

# MERIT BADGE SERIES



# DISABILITIES AWARENESS



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®



## How to Use This Pamphlet

The secret to successfully earning a merit badge is for you to use both the pamphlet and the suggestions of your counselor.

Your counselor can be as important to you as a coach is to an athlete. Use all of the resources your counselor can make available to you. This may be the best chance you will have to learn about this particular subject. Make it count.

If you or your counselor feels that any information in this pamphlet is incorrect, please let us know. Please state your source of information.

Merit badge pamphlets are reprinted annually and requirements updated regularly. Your suggestions for improvement are welcome.

## Who Pays for This Pamphlet?

This merit badge pamphlet is one in a series of more than 100 covering all kinds of hobby and career subjects. It is made available for you to buy as a service of the national and local councils, Boy Scouts of America. The costs of the development, writing, and editing of the merit badge pamphlets are paid for by the Boy Scouts of America in order to bring you the best book at a reasonable price.

Send comments along with a brief statement about yourself to  
Pilots and Program Development, S272  
Boy Scouts of America • 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane • Irving, TX 75038  
If you prefer, you may send your comments to [merit.badge@Scouting.org](mailto:merit.badge@Scouting.org).



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- Interactive question and answer quizzes
- Slide shows
- Career biographies and videos

For a current list of interactive digital merit badge pamphlets, go to [www.boyslife.org/meritbadges](http://www.boyslife.org/meritbadges). (Be sure you have your parent's permission before you download or purchase anything online.)



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
MERIT BADGE SERIES

# DISABILITIES AWARENESS



*"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"*



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

# Requirements

1. Do the following:
  - a. Define and discuss with your counselor the following disabilities awareness terms: disability, accessibility, adaptation, accommodation, invisible disability, and person-first language.
  - b. Explain why proper disability etiquette is important, and how it may differ depending on the specific disability.
2. Visit an agency that works with people with physical, mental, emotional, or educational disabilities. Collect and read information about the agency's activities. Learn about opportunities its members have for training, employment, and education. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
3. Do TWO of the following:
  - a. Talk with a Scout who has a disability and learn about his experiences taking part in Scouting activities and earning different merit badges. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
  - b. Talk with an individual who has a disability and learn about this person's experiences and the activities in which this person likes to participate. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
  - c. Learn how people with disabilities take part in a particular adaptive sport or recreational activity. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
  - d. Learn about independent living aids such as service animals, canes, and augmentative communication devices such as captioned telephones and videophones. Discuss with your counselor how people use such aids.

- e. Plan or participate in an activity that helps others understand what a person with a visible or invisible disability experiences. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor.

4. Do EITHER option A or option B:

**Option A.** Visit TWO of the following locations and take notes about the accessibility to people with disabilities. In your notes, give examples of five things that could be done to improve upon the site and five things about the site that make it friendly to people with disabilities. Discuss your observations with your counselor.

- Your school
- Your place of worship
- A Scouting event or campsite
- A public exhibit or attraction (such as a theater, museum, or park)

**Option B.** Visit TWO of the following locations and take notes while observing features and methods that are used to accommodate people with invisible disabilities. While there, ask staff members to explain any accommodation features that may not be obvious. Note anything you think could be done to better accommodate people who have invisible disabilities. Discuss your observations with your counselor.

- Your school
- Your place of worship
- A Scouting event or campsite
- A public exhibit or attraction (such as a theater, museum, or park)

5. Explain what advocacy is. Do ONE of the following advocacy activities:

- a. Present a counselor-approved disabilities awareness program to a Cub Scout pack or other group. During your presentation, explain and use person-first language.
- b. Find out about disabilities awareness education programs in your school or school system, or contact a disability advocacy agency. Volunteer with a program or agency for eight hours.

- c. Using resources such as disability advocacy agencies, government agencies, the internet (with your parent's permission), and news magazines, learn about myths and misconceptions that influence the general public's understanding of people with disabilities. List 10 myths and misconceptions about people with disabilities and learn the facts about each myth. Share your list with your counselor, then use it to make a presentation to a Cub Scout pack or other group.
6. Make a commitment to your merit badge counselor describing what you will do to show a positive attitude about people with disabilities and to encourage positive attitudes among others. Discuss how your awareness has changed as a result of what you have learned.
7. Name five professions that provide services to people with disabilities. Pick one that interests you and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss what you learn with your counselor, and tell why this profession interests you.



