Volunteer Essentials
2016/2017

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Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

We know you’re busy and need to be efficient with your time. For that reason, this Quick-Start Guide to Volunteer Essentials gives you the nitty-gritty—what you need to know now, as you plan for your first meeting with girls. We encourage you to read through these tips as soon as you can, and then feel free to put down this handbook for now.

The rest of Volunteer Essentials is a reference for you to use only as needed. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you’ll find your answer. Think of Volunteer Essentials as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering: it’s here when you need it, but there’s no need to read it all today.

Ready to get started? Then read the following handy tips, and you’ll be on your way!

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Connect with us!

- Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland: [www.kansasgirlscouts.org](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org)
- Register online for [Girl Scout membership](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org).
- Register online for Girl Scout activities using [Ultracamp](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org).
- Click the [Contact Us](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org) page for a council map, with directions and hours for all GSKH shops and offices.
- Search [Volunteer Essentials](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org) for additional information on Troops, Travel, and Event-planning.
- Search [Forms](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org) to find a complete list of forms and resources from volunteers and parents/guardians.
- [Shop online](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org) and support the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland.
- GSKH Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/ksgirlscouts](https://www.facebook.com/ksgirlscouts)
- GSKH Twitter: [https://twitter.com/ksgirlscouts](https://twitter.com/ksgirlscouts)
- GSKH Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/ksgirlscouts/](https://www.instagram.com/ksgirlscouts/)
- GSKH YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/user/KSGirlScouts](https://www.youtube.com/user/KSGirlScouts)
- GSKH Flikr: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/ksgirlscouts/sets/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ksgirlscouts/sets/)
- GSKH Linked-In: [https://www.instagram.com/ksgirlscouts/](https://www.instagram.com/ksgirlscouts/)
We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low. We are the largest girl-serving organization in the United States and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries.

Our Mission and Vision

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We strive to be the premier leadership organization for girls, and experts on their growth and development.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.” Note: This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it’s your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls' families.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.
More than 3 Million Strong
We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

- 2.3 million girls 5 to 18 years of age
- 16,800 Girl Scouts overseas
- 888,000 adult volunteers
- 59 million alumnae
- 112 councils throughout the United States

At any given time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and it's interesting to know that:

- 80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 69 percent of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience
We have identified Three Keys to Leadership: girls Discover themselves and their values; Connect with others; and Take Action to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

I Can’t Wait To
I Can’t Wait To is a multi-year campaign that focuses on getting the fun of Girl Scouts into the lives of young girls (K–5), their parents and caregivers, and you, the volunteer.

ToGetHerThere
At Girl Scouts, we know that when girls are given the opportunity, they change their world. Every girl has an important role to play, and every girl deserves the confidence to achieve anything she sets her sight on. But we need help to ensure that girls in every U.S. zip code develop the confidence that Girl Scouts nurtures. That's why we've launched ToGetHerThere, the largest fundraising campaign for girls in history.

ToGetHerThere is a Movement wide fundraising campaign with the goal of raising $1 Billion for girls by 2020. Every gift to every Girl Scout Council counts toward the goal. Together, we will get her there - to help lead her troop, her family, her community, her company, her country, and her world. To learn more about joining the largest campaign for girls visit girlscouts.org/invest.
Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together. Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter’s group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who have passed the necessary screening process) looking to help prime girls for the day when they’ll lead—however and wherever they choose.

What all members share, both girls and adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues. (Adults have the option to purchase a lifetime membership).

Girls at Every Grade Level

After girls join, they team up in the following grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisy (grades K–1)
- Girl Scout Brownie (grades 2–3)
- Girl Scout Junior (grades 4–5)
- Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6–8)
- Girl Scout Senior (grades 9–10)
- Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11–12)

Flexible Ways to Participate

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to make sure that everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. As a volunteer, you can choose from flexible ways to participate that can be tailored to fit your schedule and lifestyle. You can also volunteer behind the scenes, in your council office, instead of volunteering directly with girls.

Girls can choose any one, all, or some of the options—camp, events, series, troop, travel, and virtual*—within a single membership year. (*Note that virtual is still in development.) As a volunteer, you, too, have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. Based on independent research and extensive surveys with thousands of council staff members from around the country, we have a good sense of which options will interest girls, based on their grade levels. These are reflected in the chart on the right.
**Girl Scouts’ Organizational Structure**

Girl Scouts is the world’s largest organization of and for girls, currently encompassing 2.3 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Three core structures support all these members: the national headquarters, your council, and your support team.

**National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood**

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 300 employees. GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). (Visit [GSUSA online](https://www.girlscouts.org), where you’ll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.)

Global Girl Scouting ensures that girls have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place. Visit [Global Girl Scouting online](https://www.girlscouts.org) for additional information.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO), a division of Global Girl Scouting, has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls abroad. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools. Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see the “For Travel Volunteers” appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.

**Your Council**

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to attract and retain members in a geographic area, provide ways for girls to participate in Girl Scouting, create an environment that reflects Girl Scout values and ideals, manage volunteers’ experience with Girl Scouting, and keep girls and volunteers as safe as possible. The national office provides support materials to all councils to ensure that the Girl Scout experience is nationally consistent.

Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland serves more than 14,500 girls and adults in 80 Kansas counties. Our operational headquarters is in Wichita with regional offices in Emporia, Garden City, Hays and Salina. Visit our [Contact Us](https://www.girlscouts.org) page online for contact information.

**Your Support Team**

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout support team, which may be called a service unit or another name. Never hesitate to contact them, because your support team will guide and assist you in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, resources in the National Program Portfolio (National Leadership Journeys and *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*), or selling Girl Scout cookies and other products, go to your team for answers and ongoing support.
The Girl Scout program is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), in which girls Discover themselves, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place—all within the safety of an all-girl environment where girls take the lead, learn by doing, and learn cooperatively.

At the core of the GSLE are National Leadership Journeys, fun and challenging experiences grouped around a theme and spread over a series of sessions. Each Journey has all the important components of the GSLE sewn right in. So, to guide girls on a great Journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these six simple tips:

   This link will show you how all the fun and meaningful traditions of Girl Scouting fit right into any National Leadership Journey. There, you can also find information about the topics that each Journey covers, which you can share with girls. And you'll find even more fun traditions to complement your Journey in The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting, a resource for each grade level of Girl Scouting.

2. **Choose a Journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it’s important to give girls the chance to pick the Journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each Journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one.

3. **Get to know the Journey.** Pick up a girls’ book and an adult guide. Read the girls’ book for the pleasure of it, just to get an overview of the Journey’s theme and content.

4. **Review the sample session plans in the adult guide.** These sample session plans give you ideas about bringing the Journey to life with girls while leaving plenty of room for creativity and customization.

5. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the Journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don’t have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sample sessions.

6. **Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their National Leadership Journey awards—and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!
The Volunteer Toolkit is a simple online tool for leading K-5 troops. The Toolkit does the planning for you, so you can focus on the FUN of leading your troop. It’s your guide to leading fun, girl-led activities with confidence! You’ll spend less time planning and more time doing! Say goodbye to digging through stacks of books and piles of resources.

It’s everything you want rolled into one user friendly, intuitive, online tool. The Toolkit has planning and curriculum components to help you plan for meetings and activities with your girls. It includes meeting resources for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Troops. The toolkit includes two journeys, plus a year of badge work.

With the toolkit volunteers can set up a year plan overview and see a detailed plan for each meeting, including an agenda, material list and printables. The toolkit is customizable to accommodate your troop’s schedule and preferences. You can add meetings and/or add activities to a specific meeting. You can also reorder and swap meetings around in the schedule.

Everything in the toolkit is designed to help leaders get started and stay organized. You can use the toolkit as-is, or customize it however you like! The toolkit can be accessed from your computer, tablet, or phone, and you can also print out materials ahead of time.

Please note that the toolkit for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador troops doesn’t include pre-populated meeting plans yet, but you can still access the great planning features.

After you’ve drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Or, create the year plan together! Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, while older girls will require much less. Seniors and Ambassadors may not even want you to draft a plan in advance, so if they balk at what you’ve done, let them take the reins. (Journeys for older girls include planning pages specifically designed to help them customize their Journey.) Daisies and Brownies, on the other hand, may enjoy your year plan and just fill in a few ideas here and there, which will clue you in to their interests.

As your group starts its Journey, get a discussion (or debate!) going on the Journey’s theme and what it means to the girls. Probe to find out what they’re most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to their Journey.
Meeting with Girls for the First Time

When you first get together with girls (and this meeting may also include parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you’ll want to get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know one another.

Icebreaker games that let girls share simple details about themselves are a great way to start off your first gathering. Journeys often start with such an icebreaker, so if you’re digging into a Journey right away, you’ll be all set. You can also check your council’s resources or search the Internet for “icebreakers for kids” to find more ideas.

If you already know which Journey the girls want to do, you’ll find it useful to accomplish some of the following during this meeting. (Note that all these points are detailed in the adult guide for each Journey, too). If your girls haven’t chosen a Journey yet, you can spend time during the first meeting talking about the themes of the three Journeys that are available for their grade level and find out which one the group would like to do. You can then discuss these points in the next meeting, if you run out of time.

1. **Introduce the Journey, its theme, and its ties to leadership.** Each Journey’s adult guide gives you ideas for talking with girls and their parents/guardians about the Journey’s theme and the Three Keys to Leadership.

2. **Find out what interests the group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers), so that you and the girls can begin to customize the Journey.** Do the girls want to dig deeper into a particular aspect of the Journey? Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they’re passionate about, what they’ve always wanted to do, and how they would spend their time if money and other barriers were no object. Remind the girls they can do activities inside or outside. Build off the ideas shared, but be sure to include opinions from all the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so everyone is included.

3. **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their Journey (referring to your draft calendar only as needed, so that the girls lead). Consider questions like these:
   - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular Journey topic or theme?
   - Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
   - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via email or social media?
   - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
   - Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
   - If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?
   - Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?
When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these on your council’s website; your council may also provide them in some additional electronic or printed form.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you information on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves for the activity, what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity, and so on.

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can email or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians, and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists, so that you, your co-volunteers, and the girls can check off each step that has been accomplished.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that:

- **All activities are girl-led.** Take into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively.** Have girls teach each other new skills they may need for the activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing.** If research or special equipment is needed, they’ll learn better by doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with your council **before** making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely:

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your council for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot air balloons, and blimps.
- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, and outdoor trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.
**An additional note:** Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position. You are required to obtain permission slips signed by the girls’ parents/guardians; see the "Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels" chapter of this handbook for more information.
Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow development of individual girls. The following group sizes are recommended:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 5–12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 10–20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors: 10–25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 5–25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 5–30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 5–30 girls

Girl Scouts’ adult-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel, and Camping</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for every:</td>
<td>One additional adult to each additional:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Daisies</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(grades K–1)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Brownies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1-8</td>
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<td>(grades 2–3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Juniors</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-10</td>
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<td>(grades 4–5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Cadettes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>(grades 6–8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Seniors</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>(grades 9–10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Ambassadors</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(grades 11–12)</td>
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Here are some examples: If you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three adults, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. If this isn’t making sense to you, follow the chart: you need two adults for 12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults. If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18.

Adult supervision for all girls also extends to any online activity. For additional information on online safety, please consult:

- The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge
Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.

3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.

4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow your council’s guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.

5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls’ families.

6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas. *GSKH requires approval for troop overnight experiences using the [Travel Application](https://kansasgirlscouts.org) found at kansasgirlscouts.org.*
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.

9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.

10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers. Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.

12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.
Outdoor Adventures

Being outside is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they spend an afternoon exploring a local hiking trail or a week at camp, being outside gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun in a whole new environment. For more information, visit www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/camping.

