

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parental involvement and support is an important ingredient in providing a positive experience for all girls in Girl Scouting. Each parent is urged to give assistance to the leader in ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of girls.

We know this is easier said than done. Here are a few tips to help involve **ALL** parents/guardians.



Ask a specific person to do a specific job.

Be clear; be specific.

General pleas fall on deaf ears; they think someone else is helping.

Develop a list of jobs to be done, and ASK.



Make it **YOUR** goal to involve every parent in some way.

Be **Creative**; use the list of jobs that need to be done. Keep asking; use your parent network - if parents can't help, perhaps they can point you in the right direction of people who can.



Troop newsletters keep parents informed.

Communicate regularly and in a variety of ways with parents.

Thank parents that help you in your newsletter - others will see it.

Have the troop write thank-you's to parents.



If you want parents to help - give plenty of notice!

It is hard to rearrange schedules at the last minute - but given time, people will try.



Recruit a Troop Committee.

The troop committee is the support behind a troop. It is a group of 3 - 5 adults who are registered Girl Scout members and who help the girls and leaders carry out their plans. By dividing the work among committee members, the leader's workload is greatly reduced.



FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE!

This piece comes from "America Online," subject: "Best Advice I Ever Got..."

I have been thinking about how hard being a leader was for me for the first few years and especially how hard it was to get enough help from parents. I almost quit many times. But, I happened to be talking to a much older woman who had been a Girl Scout leader for years and years and years and she gave me this advice. "Never, ever complain to a parent about the work involved in being a leader. Only talk about the satisfactions, the funny things that have happened, what you have learned about their daughter and how much you enjoyed their daughter's company. Talk about the joys you have experienced and the great fun you have had. Always be ready to tell something interesting or share a story about something that happened at a camp out, field trip, etc. Be enthusiastic and excited; never negative. Do not ever complain about anything." She told me that, if I tried that for a year, that the next year I would have parents begging to help, and IT WORKED! I now have six co-leaders, five of us have had leadership training. I have two parents begging to be in charge of Girl Scout Cookie sales. Every single parent is doing something significant. We have dads just starting to get in the act, too.

-- Pam Sorooshian

Developing the Parent Partnership

Why? Parents who are involved and informed increase girl enjoyment and reduce your time and headaches.

How? The key is ASKING! You need to plan far enough in advance to be able to do this. Parent meetings are the best place to accomplish this. **THREE PARENT MEETINGS A YEAR ARE NOT TOO MUCH!**

- ★ **FALL PARENT MEETING** - Use to organize troop, recruit troop committee, discuss troop's plans, and recruit drivers and other help for fall events.
- ★ **WINTER PARENT MEETING**- Kick-off Cookie Sale Program, discuss troop plans for January through March, Court of Awards, recruit adult help for activities.
- ★ **SPRING PARENT MEETING** - Discuss summer plans, Spring Registration, Court of Awards.

The key to parental support is to communicate regularly, in a variety of ways. Parents who clearly understand that Girl Scouting is a family partnership, not a baby-sitting service, will support their daughter's efforts in the troop. Here are some tips on communicating and building on a partnership.

- ★ **HAVE THE GIRLS WRITE A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS.** It can include news of future plans, ongoing work, and successful meetings or events.
- ★ **OFFER A VARIETY OF WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP.** Some people prefer behind the scenes work such as preparing craft materials or telephoning. Others are better at working with adults. Still others have careers, hobbies, and interests that they could share at meetings.
- ★ **OFFER ALL PARENTS AND ADULTS CONNECTED WITH THE TROOP THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME ADULT MEMBERS OF GIRL SCOUTING.** As members, they will see their role as supporters and partners more clearly.
- ★ **SCHEDULE ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO WHICH PARENTS CAN BE INVITED** - such as mother-daughter and father-daughter picnics, sport event, fashion events, investitures, plays, troop dinners, etc.
- ★ **RECOGNIZE ALL PARENTS WHO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE TROOP** - not just the superstars. Every parent in the troop contributes by providing the basic support that allows his/her daughter to attend meetings and participate in special events.