# Disabilities Awareness Resources

## Scouting Literature

*Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Athletics, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Digital Technology, Engineering, First Aid, Inventing, Medicine, Public Speaking, Robotics, Signs, Signals, and Codes*, and *Sports* merit badge pamphlets; *Guide to Safe Scouting*, No. 34416; and *Guide to Advancement*, No. 33088 (section 10.0.0.0)

Visit the Boy Scouts of America's official retail website at <http://www.scoutstuff.org> for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

*Boys' Life* magazine in Braille. National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington DC.  
Toll-free telephone: 800-424-8567

Recordings of the *Boy Scout Handbook* and various merit badge pamphlets. Learning Ally.  
Toll-free telephone: 800-221-4792

*Boy Scout Handbook* in large print. Pilots and Program Development, Boy Scouts of America.  
Send requests via email to [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org).

The following materials are available at [www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx):

- Scouting With Special Needs and Disabilities, an information sheet
- Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities, No. 510-071
- *Scouting for Youth With Disabilities Manual*, No. 34059
- Individual Scout Advancement Plan, No. 512-936
- *Abilities Digest* newsletter

For more information, email [Disabilities.Awareness@scouting.org](mailto:Disabilities.Awareness@scouting.org).

Resources for bullying prevention are available at <http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/bullying.aspx>.

## Books

### Fiction

Many of these novels are classics available in several editions and formats including audio and large print.

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*. HarperCollins, 2010. A lonely boy in a wheelchair misbehaves until his orphaned cousin moves in. A locked garden brings them closer as they transform the garden and themselves.

Byars, Betsy. *The Summer of the Swans*. Puffin Books, 2004. A teenager gains new insight into herself and her family when her brother with cognitive disabilities goes missing.

De Angeli, Marguerite. *The Door in the Wall*. Yearling Books, 1998. In 14th-century England, a boy with physical disabilities proves his courage.

Dorris, Michael. *Sees Behind Trees*. Disney-Hyperion, 1999. An American Indian boy with a special gift to “see” beyond his limited eyesight journeys with an old warrior to a land of mystery and beauty.

Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind*. Atheneum Books, 2012. When a girl with cerebral palsy who cannot walk or talk is given a device that lets her “speak,” she surprises everyone around her.

Flegg, Aubrey. *The Cinnamon Tree*. O’Brien Press, 2000. When a land mine explodes beneath her, Yola Abonda must learn to walk again after the amputation of her leg.

Hoopmann, Kathy. *Blue Bottle Mystery: An Asperger Adventure*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006. A boy with Asperger’s syndrome and his friend travel an exciting fantasy adventure when they discover an old bottle.

Janover, Caroline. *How Many Days Until Tomorrow?* Woodbine House, 2000. A boy with dyslexia spends an island summer with his grandparents, developing strengths and discovering new talents.

Konigsburg, E.L. *The View from Saturday*. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1998. Four unique students attract the attention of their paraplegic teacher, who chooses them to represent their class in the Academic Bowl.

Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. Scholastic Press, 2008. A sister helps her brother with autism understand how to live in a world that does not always have compassion.

Martin, Ann M. *A Corner of the Universe*. Scholastic, 2004. After a school for people with developmental disabilities closes, a family must deal with a child-like young man whose existence they have denied for years.

Mikaelsen, Ben. *Petey*. Hyperion Books, 2010. A man with cerebral palsy is misdiagnosed and institutionalized. Sixty years later, he befriends a boy and shares with him the joy of life.

Philbrick, Rodman. *Freak the Mighty*. Scholastic Paperbacks, 2001. Two boys unite to become a powerful team, using their unique, differently abled talents as their strengths.



Polacco, Patricia. *The Junkyard Wonder*. Philomel Books, 2010. A teacher inspires her class of students with special needs to greater heights, and discovers hidden genius.