Thanks to a special partnership between the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, girls have more camping options across the state. Troops and Service Units get access to basic camping areas at all 26 Kansas State Parks. Troops MUST follow instructions and complete a reservation application to take advantage of these camping opportunities paid for by Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland.

Girls’ Choice Outdoor Badges and Requirements were recently rolled out by GSUSA. These badges were developed, created and voted on by girls. Hard copy and downloadable versions of the requirements can be found at girlscoutshop.com.

Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland has developed a series of Outdoor Leadership Skills courses to prepare volunteers for outdoor adventures with girls. Information about volunteer learning opportunities including scheduled courses can be found at www.kansasgirlscouts.org.

GSKH Outdoor Leadership courses are required before facilitating outdoor activities with girls.

- **Outdoor Leadership Basics 100** home-study can be completed on your own time, and prepares volunteers to take troops or groups out for the day to hike, have a picnic, and get a taste of outdoor fun (without fire-building or outdoor cooking). Search “Outdoor Leadership Basics” from www.kansasgirlscouts.org.

- **Outdoor Leadership 101**, volunteers will be qualified to plan and have backyard campouts, host and attend day camps, and have a camping adventure within their own community or stay at any Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland Camp property (with the exception of semi-primitive camp sites). Volunteers will also be able to lead cookouts and have campfires.

- **Outdoor Leadership 201** provides additional skills necessary required for any overnight camping (tents, A-frames, rustic cabins, etc.) outside your community and semi-primitive camping.
Outdoor Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors, including how to plan and organize outdoor activities. Acknowledge a girl's mastery of an outdoor skill and invite her to challenge herself further by taking that next step up and out. Options are endless when girls lead.
Welcome to the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland (GSKH)! No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment of time and energy will pay back tenfold. With your help, girls will be able to identify issues they care about and work with one another to resolve them. Your interests and life experiences make you the perfect person to be a new kind of partner for girls, someone who creates a safe environment where they can work together and each girl feels free to work toward her highest aspirations. Have no doubt: You, and nearly one million other volunteers like you, are helping girls make a lasting impact on the world.

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your most important role as a Girl Scout volunteer is to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to help girls succeed, play a critical role in their lives, and watch them blossom! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you’ll be embarking on with the girls—whether you’re volunteering at a camp, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series on a topic that interests you.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you’ll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You’ll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two adults must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and not related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the adult-to-girl ratios in the Quick-Start Guide and the “Safety-Wise” chapter of this handbook.

In More than ‘Smores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of Adult Volunteers:

“Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis.” (2014, p.27)

Your Responsibilities

Your responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you’ll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls’ interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls’ parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl

**Girl Scout Promise**

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.” **Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it's your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls' families.

**Girl Scout Law**

I will do my best to be

- honest and fair,
- friendly and helpful,
- considerate and caring,
- courageous and strong,
- and responsible for what I say and do,

and to

- respect myself and others,
- respect authority,
- use resources wisely,
- make the world a better place,
- and be a sister to every Girl Scout.
**Your Volunteer Support Team**

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll team up with co-volunteers, parents/guardians, members of the community, council staff, and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you. The adult guide of each Journey gives you tips and guidance for creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

The other volunteers on your support team may help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Building girls outdoor skills and experiences
- Managing group records

If you have a large support team, the first thing you'll want to do is meet with this group and discuss what brought each of you to Girl Scouts, review your strengths and skills, and talk about how you would like to work together as a team. You might also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout cookie activities, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for other opportunities) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group of volunteers, if necessary
- Whether, when, where, and how often to hold parent/guardian meetings
- Whether an advance trip to a destination, event site, or camp needs to happen

Remember to call on your volunteer support team. This team can help you observe a meeting, assign you a buddy, help with registration forms, assist you with opening a bank account, plan your first meeting, and so on. Also plan to attend support meetings—usually held several times throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers.
Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with the necessary information to successfully manage your group of girls and to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you want to learn more. Volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources, face-to-face learning, interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time.

Learn about Girl Scouts

Girl Scouting 101 (GS101)

There’s a good chance you’ve already logged on to http://training.girlscouts.org to watch Girl Scouting 101. GS101 is an easy-to-use online course which introduces volunteers to Girl Scouts’ inspiring national leadership experience, from Journey resources and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting to cookie sales, safety guidelines, and much more. Spend about 45 minutes learning online—whenever you can fit it into your day. This online session and Volunteer Essentials are designed to give you all of the information you need to start working with girls. They’re always available; think of them as references you can use whenever you need them.

Outdoor Leadership series

GSKH Outdoor Leadership courses are required before facilitating outdoor activities with girls.

- **Outdoor Leadership Basics 100** home-study can be completed on your own time, and prepares volunteers to take troops or groups out for the day to hike, have a picnic, and get a taste of outdoor fun (without fire-building or outdoor cooking). Search “Outdoor Leadership Basics” from www.kansasgirlscouts.org.

- **Outdoor Leadership 101**, volunteers will be qualified to plan and have backyard camp-outs, host and attend day camps, and have a camping adventure within their own community or stay at any Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland Camp property (with the exception of semi-primitive camp sites). Volunteers will also be able to lead cookouts and have campfires.

- **Outdoor Leadership 201** provides additional skills necessary required for any overnight camping (tents, A-frames, rustic cabins, etc.) outside your community and semi-primitive camping.

Spark and Ignite

These half-day, full-day, and overnight adult learning opportunities offer sessions on a variety of topics that enhance your leadership skills and spark ideas for your troop. Find information about upcoming Spark and Ignite sessions on the Events page at www.kansasgirlscout.org.
Knowing How Much You’re Appreciated

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to your council staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. We’re calling on all members of society to help girls reach their full potential, and you’ve answered that call. So thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Just as you’ll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the term you signed up for, you’ll talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return to this position or try something new. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure with Girl Scouting!

If you’re ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your council support team know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. Are you ready to organize a series or event? Take a trip? Work with girls at camp? Work with a troop of girls as a year-long volunteer? Share your skills at a council office, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless, and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.

Volunteer Appreciation Week

Volunteer Appreciation Week—a special week in April—is set aside especially for you. Girl Scouts pay tribute to the volunteers who help girls make the world a better place. The week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22).

In addition, Girl Scouts also celebrates Volunteers Make a Difference Week, in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which takes place during the weekend in autumn that we set our clocks back.

In order to recognize the extraordinary women and men who volunteer across the council for their service, GSKH offers a number of volunteer awards at the local, council, and national levels. Please see more information at www.kansasgirlscouts.org by searching for Volunteer Recognition.
Chapter 2: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

Now that you’re a Girl Scout volunteer, you belong to a network of more than 1 million adults who share an important commitment: preparing girls to lead successful lives. During your time as a volunteer, you’ll have fun, meet new people, and learn by doing alongside girls at every step.

The Girl Scout program—what girls do in Girl Scouting—is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), a national model that helps girls become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of a powerful, national experience. As they build leadership skills, they also develop lifelong friendships and earn meaningful awards, two of many treasured traditions in the sisterhood of Girl Scouting.

What Girl Scouting Does for Girls

Girl Scouting guides girls to become leaders in their daily lives, their communities, and the world—helping them become the kind of person exemplified by the Girl Scout Law. When girls—as the Girl Scout Law states—are “honest and fair,” when they “use resources wisely,” and know how to be “courageous and strong,” they can be more successful in everything they do. It may start in school and on sports teams, but research shows that the courage, confidence, and character they develop as Girl Scouts follows them throughout their lives. Girl Scouting has a practical approach to helping girls become leaders:

- When girls lead in their own lives, they Discover their values and the confidence to do what’s right. This helps girls act in ways that make us proud, no matter where they are.
- When girls lead in their communities, they Connect as they learn how to work with other people. This helps them get along better with others, resolve conflicts, and do better on group projects at school.
- When girls lead in the world, they Take Action to change the world for the better. Starting as young Girl Scouts, girls learn how to see problems—such as a food pantry in need of donations or an elderly neighbor who could use a hand—and come up with a solution.

In other words: Discover + Connect + Take Action = leadership. And everything you do with girls in Girl Scouting is aimed at giving them the benefits of these Three Keys to Leadership.

More details about the benefits (or outcomes) Girl Scouts offers girls can be found in Transforming Leadership Continued, available online at www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp.
Top Reasons Why Girls Should Get Outdoors

Findings from the 2014 *More than S’mores* Report

1. Girls really enjoy outdoor activities in Girl Scouts.
3. Girl Scouts who get outdoors are twice as likely to connect with and care for the environment than non-Girl Scouts.
4. Girls of color and girls in lower socioeconomic backgrounds report even stronger benefits from outdoor experiences.

“It was my first time on the water, in a lake. I was scared at first but when I started to paddle I got the hang of it. I really loved it.”

10-year-old Girl Scout, Missouri

Because of Girl Scouts...

71% of girls tried an outdoor activity for the first time.
48% of girls helped other girls do an outdoor activity.
71% of girls improved an outdoor skill.
29% of girls overcame a fear of an outdoor activity.

*More Than S’mores, a 2014 study by the Girl Scout Research Institute, talked to nearly 3,000 Girl Scouts in fourth-through-eighth grade.*
I Can’t Wait To

I Can’t Wait To is a multi-year campaign that focuses on getting the fun of Girl Scouts into the lives of young girls (K–5), their parents and caregivers, and you, the volunteer.

ToGetHerThere

At Girl Scouts, we know that when girls are given the opportunity, they change their world. Every girl has an important role to play, and every girl deserves the confidence to achieve anything she sets her sight on. But we need help to ensure that girls in every U.S. zip code develop the confidence that Girl Scouts nurtures. That’s why we’ve launched ToGetHerThere, the largest fundraising campaign for girls in history.

ToGetHerThere is a Movement wide fundraising campaign with the goal of raising $1 Billion for girls by 2020. Every gift to every Girl Scout Council counts toward the goal. Together, we will get her there - to help lead her troop, her family, her community, her company, her country, and her world. To learn more about joining the largest campaign for girls visit girlscouts.org/invest.

Fun with Purpose

Girl Scouting isn’t just about what we do; it’s also about how we do it. Over time, we’ve noticed that girls will give almost any activity a try, as long as the adults guiding them take the right approach. Girl Scout activities ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

- **Girl-led:** Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they’ll structure activities. Of course, you’ll provide guidance appropriate to the age of the girls. Plus, you’ll encourage them to bring their ideas and imaginations into the experiences, make choices, and lead the way as much as they can.

- **Learning by doing:** This means that girls have active, hands-on experiences. It also means they have a chance to think and talk about what they are learning as a result of the activities. This kind of reflection is what helps girls gain self-awareness and confidence to dive into new challenges. So make sure girls always have a chance to talk with each other—and you—after an activity. It doesn’t have to be formal, just get them talking and see what happens.

- **Cooperative learning:** Girls learn so much about themselves and each other when they team up on common goals. Plus, great teamwork helps girls in school now and on the job later. Look for ways to help each girl contribute her unique talents and ideas to the team, help all girls see how their differences are valuable to the team, and coach girls to resolve their conflicts productively.
We call these three methods “processes.” You might be wondering how to put these processes into action with the girls in your group. These steps should help you get started:

1. After you help girls choose a National Leadership Journey (there’s more information about those later in this chapter), make sure you get the adult guide that accompanies the Journey. As you read through that guide, look at how the activities, conversations, and choice-making options are set up using the three processes. Once you start practicing the processes, you’ll probably find that they become second nature when you’re with girls.

2. If you haven’t already, watch Girl Scouting 101, our online introduction to volunteering with Girl Scouts. If you’ve already watched Girl Scouting 101, you may want to review its “What Girl Scouts Do” section to brush up on the processes.

