. But, just like you, children with autism are very special in many ways. They have families who love them very much, they go to school, and they have special interests.

ADHD: stands for attention deficit hyperactive disorder. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. People with ADHD experience an ongoing pattern of the following types of symptoms:

ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopment disorders.

Learning disabilities: A learning disability is a neurological condition that interferes with an individual's ability to store, process, or produce information. Learning disabilities can affect one's ability to read, write, speak, spell, compute math, reason and also affect an individual's attention, memory, coordination, social skills and emotional maturity.

Approximately 1 in 5 people in the United States have a learning disability. Nearly 4 million children (6- 21) have some form of learning disability.

Dyslexia: A person has trouble interpreting nonverbal cues like facial expressions or body language and may have poor coordination. The severity of this specific learning disability can differ in each individual but can affect reading fluency, decoding, reading comprehension,

recall, writing, 4 Celebrating Our Differences – Patch Program spelling, and sometimes speech and can exist along with other related disorders. Dyslexia is sometimes referred to as a Language-Based Learning Disability.

#### Signs and symptoms:

- Reads slowly and painfully
- Experiences decoding errors, especially with the order of letters
- Shows wide disparity between listening comprehension and reading comprehension of some text
- Has trouble with spelling
- May have difficulty with handwriting
- Exhibits difficulty recalling known words
- Has difficulty with written language
- May have trouble with math computations
- Decoding real words is better than nonsense words
- Substitutes one small sight word for another: a, I, he, the, there, was

**Dysgraphia:** A specific learning disability that affects a person's handwriting ability and fine motor skills. A person with this specific learning disability may have problems including illegible handwriting, inconsistent spacing, poor spatial planning on paper, poor spelling, and difficulty composing writing as well as thinking and writing at the same time.

**Dyscalculia:** A specific learning disability that affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts. Individuals with this type of LD may also have poor comprehension of math symbols, may struggle with memorizing and organizing numbers, have difficulty telling time, or have trouble with counting.

#### Genetic Disabilities

Some disabilities arise due to someone's genetics, or their DNA.

Down syndrome is an example of a genetic condition that causes someone to be mentally disabled. It causes people to have an extra chromosome. People with Down syndrome usually have low muscle tone, a single deep crease across the palm of the hand, a slightly flattened facial profile, and an upward slant to the eyes. People with Down syndrome are smart, funny, creative, and have full access to a range of feelings.

#### Hearing

People who are deaf, partially deaf, or hearing-impaired experience hearing loss on a scale from minimal hearing loss to full loss of hearing.

Deaf people can communicate by American Sign Language, and some can speak audibly and read lips.

#### Mental disabilities

Mental disabilities often affect the brain chemistry and neural pathways in one's brain. This affects how someone thinks and behaves.

Examples of this include obsessive compulsive disorder: which causes onset unwanted thoughts and obsessions, as well as repeated behavior.

Schizophrenia is a mental disability that causes hallucinations. People with schizophrenia often report hearing voices and seeing faces that are not there.

Bipolar is a mental disability that causes intense mood swings that include very high highs, intense excitement and happiness, and very low lows of deep sadness and loneliness.

Anxiety causes someone to be overly nervous. Depression causes episodes of deep sadness. These two disabilities often go hand in hand.

### Person first language:

Everybody has personal characteristics and we're alike and different, but the words we use to describe ourselves and others say a great deal about who we are and what we believe. We should be known not for our limitations, but for our accomplishments and abilities, which is what Person First Language is all about!

Important etiquette to keep in mind when talking about and/or getting to know someone with a disability:

- Don't label people with disabilities as a large group "the disabled." A better way to refer to such a large group is to say, "people with disabilities."
- Speak about the person first, then, if necessary, the person's disability. A disability only needs to be mentioned if the person needs accommodation or consideration.
- Emphasize a person's abilities, not disabilities (ex. If asked about Katie, describe her as enthusiastic and smart, not as an autistic person).
- Get to know the whole person, not just their disability.
- Always let a person with a disability speak for herself or himself. If a Girl Scout is not able to speak for herself, either they or their personal assistant will let you know that. If you want to know about her disability, ask her, not the person standing next to her! And if she doesn't want to talk about her disability, honor her wish and don't keep asking.

Learn more here:

[Rochester Accessible Adventures](#)

[Western New York Developmental Disabilities State Operations and Offices](#)

[Office For People With Disabilities - Erie County](#)

[The Arc Monroe New York](#)

[Support Services for Youth in Transition: Youth With Disabilities](#)

[youth.gov -- Disabilities](#)

[Respectful Language Around Disability](#)