Taylor, Theodore. *The Cay*. Yearling Books, 2003. During World War II, an adolescent boy, blinded by a blow on the head, and an old man are stranded on a tiny island where the boy gains a new kind of vision.

Winkler, Henry. *Niagara Falls, or Does It?* Turtleback Books, 2003. In a series inspired by the author's own experiences with undiagnosed dyslexia, a fourth-grader decides to "show" how he spent his summer instead of writing the usual essay.

## Nonfiction

Abramovitz, Melissa. *Multiple Sclerosis*. Lucent Books, 2010. Offers insights into the neurological disease known as MS, what causes it, and how people live with it.

Corman, Richard. *I Am Proud: The Athletes of Special Olympics*. Barnes & Noble Books, 2003. Portrays athletes' dignity, grace, and joy in competition.

Dougherty, Terri. *Epilepsy*. Lucent Books, 2009. Explains types of seizures and their triggers, and provides a historical perspective on treatments.

Flodin, Mickey. *Signing for Kids: The Fun Way for Anyone to Learn American Sign Language*. Perigee Books, 2007. An introduction to the expressive language used by many deaf people to speak with their hands.

Floyd, Ingrid. *Opening the Gate: Stories and Activities About Athletes With Disabilities*. CreateSpace, 2013. An introduction to the world of wheelchairs and prosthetics, with outstanding athletes recounting the experiences that helped them participate effectively in sports and led them to the top of their athletic careers.

Freedman, Russell. *Out of Darkness: The Story of Louis Braille*. Clarion Books, 1999. A biography of the 19th-century Frenchman who developed a system of raised dots on paper that enabled others who are blind to read and write.

Kent, Deborah, and Kathryn A. Quinlan. *Extraordinary People With Disabilities*. Children's Press, 1997. A collection of biographies of 48 famous people who made great accomplishments despite their disability.

Kling, Andrew A. *Cerebral Palsy*. Lucent Books, 2012. Discusses the incurable disorder that strikes about two in 1,000 infants yearly in the United States.

Krueger, Tira. *Taking Tourette Syndrome to School*. JayJo Books, 2002. Portrays Tourette syndrome from the point of view of a child who has the condition.

Lauren, Jill. *That's Like Me! Stories About Amazing People With Learning Differences*. Star Bright Books, 2009. Stories of 16 adults and young people who overcome by focusing on their strengths instead of their learning disabilities.

Meyer, Donald, ed. *Views From Our Shoes: Growing Up With a Brother or Sister With Special Needs*. Woodbine House, 1997. Children ages 4 to 18 share their experiences of having a sibling with a disability.

Naff, Clayton Farris, ed. *Muscular Dystrophy*. Greenhaven Press, 2011. Explains the causes and treatments of muscular dystrophy.

Oleksy, Walter G. *Christopher Reeve*. Greenhaven Press, 1999. Discusses the life-altering accident of the actor known for his role as Superman and for his efforts on behalf of people with spinal cord injuries.

Paquette, Penny Hutchins, and Cheryl Gerson Tuttle. *Learning Disabilities: The Ultimate Teen Guide*. Scarecrow Press, 2006. Gives teenagers dealing with learning disabilities tools for coping with the obstacles they face.

Rogers, Dale Evans. *Angel Unaware*. Revell, 2007. The story of a child with Down syndrome born to celebrities Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.

Stern, Judith, and Uzi Ben-Ami. *Many Ways to Learn: A Kid's Guide to LD*. Magination Press, 2010. Describes different learning disabilities and the many things children with LD can do to reach their goals.

Verdick, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth Reeve. *The Survival Guide for Kids With Autism Spectrum Disorder (and Their Parents)*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2012. Helps young people with autism spectrum disorders understand their condition.

Vujicic, Nick. *Life Without Limits*. Crown Publishing, 2010. Portrays a man born without arms or legs who lives a rich, fulfilling, independent life as an internationally successful motivational speaker.

Warner, Penny. *Learn to Sign the Fun Way!* Three Rivers Press, 2001. Provides games and other activities that help the reader learn to sign.