3. Want more detail about the processes? Take a look at the examples in Transforming Leadership Continued, available online at www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp.

One last tip about using the processes: The girls’ time in Girl Scouting isn’t a to-do list, so please don’t ever feel that checking activities off a list is more important than tuning in to what interests and excites girls and sparks their imaginations. Projects don’t have to come out perfectly, and girls don’t have to fill their vests and sashes with badges: what matters most is the fun and learning that happens as girls make experiences their own.

The National Program Portfolio

You’ll use several books, awards, and online resources to bring the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to life with girls. We strongly recommend that each girl has her own books from the National Program Portfolio. These books—the Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting—and national program awards—like badges and pins—are an important part of how Girl Scouting helps girls experience the power of millions of girls changing the world together.

As you use the National Program Portfolio with girls, keep in mind that Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) creates materials to serve our vast and diverse community of girls. To help bring topics off the page and into life, we sometimes provide girls and volunteers with suggestions about what people across the country and around the world are doing. We also sometimes make suggestions about movies, books, music, websites, and more that might spark girls’ interests.

At GSUSA, we know that not every example or suggestion we provide will work for every girl, family, volunteer, or community. In partnership with those who assist you with your Girl Scout group—including parents, faith groups, schools, and community organizations—we trust you to choose real-life topic experts from your community as well as movies, books, music, websites, and other opportunities that are most appropriate for the girls in your area to enrich their Girl Scout activities.

We are proud to be the premier leadership organization for girls. While girls and their families may have questions or interest in programming relevant to other aspects of girls’ lives, we are not always the organization best suited to offer such information. Your council can recommend local organizations or resources that are best suited to do so.
Also note that GSUSA continuously reviews national program content to guarantee that all our resources are relevant and age appropriate, and that their content doesn’t include violence, sex, inappropriate language, or risky behavior. We value your input and hope that you will bring to your council’s attention any content that concerns you.

**National Leadership Journeys**

National Leadership Journeys help Girl Scouts learn and practice the Three Keys, aid their communities, and earn leadership awards, progressing up Girl Scouting’s Ladder of Leadership as they do so. There are three series of Leadership Journeys, each about a different theme; the girls in your group can choose the theme that interests them most.

After the girls choose a Journey, spend an hour or two reading the companion adult guide. It’ll give you a feel for how to bring the Journey to life, and you’ll get ideas for the steps girls will take (with your support) to earn their leadership awards. Don’t worry; you don’t have to be any kind of expert to do a Leadership Journey with girls. You just need to be willing to dive in and enjoy the learning-by-doing experience with them.

Each Journey adult guide contains sample plans that you can customize to fit the needs of your group, whether you guide a troop, volunteer at a Girl Scout camp, mentor girls on a travel adventure, or engage with girls in a series or at an event. Each Journey also offers opportunities to enjoy the longstanding traditions of Girl Scouting, from ceremonies and songs to earning awards and skill badges.

**The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and National Proficiency Badges**

In addition to the Leadership Journeys, girls at each Girl Scout grade level have their own edition of The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting—a binder full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn certain badges, including ones about financial literacy and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Girls who want to earn more badges can add a Skill Building Badge Set tied to the theme of the Journey they’ve chosen.

When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she’s learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack or take great digital photos. It may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career. Please remember that we don’t expect you to be an expert in the badge topics; just have fun learning by doing with the girls!

While you’re having fun, keep in mind: Badges are for educating girls, not for decorating their sashes and vests. The quality of a girl’s experience—and the skills and pride she gains from earning leadership awards and skill-building badges—far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns.

If you’re working with Girl Scout Daisies, please note that they earn Petals and Leaves (which form a flower) instead of badges.

There are several ways to supplement the National Program Portfolio and enhance girls’ time as Girl Scouts—and have fun while you’re doing it! A few of them are outlined below.
Digital programming

The For Girls section of girlscouts.org features a variety of videos, games, blogs, and other fun ways to enrich the GSLE. Girls will find opportunities to post their ideas for public service announcements on topics that matter to them and get inspired by watching short videos that tell the stories of women from all walks of life. If you work with Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, you might like the site’s print-and-play coloring and game pages—great for having on hand when energetic girls get together! Both girls and volunteers will have fun with Badge Explorer, an overview of all of the badges girls can earn. For Girls is updated frequently, so check back often—and invite girls to do the same!

Make Your Own Badge

Girls are welcome to develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. (In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn how to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life!) Once girls check the Awards Log in The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting to make sure there’s not already a badge on the topic they want to explore, they’ll follow steps outlined in that handbook to complete the requirements for their very own badge. Even better, they can go online to design and purchase a badge that later arrives in the mail! For more information, check out the Make Your Own Badge website.

My Promise, My Faith Pin

The Girl Scout Law includes many of the principles and values common to most faiths. And even though Girl Scouts is a secular organization, we’ve always encouraged girls to explore spirituality via their own faiths. Girls of all grade levels can now earn the My Promise, My Faith pin. By carefully examining the Girl Scout Law and directly tying it to tenets of her faith, a girl can earn the pin once each year she participates in Girl Scouting. You can find more about the requirements for this pin in The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program

In addition to giving girls an opportunity to earn money to fund their Girl Scouting goals, taking part in the Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches girls five important skills that serve them throughout their lives: goal setting, money management, people skills, decision making, and business ethics. For more on everything involved in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, flip to the “Managing Group Finances” chapter of this handbook.

Outdoor Adventures

Being outside is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they spend an afternoon exploring a local hiking trail or a week at camp, being outside gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun in a whole new environment. For more information, visit www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/camping.
Spanish-language resources

Two of the Journey series—It’s Your World—Change It! and It’s Your Planet—Love It!—are available in Spanish, as are two new supporting books for Spanish-speaking volunteers to use with Spanish-speaking and bilingual Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors: ¡Las Girl Scouts Brownies Cambian El Mundo! (Girl Scout Brownies Change the World!) and ¡Las Girl Scouts Juniors Apuntan a las Estrellas! (Girl Scout Juniors Reach for the Stars!). The books, which introduce the Girl Scout movement to these girls and their families, provide everything you need for a fun-filled year in Girl Scouting. For more information on these resources, contact your council.

Putting It All Together

All of this may seem overwhelming, but don’t worry. The next few pages give you an idea of what’s involved when you use the National Program Portfolio with girls at each Girl Scout grade level.
What Daisies Do

KINDERGARTEN - 1ST GRADE

Choose a Journey

Use The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting
What Brownies Do
2ND - 3RD GRADE

Choose a Journey and earn the awards

Want to earn more Badges? Add the Badge sets

Use them all with The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting

Brownie Quest
- Computer Expert
- My Best Self
- Dancer
- Home Scientist
- My Family Story

WOW! Wonders of Water
- Potter
- Household Elf
- My Great Day
- Senses
- Hiker

A World of Girls
- Letterboxer
- Inventor
- Puts
- Making Games
- Making Friends

* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale, and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.
Choose a Journey and earn the awards

Want to earn more Badges? Add the Badge sets

Agent of Change
- Digital Photographer
- Staying Fit

Get Moving!
- Jeweler
- Gardener

aMUSE
- Geocacher
- Animal Habitats

February
- Detective
- Camper
- Independence

Use them all with The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting

- Inside Government
- Drawing
- Practica with Purpose
- Simple Meals
- Junior First Aid
- Junior Girl Scout Way
- Flowers

- Financial Literacy
- Business Owner
- Savvy Shopper

- Cookie Business
- Cookie CEO
- Customer Insights

*Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl’s books.
Choose a Journey and earn the awards

Want to earn more Badges? Add the Badge sets

Use them all with The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

Remember to add trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.
Choose a Journey and earn the awards

Want to earn more Badges? Add the Badge sets

Use them all with The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting

*Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl’s books.
National Program Portfolio

What Ambassadors Do

11th - 12th Grade

Choose a Journey

Use The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting

Financial Literacy
- On My Own
- Good Credit
- Cookie Business
  - Research & Development
  - P & L

Photographer
Coaching
Public Policy
Dinner Party
Ambassador First Aid
Ambassador Girl Scout Way
Water
Emblems and Patches

In addition to the leadership awards tied to the Journeys and the National Proficiency badges, girls can show they belong by adding emblems to the front of their vests or sashes and participation patches on the back.

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* to see where these are placed).

- **Participation patches** represent activities girls have tried and are fun ways for girls to remember special events they’ve attended. Since these patches and pins aren’t tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a girl’s sash or vest.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at any GSKH council shop or online at [http://kansasgirlscouts.org/shop/](http://kansasgirlscouts.org/shop/). There, you’ll find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level and a link that shows you exactly where girls can place their emblems, awards, badges, pins, and patches on their vests and sashes.

Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting’s highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting, and community networking and leadership. They also engage girls in building networks that not only support them in their award projects, but in new educational and career opportunities.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning these awards are rooted in the GSLE. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level Journey (two Journeys for the Gold Award or a Silver Award and one Journey). With Journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and carry out Take Action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed during a Journey to develop and execute projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. Girl Scouts has just introduced a web link that takes girls step-by-step through the Gold Award requirements. Visit [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/gold_award.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/gold_award.asp) to take a peek.

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in all four branches of the U.S. Military? A number of college-scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award designees. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels. Check out some of the award projects girls in your council are doing and talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. You’ll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so. And imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country, and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others, and act to make change happen!
All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting’s highest awards—information on the awards and guidelines for you to use when helping girls earn their awards are also available online.

### A Tradition of Honoring Girls

From the beginning of Girl Scouts, one prestigious award has recognized the girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first of these awards, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed to The Golden Eaglet, and in 1920, the requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. The First Class Award existed for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First Class Award, for a girl who was an “all-around” person, with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today’s highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980.

### Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. In the past, these have covered topics like the environment, robotics, and space exploration. You can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting your council or by visiting [www.girlscouts.org/program/basics](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics) and clicking on “Program Basics” on the left side of the screen. Note that councils may offer different experiences, based on availability of resources and partners in your area.

Please visit [www.kansasgirlscouts.org](http://www.kansasgirlscouts.org) to learn about upcoming girl and adult activities for Girl Scouts in Kansas, including organizations that provide special experiences just for Girl Scouts.

**Partnership Organizations** align with the mission and values of the Girl Scouts, and create unique leadership activities for girls. We offer these activities for large groups of girls on set dates, and GSKH processes the registrations online and in our offices.

**Collaborators** provide Programs-on-Demand or Community Service opportunities for troops, service units, groups and individual members, which can be tailored to particular schedules and interests. The opportunities are available by contacting the community partners directly using the contact information provided in the Activity Guide or online.

**A Community Offering** is an organization that offers programming to everyone, or wishes to offer a discount or special offer to Girl Scout members. The event does not have to be tailored specifically to the Girl Scouts. You might find a new community offering in your area just by asking a local business or organization!
Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important and are still practiced today. This section gives you an overview of annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions. Be sure to look in The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and Leadership Journeys for more information on songs, outdoor activities, historical anecdotes, traditions, and ceremonies.

Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you’re encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **February 22**: World Thinking Day (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide).
- **March 12**: The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday”) and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”).
- **April**: Volunteer Appreciation Week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- **October 31**: Founder’s Day (Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday).

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**World Thinking Day: February 22**

World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to “think” of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. February 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.

