

ADVANCEMENT COMMENTS FOR YOUTH MEMBERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The following are the guidelines for membership and advancement in Scouting for persons having disabilities or other special needs. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides the following definition of an individual with a disability: "An individual is considered to have a 'disability' if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (e.g., . . .seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working), has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

"An individual with epilepsy, paralysis, HIV infection, AIDS, a substantial hearing or visual impairment, mental retardation, or a specific learning disability, is covered, but an individual with a minor, non- chronic condition of short duration, such as a sprain, broken limb, or the flu would not be covered by the ADA.

"The ADA definition protects individuals with a record of a disability and would cover, for example, a person who has recovered from cancer or mental illness.

"And the ADA protects individuals who are regarded as having a substantially limiting impairment, even though they may not have such an impairment. For example . . . a qualified individual with a severe facial disfigurement is protected from being denied employment because an employer feared the 'negative reactions' of customers or co-workers."

The Department of Education identifies a severely handicapped child as one who, because of the intensity of his physical, mental, or emotional problems, or a combination of such problems, needs education, social, psychological, and medical services beyond those that have been offered by traditional regular and special educational programs, in order to maximize his full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment. Such children include those classified as seriously emotionally disturbed or profoundly and severely mentally retarded, and those with two or more serious handicapping conditions, such as the mentally retarded, blind, and the cerebral palsied deaf.

MEMBERSHIP BEYOND NORMAL REGISTRATION AGE

The chartered organizations using Scouting determine, with approval of appropriate medical authorities, whether a youth member is qualified to register (based on the above definitions) beyond the normal registration age. The Cubmaster's signature on the Cub Scout Application, the Scoutmaster's signature on the Boy Scout Application, the Varsity Scout Coach's signature on the Varsity Scout Application, and the Advisor's or Skipper's signature on the Venturing Application, or on the unit's charter renewal application certify the approval of the chartered organization for the person to register. The local council must approve these registrations on an individual basis.

The medical condition of all candidates for membership beyond the normal registration age must be certified by a physician licensed to practice medicine, or an evaluation statement must be certified by an educational administrator. Use the Personal Health and Medical Record Form. Any corrective measures, restrictions, limitations, or abnormalities must be noted. In the case of mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed candidates for membership, their condition must be certified by a statement signed by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. Current health, medical, or certification records of all youth members beyond the normal registration age who have disabilities are to be retained in the unit file at the council service center.