Weihenmayer, Erik. *Touch the Top of the World: A Blind Man's Journey to Climb Farther Than the Eye Can See*. Plume Books, 2002. An adventure-packed memoir in which the author recalls becoming blind, acquiring a passion for mountain climbing, and succeeding in climbing Mount Everest.

Williams, Donna. *Nobody Nowhere: The Remarkable Autobiography of an Autistic Girl*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004. Takes readers into the mind of a person who has autism, giving an insider's view of a little-understood condition.

Woodyard, Shawn, and others. *Resources for People With Disabilities: A National Directory, 2nd ed.* Ferguson Publishing, 2001. Provides information about advocacy, assistive technology, organizations and associations, rehabilitations, state programs, and more.

## Organizations and Websites

In addition to those listed here, many local and regional organizations support people with disabilities. Internet searches (with your parent's permission) will help you find them.

### **AbleData**

103 W. Broad St., Suite 400  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
Toll-free telephone: 800-227-0216  
Website: <http://www.abledata.com>

### **American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**

9700 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Suite 200  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
Toll-free telephone: 877-227-6799  
Website: <http://www.aapmr.org>

### **American Association of People With Disabilities**

2013 H St. NW, Fifth Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
Toll-free telephone: 800-840-8844  
Website: <http://www.aapd.com>

### **American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

501 Third St. NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20001  
Telephone: 202-387-1968  
Website: <http://aaidd.org>

### **American Council of the Blind**

1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 420  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Toll-free telephone: 800-424-8666  
Website: <http://acb.org>

### **American Foundation for the Blind**

2 Penn Plaza, Suite 1102  
New York, NY 10121  
Telephone: 212-502-7600  
Website: <http://afb.org>

### **American Printing House for the Blind Inc.**

1839 Frankfort Ave.  
P.O. Box 6085  
Louisville, KY 40206-0085  
Toll-free telephone: 800-223-1839  
Website: <http://www.aph.org>

### **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association**

2200 Research Blvd.  
Rockville, MD 20850-3289  
Toll-free telephone: 800-638-8255  
Website: <http://www.asha.org>

### **The Arc**

1825 K St. NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20006  
Toll-free telephone: 800-433-5255  
Website: <http://www.thearc.org>

### **Attention Deficit Disorder Association**

P.O. Box 7557  
Wilmington, DE 19803-9997  
Toll-free telephone: 800-939-1019  
Website: <http://www.add.org>

### **Autism Empowerment**

P.O. Box 871676  
Vancouver, WA 98687  
Telephone: 360-852-8369  
Website:  
<http://www.autismempowerment.org>

### **Autism Society**

4340 East-West Highway, Suite 350  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Toll-free telephone: 800-328-8476  
Website: <http://www.autism-society.org>

### **Autism Speaks**

1 E. 33rd St., Fourth Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
Telephone: 212-252-8584  
Website: <http://www.autismspeaks.org>

**BlazeSports America**

1670 Oakbrook Drive, Suite 331  
Norcross, GA 30093  
Telephone: 404-270-2000  
Website: <http://blazesports.org>

**Bookshare**

Website: <http://www.bookshare.org>

**Brain Injury Association of America**

1608 Spring Hill Road, Suite 110  
Vienna, VA 22182  
Telephone: 703-761-0750  
Website: <http://www.biausa.org>

**Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder National Resource Center on ADHD**

4601 Presidents Drive, Suite 300  
Lanham, MD 20706  
Toll-free telephone: 800-233-4050  
Website: <http://www.chadd.org>

**Disability.gov**

Website: <http://www.disability.gov>

**Disability Is Natural**

P.O. Box 39076  
San Antonio, TX 78218  
Telephone: 210-320-0678  
Website:  
<http://www.disabilityisnatural.com>

**Disabled American Veterans**

3725 Alexandria Pike  
Cold Spring, KY 41076  
Toll-free telephone: 877-426-2838  
Website: <http://www.dav.org>

**Disabled Sports USA**

451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 100  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Telephone: 301-217-0960  
Website:  
<http://www.disabledsportsusa.org>