Today, girls honor World Thinking Day by earning the **World Thinking Day award**, which focuses on an annual theme selected by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. They also show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by contributing to the **Juliette Low World Friendship Fund**, which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.
Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on—are sewn right into the Journeys, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons. Here’s a brief list, in alphabetical order, so that you can become familiar with the most common Girl Scout ceremonies:

- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award), and are usually held for a group and combined with council recognition.
- **Young Women of Distinction** is hosted by GSKH annually to recognize Girl Scouts who have completed the requirements to become recipients of the Girl Scout Bronze, Girl Scout Silver or Girl Scout Gold Awards.
- **Girl Scouts’ Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
Hosting a Girl-Led Event

If you’re working with girls who want to host an event—large or small—be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event. To get girls started, ask them to think about the following questions:

- What sort of event do we have in mind?
- Who is our intended audience?
- Will it be outdoors?
- Does the audience have to be invited, or can anyone come?
- What’s our main topic or focus?
- What’s our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
- Will one or more speakers need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find speakers?
- Where will the event take place?
- Is there a charge for this venue?
- Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
- Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
- Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra portable toilets cost, and how many do we need?
- Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
- Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
- What sort of entertainment will we provide?
- Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
- How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
- What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
- Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
- How will we advertise the event?
- What decorations will we use?
- Will we give away any keepsakes?
- Will we charge for the event?
- Who will set up the event?
- Who will clean up after the event?
- How will we determine whether the event was a success?

Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends, and community experts are also available in the Leadership Journey adult guides!
Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over time, any organization is going to develop a few common signals that everyone understands. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, which has developed a few unique ways to greet, acknowledge, and communicate, some of which are listed here.

**Girl Scout Sign**

The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry, when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign, raise the three middle fingers of the right hand palm forward and shoulder high (the three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise). Girls give the sign when they:

- Say the Promise or Law.
- Are welcomed into Girl Scouts at an investiture ceremony that welcomes new members.
- Receive an award, patch, pin, or other recognition.
- Greet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

**Girl Scout Handshake**

The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts, and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. Shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

**Quiet Sign**

The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. Raise your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

**Girl Scout Slogan and Motto**

The Girl Scout slogan is, “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is, “Be prepared.”
**Songs**

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship of music. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp). A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council shop or visit the [GSUSA online shop](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp).
Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you’ll have the opportunity to guide girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. You’ll help her develop leadership skills she can use now and as she grows—all in a safe and accepting environment. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

When and how often to meet is up to you, your co-volunteers, parents, and girls: it may just be one time for this particular group of girls. Or, if you meet regularly, what day and time work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteers, and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, once a month? Is after-school best? Can your co-volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends?

Where to meet can be a bit trickier: a meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses or worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations:

- **Cost**: The space should be free to use.
- **Size**: Make sure the space is large enough accommodate the whole group and all planned activities.
- **Availability**: Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.
- **Resources**: Determine what types of furnishings (table? chairs?) come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort, where you can store supplies or a safe outdoor space for activities.
- **Safety**: Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure a first-aid equipment is on hand.
- **Facilities**: Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Communication-friendly**: Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.
- **Allergen-free**: Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won’t bother susceptible girls during meetings.
- **Accessibility**: Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started:

“I’m a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of _____ girls. We’re doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like _____ and ______. We’re all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We’d love to hold our meetings here because ______.”
**Special Considerations for Meeting in Homes**

Schools, churches and community buildings are excellent locations for troop meetings. A private location or home should be your last choice.

In order to ensure the safety of all Girl Scouts, GSKH has a special approval process for in-home troop meetings. Meetings or events cannot take place in a home where a convicted sex offender resides. Meetings or events cannot take place in a home or facility where residents smoke indoors. For home meetings, complete the **Meeting Space Agreement** (under the “Forms” section at [www.kansasgirls scouts.org](http://www.kansasgirls scouts.org)). All persons over 18 living in the home must become a Girl Scout member and complete a criminal background check. A Girl Scout representative will conduct a site-visit of the home before approving the application.

A renewal of the **Meeting Space Agreement** MUST be completed each year that the troop leader is planning to hold a troop meeting in her/his home. This is due by October 1 each year and must be approved prior to the first meeting in the home each membership year. Additionally, a new **Meeting Space Agreement** is required if there is a change in site or circumstance of the adults living in the home.

**Understanding Healthy Development in Girls**

Just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to girls. So take some time to understand the likes, needs, and abilities of girls at different ages.

As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You’ll also find these listed in the adult guide of each Leadership Journey. Plus, the activities in the Journeys are set up with the following guidelines in mind! Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.

GSRI reports in *More than S’mores* that participating in casual outdoor activities in Girl Scouts, like playing, walking, or taking field trips in the outdoors made girls stronger problem solvers and challenge seekers. These outdoor experiences often place girls in new physical, psychological, and social situations that motivate curiosity and foster a sense of discovery. These challenges “require girls to become more self-aware and to cooperate, communicate, and solve problems.” (2014, page. 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl Scout Daisies</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .</strong></td>
<td><strong>They’ll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.</td>
<td>Encouraging them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43
| Love to move and dance.                      | They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle. |
| Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now. | Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms, or zoos; meet care providers; or make a creative bird feeder. |
| Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money. | You’ll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar! |
| Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don’t always have the words for what they’re thinking or feeling. | That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them. |
| Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so. | Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again. |

**Girl Scout Brownies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grade), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.</td>
<td>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are social and enjoy working in groups.</td>
<td>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.</td>
<td>Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.</td>
<td>Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf’s adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role play their own pretend visit to a new country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.</td>
<td>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.</td>
<td>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.</td>
<td>Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.</td>
<td>Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Juniors</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), girls . . .</strong></td>
<td><strong>This means . . .</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to make decisions and express their opinions.</td>
<td>Whenever possible, allowing girls to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others' opinions and offering assistance in decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.</td>
<td>Allowing girls to team-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.</td>
<td>Although it’s okay to have expectations, the expectation is not perfection! Share your own mistakes and what you learned from them, and be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concerned about equity and fairness.</td>
<td>Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place, and having girls develop their own rules for their group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to think abstractly and critically, and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feelings and attitudes of another.</td>
<td>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision, share their visions of their roles in the future, and challenge their own and others’ perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.</td>
<td>Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.</td>
<td>Girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument, or choreographing a dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin changes, and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.</td>
<td>Being sensitive to girls’ changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes, and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Girl Scout Cadettes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls . . .</strong></th>
<th><strong>This means . . .</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape, and weight. They're also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.</td>
<td>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</td>
<td>That girls will enjoy teaming-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting, and beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.</td>
<td>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Girl Scout Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls . . .</strong></th>
<th><strong>This means . . .</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.</td>
<td>Asking girls to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Engage girls in role-play and performances, where others can watch and offer alternative solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.</td>
<td>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age. That girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They’ll also want to tackle relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.

Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality. Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn’t just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.

Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and so on. Acknowledging girls’ pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.

Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home. Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girl Scout Ambassadors</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls . . .</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>This means . . .</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group, and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They’ll also want to tackle relationship issues through artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.

| Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn’t just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality. |

Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, etc.

| Acknowledging girls’ pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques. |

Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.

| Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure.” Girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes. |

### Creating a Safe Space for Girls

A safe space is one in which girls feel as though they can be themselves, without explanation, judgment, or ridicule. Girl Scout research shows that girls are looking for an emotionally safe environment, where confidentiality is respected and they can express themselves without fear.

The environment you create is as important—maybe more—than the activities girls do; it’s the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a warm, safe environment for girls.

### Girl-Adult Partnership

Girl Scouting is for the enjoyment and benefit of the girls, so meetings are built around girls’ ideas. When you put the girls first, you’re helping develop a team relationship, making space for the development of leadership skills, and allowing girls to benefit from the guidance, mentoring, and coaching of caring adults.

The three Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) are integral to the girl-adult partnership. Take time to read about processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group’s experiences. (See the “Girl Scouting as a National Experience” chapter of this handbook for more about using the Journey adult guides.)

### Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

Girls look up to their volunteers. They need to know that you consider each of them an important person. They can survive a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected. Recognize acts of trying as well as instances of clear success. Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique. Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke. Help girls find ways to show acceptance of and support for one another.
Promoting Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in the ways responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements and in responses to performance and accomplishment. When possible, consult girls as to what they think is fair before decisions are made. Explain your reasoning and show why you did something. Be willing to apologize if needed. Try to see that the responsibilities, as well as the chances for feeling important, are equally divided. Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities, and responding to behavior and accomplishments.

Building Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. They must be sure you will not betray a confidence. Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment. Help them make the important decisions in the group. Help them correct their own mistakes. Help girls give and show trust toward one another. Help them see how trust can be built, lost, regained, and strengthened.

Managing Conflict

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts are expected to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly and in a nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, do not spread your complaint around to others—that won’t help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision and, ultimately, contact your council if you need extra help.

Inspiring Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen to what they think, feel, and want to do. They like having someone they can talk to about important things, including things that might not seem important to adults. Listen to the girls. Respond with words and actions. Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something, and encourage girls to do this, too. Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings, and propose plans or improvements. Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understanding of self and others, and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.
Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

- **Listen**: Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you shoulds”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.
- **Be honest**: If you’re not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.)
- **Be open to real issues**: For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious issues. (You'll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don’t know, listen. Also seek help from your council if you need assistance or more information than you currently have.
- **Show respect**: Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.
- **Offer options**: Providing flexibility in changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.
- **Stay current**: Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, movies they like, books and magazines they read, and music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you’re interested in their world.

One way to communicate with girls is through the LUTE method—listen, understand, tolerate, and empathize. Here is a breakdown of the acronym LUTE to remind you of how to respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

- **L = Listen**: Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”
- **U = Understand**: Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”
- **T = Tolerate**: You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. It signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”
- **E = Empathize**: Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”
Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a partner, and as a coach or mentor, as needed (not a “leader”).
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team.
- Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind, and have fun together.
- Ask what they think and what they want to do.
- Encourage girls to speak their minds.
- Provide structure, but don’t micromanage.
- Give everyone a voice in the group.
- Treat girls like partners.
- Don’t repeat what’s said in the group to anyone outside of it (unless necessary for a girl’s safety).

Girl Scout Research Institute

It’s amazing what you can learn when you listen to girls.

Since its founding in 2000, the Girl Scout Research Institute has become an internationally recognized center for research and public policy information on the development and well-being of girls. Not just Girl Scouts, but all girls.

In addition to research staff, the GSRI draws on experts in child development, education, business, government, and the not-for-profit sector. We provide the youth development field with definitive research reviews that consolidate existing studies. And, by most measures, we are now the leading source of original research on the issues that girls face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit www.girlscouts.org/research.

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

According to Feeling Safe: What Girls Say, a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of close friendship. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered “sensitive” by parents, and they may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics should be covered with their daughters.

Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council.

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.
You should know, GSUSA does not take a position or develop materials on issues relating to human sexuality, birth control, or abortion. We feel our role is to help girls develop self-confidence and good decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives. We believe parents and guardians, along with schools and faith communities, are the primary sources of information on these topics.

Parents/guardians make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow your council’s guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report concerns: There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your group. Alcohol, drugs, sex, bullying, abuse, depression, and eating disorders are some of the issues girls may encounter. You are on the frontlines of girls’ lives, and you are in a unique position to identify a situation in which a girl may need help. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to promptly bring that information to her parent/guardian or the council so she can get the expert assistance she needs. Your concern about a girl’s well-being and safety is taken seriously, and your council will guide you in addressing these concerns.

For additional information please check the following resources:

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway
- How to Report Suspected Child Maltreatment
- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect

Here are a few signs that could indicate a girl needs expert help:

- Marked changes in behavior or personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness, or sensitivity)
- Declining academic performance and/or inability to concentrate
- Withdrawal from school, family activities, or friendships
- Fatigue, apathy, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased secretiveness
- Deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene.
- Eating extremes, unexplained weight loss, distorted body image
- Tendency toward perfectionism
- Giving away prized possessions; preoccupation with the subject of death
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns, or fractures
- Avoidance of eye contact or physical contact
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of adults
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones
Working with Parents and Guardians

Most parents and guardians are helpful and supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. And you almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out www.girlscouts4girls.org to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters.

