

Autism Ribbon

Girl Scouts for All Appreciation Series Patch Program Ribbon 3

Purpose: To increase knowledge and understanding of people who live with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies must complete two activities.
- Girl Scout Juniors must complete three activities.
- Girl Scout Cadettes must complete four activities.
- Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors must complete five activities.

1. Create Sensory Bins

A scout sensory bin is a portable bin or container that you can use to store small sensory items that can be used at unit meetings or field trips for calming and self-regulation. Think of it as a First Aid Kit for sensory challenges. Here are some of the items that you should consider having in each bin:

- Noise Reducing Headphones – These are to help with loud or high pitched noises. They don't block hearing completely but reduce it. This should be the first thing that goes into the bin since this is one of most common sensory issues that occurs when on outings and at camp.
- Ear Plugs are more cost effective and less noticeable but

they do have some drawbacks including they can only be used one time and some may not like the feel of them and this could cause a different sensory issue. They are soft squishy foam.

- Sunglasses or Eye Protection – Another very common sensory issue is light. If this is an issue for the scout they may already have a pair of sunglasses or something to reduce the light. Some individuals wear tinted lenses or Irlen® lenses to help them with visual processing. Have a few inexpensive pair of sunglasses on hand. Hats also help with the light.
- Surgical Mask – The best solution for olfactory (smell) issues is to move away from the smells. That isn't always possible but bad or strong smells can bring on headaches, nausea and lead to sensory meltdowns. When pinching one's nose and covering one's mouth isn't practical, a small surgical mask can help.
- Fidget or stress ball – Having these on hand for scouts that have sensory or attention issues are very helpful because if they have something in their



hands, many times it helps to stay focused.

- Swivel Disc – This can be a bit more of an expense but can be well worth it for those scouts that are doing a great deal of work seated. Swivel discs are used to strengthen the body's core while promoting balance and flexibility. They are commonly used for youth who have attention and dexterity challenges.
- Visual Timer Clock – TimeTimer™ brand of clock (pictured above) is used in many elementary school classrooms so children may already be familiar with it. Use this in conjunction with a picture schedule or meeting agenda. A timer clock will not only help out those on the

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*Special thanks to Autism Empowerment for their "Autism and Scouting Leadership Training Kit".

autism spectrum but will help all of the scouts. It also helps a leader stay on track. There are also timer clocks that look like watches.

- Paper, pens, pencils and crayons – Drawing and coloring can be very calming, especially if one is drawing their favorite item. Also have spare paper on hand for producing visual social scenarios.
- Books and magazines – Get old magazines, coloring books or books and keep them in the bin and if the scout needs to take a sensory break, they can go to the place that is designated as a sensory area and read

2. Create a visual support

A visual support refers to using a picture or other visual item to help communicate with a child who has difficulty understanding or using language. Examples of visual supports include photographs, drawings, objects, written words or lists. This could be useful for explaining a new activity, safety rules, and complicated processes. For example, a chart may be useful.

A free four-page Visual Supports and Autism Spectrum Tool Kit can be downloaded from Autism Speaks: http://www.autismspeaks.org/docs/sciencedocs/atn/visual_supports.pdf

3. Turn on several sounds (music or other noises) very loud. Simultaneously have someone turn the lights on and off constantly. Try to accomplish a school assignment.

4. Try to tie your shoelaces while wearing very heavy winter gloves.

5. Think how you would feel if when you walked out the door you were worried about all these things at once: the stairs falling in, something falling from an airplane, your neighbor yelling at you, tripping over the dog, the bus being late, and whether the person who you always sit next to on the bus will be sick.