**Easter Seals**

233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 2400  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Toll-free telephone: 800-221-6827  
Website: <http://www.easterseals.com>

**Goodwill Industries International Inc.**

15810 Indianola Drive  
Rockville, MD 20855  
Toll-free telephone: 800-466-3945  
Website: <http://www.goodwill.org>

**Guide Dogs for the Blind**

P.O. Box 151200  
San Rafael, CA 94915-1200  
Toll-free telephone: 800-295-4050  
Website: <http://www.guidedogs.com>

**Helping Hands**

541 Cambridge St.  
Boston, MA 02134  
Telephone: 617-787-4419  
Website: <http://monkeyhelpers.org/>

**International Dyslexia Association**

40 York Road, Fourth Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21204  
Telephone: 410-296-0232  
Website: <http://www.interdys.org>

**Learning Disabilities Association of America**

4156 Library Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1349  
Telephone: 412-341-1515  
Website: <http://ldanatl.org>

**Mental Health America**

2000 N. Beauregard St., Sixth Floor  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
Toll-free telephone: 800-969-6642  
Website: <http://mentalhealthamerica.net>

**Muscular Dystrophy Association USA**

222 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1500  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Toll-free telephone: 800-572-1717  
Website: <http://www.mda.org>

**National Association of the Deaf**

8630 Fenton St., Suite 820  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3819  
Telephone: 301-587-1788  
Website: <http://www.nad.org>

**National Center for Learning Disabilities**

32 Laight St., Second Floor  
New York, NY 10013  
Toll-free telephone: 888-575-7373  
Website: <http://www.nclcd.org>

**National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability**

4000 Ridgeway Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
Toll-free telephone: 800-900-8086  
Website: <http://www.nchpad.org>

**National Down Syndrome Congress**

30 Mansell Court, Suite 108  
Roswell, GA 30076  
Telephone: 800-232-6372  
Website: <http://ndscenter.org>

**National Down Syndrome Society**

666 Broadway, Eighth Floor  
New York, NY 10012  
Toll-free telephone: 800-221-4602  
Website: <http://www.ndss.org>

**National Federation of the Blind**

200 E. Wells St. at Jernigan Place  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
Telephone: 410-659-9314  
Website: <http://nfb.org>

**National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped**

1291 Taylor St. NW  
Washington, DC 20542  
Toll-free telephone: 800-424-8567  
Website: <http://www.loc.gov/nls>

**National Multiple Sclerosis Society**

P.O. Box 4527  
New York, NY 10163  
Toll-free telephone: 800-344-4867  
Website:  
<http://www.nationalmssociety.org>

**National Organization on Disability**

77 Water St., Suite 204  
New York, NY 10005  
Telephone: 646-505-1191  
Website: <http://www.nod.org>

**National Rehabilitation Information Center**

8400 Corporate Drive, Suite 500  
Landover, MD 20785  
Toll-free telephone: 800-346-2742  
Website: <http://www.naric.com>

**Special Olympics International**

1133 19th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20036-3604  
Toll-free telephone: 800-700-8585  
Website: <http://specialolympics.org>

**TASH**

(Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities)  
2013 H St. NW, Suite 404  
Washington, DC 20006  
Telephone: 202-540-9020  
Website: <http://tash.org>

**Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)**

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th St. SW  
Washington, DC 20554  
Toll-free telephone: 888-225-5322  
Website:  
<http://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs>

**United Cerebral Palsy**

1825 K St. NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20006  
Toll-free telephone: 800-872-5827  
Website: <http://ucp.org>

**United States Association of Blind Athletes**

1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
Telephone: 719-866-3224  
Website: <http://usaba.org>

**USA Deaf Sports Federation**

P.O. Box 2011  
Santa Fe, NM 87502  
Website: <http://www.usdeafsports.org>

**U.S. Paralympics**

1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5760  
Telephone: 719-866-2030  
Website: <http://www.teamusa.org/US-Paralympics>

**Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA**

P.O. Box 621023  
Littleton, CO 80162  
Telephone: 720-412-7979  
Website:  
<http://www.adaptivesportsusa.org>

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