Advocating for Girls

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials, and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. The office also supports Girl Scout councils, at the state and local levels, as they build capacity to be the voice for girls. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy.

Using “I” Statements

Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements, which are detailed in the aMAZE Journey for Girl Scout Cadettes, tell someone what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make the person feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

- “Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”
- “You’re not doing your share.”

Now look at “I” statements:

- “I’d like to help your daughter learn to take more responsibility.”
- “I’d really appreciate your help with registration.”

If you need help with specific scenarios involving parents/guardians, try the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a Parent or Guardian . . .</th>
<th>You Can Say . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,</td>
<td>“I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,</td>
<td>“I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”

“I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others’ feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity.”

Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,

“I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we’re doing, I’d appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year.”

**Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network**

A parent/guardian meeting, or a meeting of your friends-and-family network (as encouraged in many of the leadership Journeys), is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too)
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters’ Girl Scout experiences
- Determined when product sales (including Girl Scout cookie activities) will happen in your council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting
- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the adults guides for many of the Journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to get Journey resources—books, awards, and keepsakes—and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on)
- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (also available from your council), health history forms (as required by your council), and GSUSA registration forms
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the Journey’s Friends and Family pages will come in handy here)
You’re free to structure the parent/guardian meeting in whatever way works for you, but the following structure works for many new volunteers:

- As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. If the girls’ parents/guardians haven’t already registered, you’ll direct them to the website at www.kansasgirlscouts.org or call 888-686-MINT (6468).
- Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you’re new to Girl Scouting, don’t worry—just let everyone know you’ll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)
- Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.
- Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:
  - All the fun girls are going to have!
  - When and where the group will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do
  - That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the group’s normal meeting time and place and the importance of completing and returning it
  - How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (a Facebook page or group, Twitter, email, text messaging, a phone tree, or fliers the girls take home are just some ideas)
  - The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law
  - The Girl Scout program, especially what the GSLE is and what the program does for their daughters
  - When Girl Scout cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product sales teaches life skills and helps fund group activities
  - The cost of membership, which includes annual GSUSA dues, any group payments (ask your council), optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a girl’s book for a Journey)
  - The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Cookie Program and other product sales generate funds for the group treasury
  - That families can also make donations to the council—and why they might want to do that!
  - That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)
- Remind the group of the next meeting (if you’ll have one) and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best, or not at all if you’re diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via Facebook, Twitter, text messages, email, phone calls, or some other form of communication.
- After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the group, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.
Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

Inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all. You’re accepting and inclusive when you:

- Welcome every girl and focus on building community.
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition.
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment for girls.
- Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all girls and their families.
- Actively reach out to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized.
- Foster a sense of belonging to community as a respected and valued peer.
- Honor the intrinsic value of each person’s life.

A Variety of Formats for Publications

The Hispanic population is the largest-growing in the United States, which is why Girls Scouts has translated many of its publications into Spanish. Over time, Girl Scouts will continue to identify members’ needs and produce resources to support those needs, including translating publications into additional languages and formats.

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. As you do this, include the special needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don’t rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability: Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability—that’s one in five people, of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and religion.

As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) with disabilities. Historically, disabilities have been looked at from a deficit viewpoint with a focus on how people with disabilities could be fixed. Today, the focus is on a person’s abilities—on what she can do rather than on what she cannot.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it’s likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.
It’s important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts—not on the completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way. Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

- Invite a girl to complete an activity after she has observed others doing it.
- If you are visiting a museum to view sculpture, find out if a girl who is blind might be given permission to touch the pieces.
- If an activity requires running, a girl who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement.

In addition, note that people-first language puts the person before the disability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say…</th>
<th>Instead of…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She has a learning disability.</td>
<td>She is learning disabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a developmental delay.</td>
<td>She is mentally retarded; she is slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She uses a wheelchair.</td>
<td>She is wheelchair-bound.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When interacting with a girl (or parent/guardian) with a disability, consider these final tips:

- When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a parent/guardian or friend.
- It’s okay to offer assistance to a girl with a disability, but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help. Listen closely to any instructions the person may have.
- Leaning on a girl’s wheelchair is invading her space and is considered annoying and rude.
- When speaking to a girl who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to the girl, not to the interpreter.
- When speaking for more than a few minutes to a girl who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.
- When greeting a girl with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. You might say, “Hi, it’s Sheryl. Tara is on my right, and Chris is on my left.”

**Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities**

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.
Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year from October 1 to September 30. Membership dues (currently $15) are sent by the council to GSUSA; no portion of the dues stays with the council. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and is not refundable.

Pre-registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush. Early registration helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from the council, helps girls and councils plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. Girl Scout grade level is determined by the current membership year beginning Oct. 1.

Lifetime membership is available for adults at least 18 years old (or 17-year-old high-school graduates). Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate for Graduating Seniors. Graduating Seniors who wish to become Lifetime members must have their registration form submitted along with payment by September 1 following their high school graduation to qualify for the reduced rate. Cookie Credits may be used to pay the Lifetime membership fee for Graduating Seniors.

Online membership registration is available at www.kansasgirlscouts.org. Online membership registrations must be paid with either a credit card or debit card. A valid email address is required to complete the online process.

Troop Leaders can also register or re-register troop members online during the early registration time period. In order to use the Volunteer Tool Kit/Troop tab online to register members and print rosters you must be appointed as a leader.

If you have questions or difficulty, please contact us at info@gskh.org or call 1-888-686-MINT (6468). Our Customer Care staff members are available Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Inquiries received over the weekend or holiday will be answered on the next business day. Please include your first and last name, phone number and your question.

Keep your information updated.

It is very important that we have correct contact information on our members including current e-mail addresses. Please use a parent/guardian email address for all girls under the age of 13. Girls over the age of 13 may use their own email addresses. Throughout the year, we will use mailings and emails to keep you updated, so please be sure you keep all information current. If you need to update any information, please contact us at info@gskh.org or call 1-888-686-MINT (6468).
Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

(Revised July 2016)

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. Here’s what you need to know.

Volunteer Background Check

In addition to becoming registered adult Girl Scout members, volunteers must submit a criminal background check authorization before working with girls. All volunteer background checks expire after three (3) years. Active volunteers are required to complete an updated criminal background check every three (3) years.

Criminal Background Check Information

GSKH is committed to providing a safe and quality program for girls as they participate in Girl Scouting. In order to safeguard the girls in our care, criminal background checks will be conducted for all employees and specified volunteers. The criminal background check is a component of GSKH’s employee and volunteer placement procedure. The background check, conducted by a third-party national screening vendor, includes criminal records searches of convictions, arrests, court records, inmate records, and sex offender registries. It does not include credit checks or motor vehicle records checks.

After completing your membership, check your email (spam or junk as well) for an email from theadvocates@verifiedvolunteers.com. Click the link within the email to authorize your background check.

Once you have submitted your name, former names(s), permanent address, social security number, and date of birth through the secure online portal, the information is sent directly to the national screening vendor. Providing false information, including social security number and date of birth, may be considered justification for non-acceptance of or dismissal from a volunteer position. The social security number on the criminal history records check shall be used for no other purpose than to make the process for conducting a background search more accurate. The results of the background check will be sent to the GSKH Human Resources Manager.

Disqualification from Volunteer Participation

The decision to exclude or limit an individual’s participation as a volunteer is solely within the discretion of Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland, Inc. Convicted felons are prohibited from serving as Girl Scout leaders, co-leaders, troop committee members, or council employees. Factors to be considered regarding misdemeanor convictions include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the crime, and the length of time since the criminal conduct occurred. On a case by case basis, the council may permit or deny the application of a person convicted of a misdemeanor.
A registered sex offender is not allowed to be a Girl Scout staff member or leader, co-leader, troop committee member, or other volunteer as deemed appropriate. A person who has been found, as a juvenile, to have committed an offense that if committed by an adult would have been a sex offense, is not eligible for volunteer service or employment with GSKH. No one may be a Girl Scout leader, co-leader, or troop committee member if a member of their household is a registered sex offender or who has been found, as a juvenile, to have committed an offense that if committed by an adult would have been a sex offense. This applies regardless of the nature of the crime.

Background checks that find a criminal or sex offender conviction will be reviewed by the Human Resource Manager. A letter of pre-adverse action with a copy of the report and the Summary of Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) will be sent to the individual by certified mail. The individual will be asked to respond to the council. If the individual disagrees with the results of the check, he/she has thirty (30) days to dispute the results directly to the screening vendor.

GSKH will rely upon the information contained in the criminal history report until a corrected report has been provided. After 10 days, the Human Resources Manager will send the adverse action letter to the individual by certified mail. A letter of rejection (containing no confidential information) will be sent to the GSKH administrator, supervisor of the applicant/volunteer, and the staff supervisor.

**Confidentiality**
GSKH will maintain the confidentiality of all criminal background information, including information regarding disqualification decisions.

**Knowing Your Responsibilities**
You (the volunteer), the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections provide more details on everyone’s responsibilities.

**Responsibilities of the Volunteer**
Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.

4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow your council’s guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.

5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls’ families.

6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas. *GSKH requires approval for troop overnight experiences using the Travel Application found at kansasgirlscouts.org.*

8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.

9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.

10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers. Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.

12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.

**Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians**

You want to engage each parent or guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to:

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place. This can include such activities as: product sales, including Digital Cookie; overnight travel; the use of special equipment; or sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner, and inform you if someone other than a parent or guardian will drop off or pick up their child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Understand what appropriate behavior is for their daughters, as determined by the council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

**Responsibilities of Girls**

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
- Know how, when and where to get help when needed.
Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland expects that all volunteers will act in an appropriate manner at all times while participating in a Girl Scout capacity. At times it is necessary to use corrective action in order to maintain a positive, safe environment for girls and to protect the assets of girls, Girl Scout groups and the council.

Objectionable or unsatisfactory conduct will not be permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the violation. When possible, Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland will work with the volunteer to establish actions to correct the situation. Serious violations may involve immediate suspension or release from the volunteer position.

Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland or the volunteer may initiate termination of appointment to a volunteer role. A volunteer may be released from an appointed position because of the inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, including training and background check, failure to abide by GSUSA or GSKH policies or standards, misuse or mismanagement of Girl Scout funds, or failure to accept and foster the mission and goals of the organization. Volunteers may still be a registered member of Girl Scout of the United States of America regardless of voluntary resignation or council termination.
Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

Whatever the activity, from camping to cookies sales, adult supervision is required regardless of the grade level of the girls. The table below has been developed to show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls (councils may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions). These adult-to-girl supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of all girls taking part in the activity. For example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)</th>
<th>Group Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel, and Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for every:</td>
<td>Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3) | 20             | 12                          | 1-6                           |
| Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5) | 25             | 16                          | 1-8                           |
| Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8) | 25             | 20                          | 1-10                          |
| Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10) | 30             | 24                          | 1-12                          |
| Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12) | 30             | 24                          | 1-12                          |

Here are some examples on utilizing the chart: If you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three adults, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, you and someone who is not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. This is determined as follows: for up to 12 Daisies you need two adults, and one more adult for up to six additional girls. Since you have 17 girls, you need three adults (2+1). If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of whom is female, since the chart shows that two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes.
In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, or the age of majority defined by your state if it is older than 18.

