

Focus On Ability Patch Program

OBJECTIVE:

The Focus on Ability patch is designed to develop an awareness and sensitivity to the barriers that people with disabilities experience on a daily basis.

TO EARN THIS PATCH:

Brownie Girl Scouts should complete at least one activity from each section. Junior Girl Scouts should complete at least two activities from the Discover and Connect sections and one activity from the Take Action Section. Girls 11-17 should complete at least three activities from the Discover and Connect sections and two activities from the Take Action section.

**PATCH
COMING
SOON!**



DISCOVER:

- ❖ Describe people with different disabilities (blind, paralyzed, deaf, mentally disabled, slow learner, cerebral palsy, etc.), and keep a list of your responses. As a group or with an advisor, discuss the list. Talk about why hurtful names, stereotypes, uncertainties and misinformation can hurt people with different abilities.
- ❖ Wrap up a "pretty" package and an "ugly" package. Discuss which one you would prefer to have and why. Talk about why we judge things by their physical appearances.
- ❖ Talk about health disabilities such as diabetes, asthma, allergies and epilepsy. How would having one of these health problems make participating in everyday activities different?
- ❖ Create a list of ways to make all people feel special, regardless of different abilities (smiles, being friends, listening, helping when needed, etc.).
- ❖ In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law. Read the ADA (or ask your troop leader to read it aloud) and discuss it. How does the law protect people with disabilities? How could people with disabilities be discriminated against if the law did not exist?

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CONNECT:

- ❖ Work in pairs and take turns talking to one another with a mouthful of marshmallows. Can you understand what your partner is saying? Is it difficult to communicate with her? Talk about how difficult it would be if you could not communicate well or for those who could not understand you.
- ❖ Try moving around the room blindfolded with a friend guiding you. Try walking through doorways, sitting down or walking up stairs (carefully!). How did you use your other senses to move around the room? How was your partner able to help you? What daily tasks do you think would be most difficult if you could not see well or not at all?
- ❖ Take an unfair spelling test with a taped voice calling out the words. Have the voice muffled, fading in and out or speaking regularly. How did you do on the test each time? Discuss how school might be challenging if you had a hearing loss.
- ❖ Try to move from one size chair to another without using your hands. Now try it again without letting your feet touch the floor. What other activities would be difficult if you did not have arms or legs? What activities could you still do on your own?
- ❖ Many children who are hearing impaired learn to communicate using American Sign Language and lip reading. Learn to spell your own name in sign language. Try to "say" the Pledge of Allegiance in sign language. How did you do? Now practice lip reading. Have a friend say something by moving her mouth but not making any noise. Can you tell what she's saying?
- ❖ Some people with disabilities have difficulty using their hands. With a partner, wrap three of your fingers on each hand in masking tape, taping the fingers together. Now try to do some simple daily tasks. Try coloring, eating a snack, tying your shoes, playing catch with a beanbag, writing your name or locking the door. How did you do? What can you do to help people who have difficulty using their hands?
- ❖ Draw a floor plan or picture of a school that would truly be handicap-accessible for people of all abilities. What would the cafeteria and playground look like?

TAKE ACTION:

- ❖ Learn a song in sign language. Perform and sing it for your friends, class, at the library or for another group.
- ❖ Create a display or presentation about a historical figure or famous person who has lived with a disability. How did his or her disability make success more challenging? What tools and skills did he or she use to overcome the disability? Share your display at the council, your local library or with a younger Girl Scout troop.
- ❖ Spend a day volunteering with an organization that serves disabled children in your area.

If you enjoyed working on this patch, you may also be interested in the following badges:

- Caring & Sharing Try-It
- Citizen Near & Far Try-It
- Celebrating People badge
- Communication badge
- Understanding Yourself & Others IP

