

## Parents' Prejoining Conference

Prior to joining a troop, parents and the Scout should meet with the Scout leader to explain the prospective Scout's special needs. The Scout should be present at the prejoining conference so that he clearly understands the expectations of him, his parents, and the troop. Allow him to speak for himself as much as possible. The following are some of the issues that should be discussed.

### **General Characteristics**

The Scout leader should attempt to obtain a general picture of the Scout's strengths and weaknesses. The leader should be aware of special needs that might arise at meetings, campouts, field trips, etc.

*Since most Scout troops do not have assistant leaders who have expertise in working with Scouts with disabilities, a parent may be required to attend troop activities, especially those activities that might require strenuous physical effort or that occur over an extended period of time.*

### **Physical Disabilities**

Physical limitations should be discussed with the parents and Scout. The medical histories on the back of the membership application form should be filled out completely and kept on file *with the unit*. If you anticipate that this Scout may need exceptions made in the advancement process, then you may wish to obtain either a medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities from a licensed health-care provider, or an evaluation statement certified by an educational administrator.

### **Mental Capabilities**

The Scout leader should be advised by the parents of their son's capabilities. The Scout leader should know the Scout's present grade level and his reading, listening, and mathematical abilities. The Scout leader can then determine how best to help the Scout get the fullest program possible.

### **Medication**

While it is the responsibility of the Scout and/or his parent or guardian to ensure that he takes his prescription medication correctly, the Scout leader should be aware of what medication the Scout takes regularly. A Scout leader, after obtaining *written* permission and instructions for administering any medications, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate or encourage the Scout leader to do so. Also, if state laws are more limiting, they must be followed.

### **Discipline**

Parents should be asked about any behavioral issues. Troop rules should be discussed with the parents and the Scout. The Scout leader should determine the discipline used to maintain appropriate behavior. The Scout leader should explain disciplinary procedures (sitting out games, suspension from a troop meeting or campout, etc.) to the parents. Have rules in writing for parents and youth.

### **Diet and Eating Problems**

Any special diets or restrictions, and any chewing or swallowing problems, should be explained to the Scout leader. If special diet is necessary, food for campouts should be provided by the parents.

### **Living Skills**

The Scout's ability to attend to his personal needs, and any special help he might require in this area, should be discussed with parents.

### **Transportation**

Transportation to and from troop meetings is the parents' responsibility. Carpooling with other parents is suggested but should be arranged among parents.

### **Unit Operation**

The Scout leader should explain the Scouting program and emphasize why advancement (at whatever rate possible) is important to the Scout. Parents should be encouraged to reinforce their son's activities.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Parents must inform the Scout leader of the name and phone number of their son's doctor. His medical history should be discussed in full. Appropriate medical permissions should be obtained. (See informed consent form.)