Adult supervision for all girls also extends to any online activity. For additional information on online safety, please consult:

- The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

**Transporting Girls**

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent’s individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities (outside the normal meeting time and place) in which a group will be transported in private vehicles keep in mind the following:

- Every driver must be an approved volunteer at least 21 years old, and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female. In addition, the girl-volunteer ratios in the “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need” section must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in the “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need” section must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least 21 years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle. In addition, state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here.

Anyone who is driving a vehicle with 12 or more passengers must be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver’s license (CDL). Note, you must check with your council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles. Fifteen passenger vans are not recommended.

Please keep in mind the following non-negotiable points regarding private transportation:

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are not authorized to sign an agreement or contract, except for rental car agreements, even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such agreements must instead be signed by the person designated by your council.
- Check with your council to make sure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation. This ensures that both you and your council are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.
• If your council has given permission to use a rented car, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70. In addition, make sure the car is adequately insured and you know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Finally, ensure you have a good paper trail that shows the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related.

• Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place. See the GSKH Activity Permission Form.

**Checklist for Drivers**

When driving a car, RV or camper, take the following precautions and ask all other drivers to do the same:

• Ensure all drivers are adults at least 21 years old
• Girls should not be transporting other girls.
• Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
• Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.
• Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns and fluid levels before each trip, and recheck them periodically on long trips.
• Keep all necessary papers up to date including, but not limited to: your driver’s license; vehicle registration; any state or local inspections; and insurance coverage.
• Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same. Girls under 12 must ride in the back seats. State laws regarding child safety seats must be followed.
• Follow all the established rules of the road in your state, including the speed limit. Some additional guidelines include: keeping a two-car-length distance between you and the car ahead of you; not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device while driving; not using ear buds or headphones while driving; and turning your lights on when your windshield wipers are on.
• Plan rest stops every few hours and avoid driving for extended periods at night. If traveling with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers.
• Do NOT drive when you are tired or taking medication that makes you drowsy.

Check with your council for any other specific guidelines or requirements they have.
Product Sales Program Safety

Girl Scout council-sponsored product sales, which include magazines and nuts, as well as cookies, give girls proven opportunities to earn money and/or credits for their Girl Scout program activities. Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the country, with sales of more than $700 million per year for girls and their communities nationwide?

That's right. The Girl Scout Cookie sale is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: no university has produced as many female business owners as the Girl Scout Cookie Program has. If you have a moment, watch the latest Girl Scout What Can a Cookie Do? video for an inspiring look into just how powerful those treats—and the girls who sell them—can be.

Council-sponsored product sales also contribute significantly to the girls’ local councils and communities through take-action projects. In order to ensure the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls, which is always a top priority in any activity, you need to read and understand the following guidelines.

Prepare Early

Communicate with Parents

Ensure that the parents/guardians of all girls participating in product sales are fully informed about the activity including the:

- Safety precautions in place
- Need for appropriate clothing and/or supplies
- Need for advance arrangements for all transportation and confirmation of these plans
- Need for written permission from them in order for their daughter to participate
- Location of designated sale areas, which are also communicated to the Council

Communicate with Your Local Police Department

Establish a relationship with your local Police Department to determine any support they may be able to provide during product sales, especially those related to cookie booths, and any safety precautions they might suggest. While Police Departments vary from state to state and city to city, many of them have resources such as:

- School Resource Officers who have specific training for communicating with young people
- Community Volunteers who may be able to assist by being present during booth sales

Police departments can also provide information on areas and addresses to avoid, as well as access to known sex offender registries.

Prepare for Emergencies

Regardless of the type of activity, you need to be prepared for emergencies involving girls or other adults. This should include having a first aid kit always available and making sure that if someone is injured and needs help, that one adult cares for the injured person while another adult seeks help.
**Arrange for Adult Supervision**

Adults provide supervision and guidance for all grade levels, and must accompany Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders for or delivering products. Adults must be present at booth activities, regardless of the age of the girls (see also the section "Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need").

Adults who oversee Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must:
- Be aware of how, when and where the girls are selling products
- Be on call when girls are participating in product sales
- Be readily available to them should they need assistance.
- Help girls understand how to be safe in their surroundings, and always enforce the use of the buddy system

Adult supervision for all Girl Scouts extends to any online activity. Consult the “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints for specific information about safe online practices for all activities, and to obtain a copy of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.

**Plan for Safeguarding Money**

Girls should always have a plan for safeguarding money, which includes such things as:
- Not walking around with large amounts of money
- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Not keeping money at home or school
- Giving cookie money to supervising adults, who will deposit the money as soon as possible

**Use the Buddy System**

Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

**Be Streetwise and Follow Your Instincts**

In order to ensure the safety of girls while selling door-to-door, you and the girls should become familiar with the areas and neighborhoods in which girls would like to sell. In addition, girls should:
- Participate in door-to-door sales only during daylight hours
- Wear a membership pin, uniform, or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts.
- Avoid a house or person that makes them uncomfortable. They should walk away and find the next person/place that does not make them uncomfortable
- Call 9-1-1 if they see someone that seems to be acting in a way that makes them feel unsafe. This could include, but is not limited to, any person who is staring at
them for long periods, seems to be following them for no apparent reason or takes pictures of the them

- Use safe pedestrian practices, such as crossing at corners and obeying walk signals
- Not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and to avoid selling to people in vehicles (except at drive-thru cookie booths) or going into alleys
- Should not carry large amounts of money (see “Plan for Safeguarding Money”, above)

**Booth Sales**

Cookie booths are a traditional and fun way of selling Girl Scout Cookies. Booth locations are approved by councils, facilitated within council jurisdiction and you must follow all council guidelines with regard to setting up, manning and taking down a booth.

When setting up booth sales, it’s important that:

- Two approved adult volunteers are present at all times
- There is adequate space at the booth for table, products and girls and to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes and cars.
- Girls are a safe distance from cars. If possible, set up a safety barrier between cars and the booth—perhaps a few volunteers could park their cars in spaces near the booth location
- The booth is not blocking a store entrance or exit
- Girls and adults do not confront or engage an irate customer, but call local authorities for assistance

While girls can receive cash from buyers and make change, they should hand the money to an adult for safekeeping. It is important that cash is kept safe and out of sight. This can be accomplished by:

- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Having an adult volunteer keep the money by, for example, securing it in a front-facing pouch tied around her waist.

If someone takes money or cookies from your booth, **do not** attempt to physically recover the stolen items and **do not** allow the girls to do so. Instead, get a good description of the offender(s), call 911, and alert local security (if applicable). Make sure girls know what to do in case of theft. Report any incidents to your local council according to its guidelines.

For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult your council guidelines.
Computer/Online Safety

Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

In order to make sure that girls are aware of how to safely use the Internet, you should discuss online safety issues with the girls and distribute copies of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (the pledge is available at the end of this document and at www.girlscouts.org). The girls should also take a copy of the pledge home and go over it with their parents. Both the girl and her parent should sign the pledge.

Setting Up a Troop/Group Website

Troops whose girls meet age criteria (13 years or older) and have parental permission may set up a group Facebook page or website. This site must be approved by the council, yes, but it can be a fantastic way for girls to share information, market Girl Scout products, and talk about their Take Action projects.

Don’t violate copyright law by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder (and, generally, this permission is pretty tough to get!). Girl Scout trademarks (such as the trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, and badges and patches) can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a website.) Check with your council’s website for complete graphics guidelines and approvals.

Safeguard Information

Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults not be disclosed on a website. The following measures will help to ensure girls’ online safety:

- Girl Scouts should only use their first names
- A Girl Scout’s last name, address, phone number, or email address should never be posted. For Digital Cookie a girl may post her unique Digital Cookie URL on her Facebook page and may email it to friends and family (for additional information please refer to Safety Activity Checkpoint for Online Product Sales, Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Volunteers and Digital Cookie Pledge for Girls)
- Always have a parent’s or guardian’s permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old
- Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an email to the families
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media and guest books should have adult oversight, and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal email addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or adult’s email.
Safety in Technology Based Sales

Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons including the online marketing and sale of approved Girl Scout related products. Below are some key points to keep in mind for all online sales and marketing:

- Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girls may send email messages to alert friends and relatives about product sales and accept customer commitments via email
- Social media sites may be used to market product, however, all applicable GSUSA and council guidelines must be followed

- Girls writing product emails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal emails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
  - A blind return address account where the girls’ name or personal email is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site
  - A group account, monitored by an adult
  - An adult’s email account, which is supervised by that adult
- Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult.
- Selling cookies at a business without girl involvement does not encourage the sale to be a girl-led activity and is prohibited. Selling cookies through online sales sites such as eBay, Craigslist, Buy and Sell sites, or community sites is also prohibited.

For Digital Cookie there are additional, specific guidelines, some of which are:

- Girls must read and accept the Girl Scout Digital Cookie Pledge before they can participate in Digital Cookie
- Volunteers must read and accept the Digital Cookie Terms and Conditions for Volunteers before they can participate in Digital Cookie
- Girls may only post about their participation on Digital Cookie on social media that allows them to restrict access to friends and family (e.g. Facebook).
- Parents/guardians must approve the content of a girls Digital Cookie web page before it goes live
- For girls under 13 years old, a parent/guardian must manage the girl’s web site and be responsible for all content. In other words, girls under 13 are not allowed to post anything to their websites; it must be done by their parent/guardian.

Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate for Girl Scouts? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What’s safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call your council staff with full details and don’t proceed without approval. Remember, the safety of girls is your most important consideration.

Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints (available on your council’s website or from your support team in some other format) related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with your council before making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely:

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your council for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot air balloons, and blimps.

- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, and outdoor trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls’ individual skills. Bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for building teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the Connect key in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint includes these tips:

- **Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.

- **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary (this is dependent upon the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls). Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by your state, if it is older than 18), and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.

- **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
Communicate with council and parents. Follow council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and council guidelines about girls’ general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.

**Be prepared for emergencies and compile key contacts.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls’ parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls’ families. Check Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine the type of first aider needed.

**Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Remain in shelter for 30 minutes after the last thunder clap or an all clear whistle is blown. Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

**Use the buddy system.** Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

**Health Histories**

**(Including Examinations and Immunizations)**

Girl Scout health histories and records may be handled differently by each council. For example, the staff at your council office may take care of obtaining and storing girl health histories, including a physician’s examination and list of required immunizations. In other councils, you may be asked to maintain these records for your group. Either way, keep in mind that information contained in a girl’s health history is confidential and protected by law. This information may only be shared with people who have a need to know this information such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian and a healthcare provider.

For various reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. Councils must attempt to make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these concerns.
It is important for you to be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have. Keep in mind the following:

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl’s custodial parent or guardian (your council can provide the necessary form).
- Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, EpiPens or diabetes medication. You must have documentation from the girl’s parent or guardian that it is acceptable for the girl to self-administer these medications.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts and seafood. This means that before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies or chips), ask whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products or wheat. Do this even if you are aware of which girls have specific allergies! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with them and their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

**Girl Scout Activity Insurance**

Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic Mutual of Omaha Activity Insurance plan upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA, and the basic plan is effective during the regular fiscal year (October 1 to the following September 30). Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new members who register in the month of August.

This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. This is one reason why all adults and girls should be registered members. It is important to remember that non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters and friends) and other persons are not covered by the basic plan.

This insurance coverage is not intended to diminish the need for, or replace existing, family health insurance. When $130 in benefits has been paid under this plan for covered expenses, any subsequent benefits from the basic plan will be payable (up to the specified maximum) only for expenses incurred that aren’t covered under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available under the basic plan.

Additional insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking trips lasting three nights or more and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. Additional insurance is mandatory for any Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland activity involving three nights or more, as well as overseas travel. For details about insurance coverage and to apply for additional coverage, contact the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland at 1-888-686-MINT (6468) or info@gskh.org.

Review the [Girl Scouts insurance plan](#) description here.
Experts

The Safety Activity Checkpoints for most activities require having an expert on hand to help girls learn an activity. Please remember that all experts must be approved by your council. To make it a bit easier, many councils keep lists of local experts (such as sailing instructors) and facilities (such as roller skating rinks) they’ve already approved. If your council doesn’t keep these lists, you’ll have to present an expert for the council’s consideration. Some things to keep in mind:

- **Does the person have documented training and experience?** She or he should have documented experience for the activity in question, such as course completion certificates or cards, records of previous training to instruct the activity and letters of reference.

- **What does she or he need to be able to do?** This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision and procedures for the activity. At the very least, she or he should be able to give clear instructions to girls and adults, troubleshoot unexpected scenarios and respond appropriately in an emergency.

- **How are you using this person’s expertise?** If the goal is for participants to become certified in an activity, the expert must be certified as an instructor. If the goal is to facilitate an activity for a group of girls, then the expert must either have a certification, or have experience leading this activity and be able to provide information which may include references and/or a skills demonstration.

- Questions and requests for vetting experts should be directed to your regional GSKH office.

Providing Emergency Care: What to do...

If There is an Accident

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe council procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the injured person. Follow established council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of council staff, parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department or hospital. Check with your council for emergency contact information.

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a Girl Scout needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff members discuss the incident with media representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, the police must be notified and a responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings and follow police instructions. Do not share information about the
accident with anyone but the police, your council and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

Always complete a Crisis/Incident Information form and submit to the council. Do not surrender permission slips or medical records. Keep your copies.

**If Someone Needs Emergency Care**

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to adults any accidents, illnesses or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. You can help girls by keeping in mind the following:

- **Know what to report.** See the “What To Do If There is an Accident” section earlier in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Know the type of extreme weather to expect in your area (e.g. tornadoes, hurricanes and lightning). Please consult with your council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons and building-security issues.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can make a significant difference in the severity of an injury. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911, and then administer first aid, if appropriately trained.

**First-Aid and CPR Requirements**

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR-certified. GSKH requires troops to be accompanies by someone currently certified in First-Aid and CPR for any activity or trip beyond their regular meeting site, any physically demanding activity, and all overnight trips.

You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, MEDIC FirstAid, American Heart Association or other sponsoring organizations approved by your council. GSKH offers discounted courses through National Safety Council, check the online event calendar for details.

**Caution:** First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts' requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you’re taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or council prior to enrolling in the course.
**Wilderness First Aid**

The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first-aider needs to be present. Since activities can take place in a variety of locations, the presence of a first-aider and the qualifications they need to have are based on the remoteness of the activity. For example, if you take a two-mile hike in an area that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) is no more than 30 minutes away at all times the first-aider will not need to have knowledge of wilderness first aid. If, on the other hand, you take the same two-mile hike in a more remote area with no cell phone service and where EMS is more than 30 minutes away, the first-aider must have knowledge of wilderness first aid (see the chart below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to EMS</th>
<th>Minimum Level of First Aid Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 minutes</td>
<td>Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to understand the differences between a first-aid course, and a wilderness-rated course. Although standard first-aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as emergency first-aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when EMS is not readily available.

**Note:** The presence of a first-aider is required at resident camp. For large events—200 people or more—there should be one first-aider for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders: physician; physician’s assistant; nurse practitioner; registered nurse; licensed practical nurse; paramedic; military medic; and emergency medical technician.

**First-Aid Kit**

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its [Anatomy of a First Aid Kit](https://www.redcross.org/preparedness/emergency-kit) (note that the Red Cross’s suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission). You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms and health histories may also be included.
If You Witness or Experience Abuse

Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have statues identifying persons who are required to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. Therefore, if you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, follow your council’s guidelines for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your state.

For additional information please check the following resources:

- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect: https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm
Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances

Helping girls decide what they want to do, and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals, is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Your Girl Scout group plans and finances its own activities, with your guidance. At the same time, the girls learn many valuable skills that serve them throughout their lives.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as the Girl Scout cookie program), group money-earning activities (council-approved, of course), and any dues your group may charge. (This is in addition to the annual membership dues that go to the national organization.) This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account and helping girls manage their group's finances, practice successful product-sales techniques, and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

For information and guidance on safety related to product sales see Chapter 4, Safety-Wise.

Ownership of Assets

All money and other assets, including property, that are raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be held and authorized by a Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA. Such money and other assets must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. They are the property of and are administered by the Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA and shall not be sold, given, transferred, or conveyed to a third party for less than fair market value. Such assets are not the property of individuals, troops, geographic units, subordinate units, or communities within a Girl Scout council. (Girl Scouts of the USA, Blue Book of Basic Documents)

Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband is the property of the council. Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to use it for girl activities. All accounts must be closed by a council representative, therefore if you are considering closing your account please contact your Volunteer Support staff member.

Establishing an Account

If your group is earning and spending money, the group needs to set up a bank account. If you’re taking over an existing group, you may inherit a checking account, but a new group will need to open a new account. Typically a new account is set up when there is money to deposit such as troop/group dues, start up funds, or money from product sales.

New Troop Start-up Funds

Your Service Unit may provide start-up funds for new troops. Start-up funds can be requested from the council if your Service Unit does not provide them. Contact your regional GSKH office to request start-up funds after girl membership registrations have been completed for the new troop. The council allows $5.00 per registered girl up to a maximum of $100.
Bank Selection

- Select a bank that offers free checking accounts to non-profit organizations.
- Avoid using a credit union as these institutions may have additional requirements for opening accounts.
- Avoid accounts that require a minimum balance, charge monthly service fees, have minimum/maximum transaction limits, or charge a fee if you deposit a bad check.
- We recommend selecting a bank that is different from where you hold your personal accounts if possible.
- If you are an employee of a banking institution we require that you select a different bank for your group account.
- If online banking is important to you, be sure to ask the bank or your council representative which banks offer this service to non-profits. This is not always permissible due to accounts sharing the same Tax Identification Number.
- Once you have selected your bank, be sure to review the business hours of the branch you will be using. Some banking institutions do not allow for business deposits to be made through the drive-thru, so you will have to visit them during their lobby’s business hours.

Account Signers

- The group must select two non-related, registered, and approved adult volunteers to be account signers.
  - Signers must maintain their annual Girl Scout membership and renew their background check every three years. This is due September 30 each year. Failure of one or both signers to renew memberships and background checks by December 15 may result in removal of signers or closure of the account.
- Troop/Group account signers must be actively serving the troop in a volunteer role. A service unit volunteer can not serve as the second signer on the troop account unless he/she is serving in a volunteer capacity with the troop. If you do not have a second signer, please contact your Girl Scout office and we will work together to fill this position.
- One signer will maintain the checkbook and/or debit card. Another signer will receive the monthly bank statement and maintain a detailed record of income and expenses.

Financial Management Training

- All signers must complete Financial Management Training. It is available online on the Volunteer Resources page at www.kansasgirlscouts.org.
- Following the training, each signer will complete the Financial Management quiz. At the end of the quiz the signer will provide us with the bank that they have selected for their account.

Opening an Account

- Once the completed Financial Management quiz has been approved by the council, the council signer for your area will prepare a letter with the information the bank needs to open the new account. Depending on the bank’s preference, it will be sent to one of the signers or directly to the bank.
o The letter will not be sent until each signer has completed Financial Management training.

- All accounts will be named Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland, INC – Troop XXXXX or Group XXXXX.
- After the bank has created the account, your council signer will give you further direction regarding the signature cards.
- Once the signature card has been signed by all designated signers, the troop/group will be able to purchase checks for their account. If you select to order pre-printed checks only put “Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland Inc” and “Troop Number” on them. If the bank requires that an address be printed on the checks, please use your local council office address.
- Each troop/group is allowed only ONE debit card. The debit card application will be signed with signature cards.

Use of Troop/Group Funds
Troop funds must benefit all members of the troop equally. Funds cannot be earmarked in individual accounts based on a member’s participation in product sales, money-earning activities, or other ways of dividing funds.

Valid troop expenses include:
- GSUSA registration dues
- Meeting supplies, activities, snacks
- Day trips or events
- Troop camping or travel
- Community service
  - Girl Scouts are encouraged to support other worthy organizations through community service, Take Action projects, and Higher Awards. Troop/group funds may be used to purchase supplies for these projects. A monetary donation of troop/group funds is discouraged as girl learning occurs through the planning, execution, and completion of the project and not through the direct gift of funds.
- GSKH shop purchases (program books, awards, etc)
- Adult learning opportunities (FA/CPR, Outdoor Leadership, etc)

A troop/group account signer may need to be reimbursed from troop funds for troop purchases. The co-signer on the troop/group account should write the reimbursement check. Checks should never be made out to “CASH, “and the payee of a check should never be the same person as the signer. Cash should not be withdrawn from an ATM or requested as cashback with a purchase.
Tracking Troop/Group Finances

- All troop/group money needs to be deposited into the troop/group bank account. No more than $25 should be kept in a petty cash fund.
- One signer will maintain the checkbook and/or debit card. Another signer will receive the monthly bank statement and maintain a detailed record of income and expenses.
- The detailed record will account for all the money received or paid out of the troop/group treasury. All receipts should be maintained with troop financial records for proof of monies spent if requested.
- GSKH provides a worksheet titled “Detailed Record of Troop/Group Funds” that can be printed or tracked in Excel. Volunteers may also use money management software such as Quicken if they choose.
- The troop/group account records should be reconciled with the bank statement on a monthly basis.
- Financial records should be kept for seven years (previous six years plus the current year). Receipts may be discarded six months after annual Finance Summary is approved.
- If the troop/group treasurer changes, records should be transferred to the new treasurer.

Reporting Troop/Group Finances

- **To Parents:** Financial records should be made available to parents to view as requested. Troop financial status should be reported to the parents regularly (at least bi-annually).
- **To Girls:** Girls should be involved in financial decisions, as appropriate for their age. Troop financial status should be reported to older girls regularly (at least quarterly). Girls as young as Brownies can be involved in budgeting and decisions on troop expenses.
- **To Council:** An annual summary of your troop/group account is to be filed with the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland no later than June 30th each year. This statement is titled the “Troop Finance Summary” and it will be submitted through your Volunteer Toolkit.
  - Failure to file the annual summary by September 30 may result in removal of signers or closure of the account.

Bad Check Recovery Procedures

- Be sure that your troop/group’s BounceBack form is on file with the bank when you open your account. Fax a copy to BounceBack using the number on the form.
- Once this form is processed, insufficient fund checks deposited into the troop/group account will be sent to BounceBank for collection.
- Do not accept any payments from the returned check account holder to cover the check after receiving notification of the insufficient fund check. All payments must be made to BounceBack.
• Submit the Bad Check Recovery Form to the council to receive reimbursement for the returned check, if the check was for payment of products for the Fall Opportunity Sale or Cookie sale.
• If the insufficient check was payment for something other than Product Sales, please contact the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland Finance Department at 888-686-MINT (6468).

**Account Maintenance for Existing Troop/Group Accounts**

• All account changes should be requested to the bank by the designated council signer in your region. To make changes such as adding/removing a designated signer, changing an address, or changing banks please contact the Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland at 888-686-MINT (6468).

**Closing your Troop/Group Account**

• Contact your Volunteer Support staff member to close your account. The designated council signer will submit the necessary documents to the bank for closure of the account.
• Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to use remaining funds for Girl Scout activities through September 30, the end of the current membership year. See “Use of Girl Scout Funds” for allowable expenditures.
• Before contacting the council to close the account, be sure that all checks and other debits have cleared the account.
• A final Troop Finance Summary will need to be submitted through the Volunteer Toolkit.
• Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband is the property of the council.
Money-Earning Basics

Groups earn money for their troop in two distinct ways:

- **The Girl Scout Cookie Program and other sales** of Girl Scout–authorized products (such as Girl Scout cookies and nuts/candy/magazines), organized by your council and open to all Girl Scouts. Girls can participate in two council-sponsored product sale activities each year: one of which may be the cookie sale and one other council-authorized product sale. All girl members who participate in Girl Scouting are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product-sale activities, with volunteer supervision. Please remember: volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don’t sell cookies and other products—girls do.

- **“Group money-earning”** refers to activities organized by the group (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and that earn money for the group.

Girls’ participation in both council-sponsored product sale activities and group money-earning projects is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of each girl’s parent or guardian
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl (see Chapter 4 for guidance)
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

There are a few specific guidelines—some required by the Internal Revenue Service—that ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity. To that end, consider the following reminders and cautions:

- All rewards earned by girls through the product-sale activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops and Groups are encouraged to participate in council product sales as their primary money-earning activity; additional group money-earning shouldn’t compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product sales.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event, donation request, or sponsorship using the Money-Earning Project Application.
- Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland forbids the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) will not be approved.
- Girl Scout Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment towards the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and
Girl Scout Fall Product Program products through participation in Council approved product sale donation programs.

- Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business (For example: In home product parties). Any business using the Girl Scout trademark must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the GSLE.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following council procedures.
- Troop funds must benefit all members of the troop equally. Funds cannot be earmarked in individual accounts based on a member’s participation in product sales, money-earning activities, or other ways of dividing funds.

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

Council-sponsored product sales are really the best way for girls to earn money to pursue their goals: the sales are beloved by the community and come with program, sales, and marketing materials and support that help girls run a great business. And they’re an integral part of the GSLE.

With every season of cookies, another generation of girls learns five important skills:

- Goal setting
- Decision making
- Money management
- People skills
- Business ethics

And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It’s not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you’re doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life.

Before beginning any cookies or other product sales with your group, refer to the cookies section of Girl Scout Central and www.girlscoutcookies.org

A Sweet Tradition

It has been decades since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand. For more on Girl Scout Cookie History, visit http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/history.asp

Two commercial bakers are currently licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC/Interbake Foods—and each council selects the baker of its choice. Each baker gets to name its own cookies (which is why some cookies have two names) and gets to decide which flavors it will offer in a given year, besides the three mandatory flavors (Thin Mints, Do-Si-Dos®/Peanut Butter Sandwich, and
Trefoils/Shortbread). For additional information on cookie varieties, including nutritional details, visit www.girlscoutcookies.org.

Your Council’s Role

Each year, your council provides learning opportunities on the procedures to follow during each sale. Your council also establishes guidelines and procedures for conducting the sale and determines how the proceeds and girl reward system will be managed.

Knowing Where Proceeds Go

Your council will provide a breakdown of “how the cookie crumbles” in your council. Please share this information with girls and their parents/guardians so everyone’s clear on how revenue raised through product sales makes it possible for your Girl Scout council to serve girls. Proceeds resulting from product sales support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product sales are a primary way in which your council raises funds to support Girl Scouting. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating groups (like yours) is determined by your council and explained to girls and adults as part of the product sale activity orientation.

The income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Council sponsored camps, programs and programmatic materials.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate rewards related to product sale activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, rewards, and council credit for event fees, camp fees, grants for travel and Take Action projects, as well as materials and supplies for program activities. The council plan for rewards applies equally to all girls participating in the product sale activity.

One critical task for each troop/group, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group’s volunteer, you’re in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income is tracked, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as they learn to keep impeccable records.

The Girl/Adult Partnership

Underlying all the lessons that girls can learn from their participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the girl/adult partnership. Ideally, this is a partnership between the girl and her leader and between the girl and her parents or guardian. Adult members do not sell cookies, they participate only in supporting the direct involvement of girls.

During the Girl Scout Cookie Program the girl/adult partnership may look like this:

- An adult and girl working together to make plans and set goals.
- An adult assisting a girl by giving her access to the information and training she needs but letting the girl do the selling and delivering of cookies.
- An adult guiding a girl in understanding the finances and letting her practice the skills.
- An adult advising a girl on how to market her cookies but allowing her to make her make her own decisions.
An adult helping a girl understand her responsibility to support her local council but ensuring that her participation is voluntary.

**Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies**

Girl safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookie and other products. Volunteers, Parents and girls should be familiar with and practice the following:

- Chapter 4 Safety Wise – Volunteer Essentials
- Girl Scout Cookie/Council – Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Safety Tips for Product Sales
- Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints

**Girl Scout Cookie Booths**

Cookie booths, or temporary sales set-ups in areas with lots of foot traffic, are a popular way for girls to sell cookies as a team. Your council may have established cookie booth locations; contact the council before planning a cookie booth of your own.

Once you’ve gotten council approval, check out the booth site before the day of the sale. Talk to business owners in the area so they’ll know what to expect. Find out what security measures are in place—these may include lights for evening sales and whether a security camera watches the booth area—and where the nearest bathrooms are located. In addition, review the Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoints, as well as Chapter 4, Safety-Wise to make sure you and the girls are as prepared as possible.

On the day of the sale, these tips will help make booth sales enjoyable for everyone:

- Ensure that you have adequate space at the booth (table, products, and girls) to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
- Plan to have at least two approved adult volunteers and two girls at the booth at all times. From time to time, volunteers might want to take breaks or will have to accompany young girls to the bathroom, so make sure to have a few extra adults on hand.
- Girls make all sales, except in cases where adults are helping Daisies handle money.
- Respect the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn’t blocking a store entrance or exit.
- Attract customers with colorful signs. Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested shoppers.
- Report any suspicious people in the area to local security.

**Cookie Donation Programs**

Your council may have a cookie donation program established where customers may purchase cookies for the sole purpose of having them donated to an organization coordinated by your council. This is a great talking point for girls to share with their customers and a great way to help teach girls that the cookie program can make a big impact in their community and to others.

Here are some things to remember about cookie donations:
• All cookie donation programs must be approved by your council
• Donated cookies must stay within the council jurisdiction unless your council has the approval from other council jurisdictions
• Donated products cannot be resold and must be used in a responsible and ethical way
• Donated products are used in a way that does not undermine the work of councils or jeopardizes the integrity of the Girl Scout Brand

Handling Product Complaints

It has always been the practice of Girl Scout councils and the bakers to guarantee customer satisfaction with their cookies. If a customer for some reason is not satisfied with the quality of their cookies they can contact the baker via the number printed on the side of the box of cookies.

Troops/group should notify their council if they are aware of any customer dissatisfaction.

Using Online Resources and Social Media to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls may use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, text messages, IMs, and emails as online marketing tools to let family, friends, and former customers know about the sale and collect indications of interest. All are effective ways that girls age 13 and older can promote cookie and other product sales. Girls under 13 years old cannot independently set up online marketing sites. Girls under 13 years old can use their parent or guardians online sites with their approval and supervision.

Girls can use electronic marketing, social media, and troop/group websites to gather sale commitments from family, friends, and previous customers. But first, please keep in mind that girls:

• Can market to and collect indications of interest from customers within their councils’ zip codes. Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to the council finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org. Family members and Digital Cookie sales are the exception to this rule.
• Digital Cookie is the only approved online sales tool available for girls to use when selling cookies. Outside of Digital Cookie, girls cannot set up online sites where cookies are sold and money is exchange via the Internet.
• Selling cookies at a business without girl involvement does not encourage the sale to be a girl-led activity and is prohibited. Selling cookies through online sales sites such as eBay, Craigslist, Buy and Sell sites, or community sites is also prohibited.
• Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (available at http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of adults.
• Cannot expose their own or any other girl’s email address, physical address, or phone number to the public. When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their group number or name and their council name.
See Chapter 4, Safety-Wise for additional information and guidance regarding online product marketing and sales.

It is important to remember the twofold purpose of the Girl Scout Cookie Program when selling cookies or other products. The primary purposes of these sales are to help girls grow and develop and to generate the revenue necessary to provide Girl Scouting to as many girls as possible. For this reason, girls should be directly involved in any sales that are made, whether in person or over the Internet.

**Additional Money-Earning Projects**

The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout cookie activities and other council-sponsored product sales. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own. Money-earning projects include fundraising events, donation requests, and sponsorships. You must gain prior approval from the council using the Money-Earning Project Application prior to organizing additional money-earning projects.

**Fundraising Events**

Other money earning activities may include:

**Collections/Drives:**
- Cell phones for refurbishment
- Used ink cartridges turned in for money
- Christmas tree recycling

**Food/Meal Events:**
- Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
- Themed meals, like high tea, Indian meal, Mexican dinner (if girls are earning money for travel, tie the meal to their destination)

**Service(s):**
- Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service; funds go to support trip)
- Babysitting for holiday (New Year’s Eve) or council events
- Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
- Cooking class or other specialty class

If your fundraising event will be offered specifically to Girl Scout members, use the Event Application instead of the Money Earning Application. For example, a troop of Cadettes may select to offer a badge workshop for Brownies at a price point that covers the cost of event materials and a small profit for the troop. The Event Application will gather the additional details needed for the online calendar and the online registration website.
Donations, In-Kind Services/Merchandise, and Sponsorships

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The sponsor’s contribution can then be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

For information on working with a sponsor, consult your council; it can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. Your council may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons not to collaborate with certain organizations.

Troops/groups may not apply for donations from Community Foundations of United Ways. Exceptions may be considered in communities where the council is not soliciting these organizations.

Donations and sponsorships exceeding a $75 value require prior council approval. In order for a business or organization to receive a tax-deductible donation receipt, the donation must be submitted to Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland Corporate Headquarters. The donation will be turned over to the troop/group who secured approval for the donation. Troops/groups that receive donations over $75 without prior approval may be subject to a processing fee of up to 10 percent of the donation amount.

When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

- **Avoiding fundraising for other organizations:** Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on), to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your group can, however, support another organization through take-action projects. And Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, as long as they’re not wearing anything that officially identifies them as “Girl Scouts.”

- **Steering clear of political fundraisers:** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.

- **Being respectful when collaborating with religious organizations:** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.

- **Avoiding selling or endorsing commercial products:** “Commercial products” is any product sold at retail. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.
Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is so well known in communities, it’s likely that your girls will already know a bit about it and want to get out there to start selling as soon as possible. But it's important that the girls have a clear plan and purpose for their product-sale activities. One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?

2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group’s account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).

3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.

4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product sales—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group’s goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group’s financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from your council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

**Remember:** It’s great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie Program, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the GSLE. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!
**Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level**

As with other activities, girls progress in their financial and sales abilities as they get older. This section gives you some examples of the abilities of girls at each grade level.

### Girl Scout Daisies

Group volunteers handle money, keep financial records, and do all group budgeting.

The leadership team, in conjunction with parents/guardians may decide what they will contribute to the cost of activities.

Girls can participate in Girl Scout cookie activities and other council-sponsored product sales.

Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.

### Girl Scout Brownies

Group volunteers handle money, keep financial records, and share some of the group-budgeting responsibilities with the girls.

Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls, in conjunction with their leadership team and parents/guardians, may decide to pay dues to contribute to the cost of activities.

### Girl Scout Juniors

Group volunteers retain overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record-keeping, but share or delegate all other financial responsibilities to the girls.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).

Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis of plans and income from the group dues.

Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls estimate costs based on plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls determine the amount of group dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for extended travel, Take Action projects, and leadership projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls may be involved in seeking donations for Take Action projects, with council approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>