

Girl-Led Progression

A guide for volunteers

One of the main features of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is that Girl Scouting is girl-led. This means Girl Scouts should be in control of all aspects of their Girl Scout experience. We know sometimes this results in a less-than strictly organized experience, but that's okay. We also know that Girl Scouts of different age levels are capable of different leadership levels—that is where progression comes into play.

As a new Daisy troop, the Girl Scouts will be present and play a role in the decision making process, but the adult volunteer is in the dominant role guiding those decisions. As they grow older, they start to take a more active role in the leadership of the troop while the adult volunteer steps back to allow them to lead. They become the primary decision makers once they are teenagers. While the adult never leaves completely, they will step back even further, allowing the Girl Scouts to lead and take responsibility for their troop. The attached charts may help illustrate this concept.

So, how do we encourage progression? Try role-playing situations, then move into a larger discussion of assessing Girl Scout readiness and appropriate field trips and outdoor activity progression.

Practice

Split into groups and ask volunteers to act out the following (or come up with your own):

- A troop leader facilitates a trip planning discussion with a brand new Senior troop (with no previous travel experience) that wants to go to Hawaii as their first troop trip.
- A troop leader who hates the outdoors refuses to take their Juniors to anything beyond a backyard cookout.
- A troop leader decides that the troop will earn the WOW! Wonders of Water Journey because the council is offering a program on this Journey.

After each role play, have a short discussion about the situation, including ways to:

- Determine Girl Scout readiness
- Help adults who may be undermining the Girl Scouts' progression
- Prepare Girl Scouts for a new step in progression (e.g. from cookouts to camp outs or from day trips to overnights.)



TIP

Try this activity at your next Service Unit meeting or with your troop leadership team!

12 signs you're encouraging girl-led opportunities

1. You know that every Girl Scout's opinion counts and you actively encourage them to speak up and share their ideas.
2. You show respect for what Girl Scouts say and value their opinions regardless of their age. You recognize that even Daisy Girl Scouts can begin to develop their leadership skills by sharing, voting and choosing.
3. You actively encourage Girl Scouts to follow the Girl Scout Law, which includes the statement “be a sister to every Girl Scout.” You remind them how much they learn from each other.
4. The Girl Scouts suggest how they want to spend their time in Girl Scouting and where they want to take trips and your response is something along the lines of “How can we make that happen?” or “How can I help?”
5. Girl Scouts are not afraid to disagree with your suggestions, but they are also open to your ideas.
6. Your first reaction to an outrageous suggestion, such as a year off from school to cruise around the world, is not “That’s impossible!” but rather “Why are you interested in doing that?” as an attempt to figure out what is behind the statement. Probing the suggestion could lead to another idea that might be a bit more realistic.
7. If you’re not comfortable with an activity suggested by Girl Scouts—maybe you’d rather not go snow-tubing—you help them find an adult who can make their ideas a reality, as long as those ideas are okay, according to Safety Activity Checkpoints.
8. You help them evaluate the value of their experiences: What did you learn? What was the best part of the day? How did this experience affect you? What might you do differently next time?
9. You share your ideas with the Girl Scouts in your group, but you don’t expect or need them to jump up and down with excitement each time they hear one of them.
10. Girl Scouts are clearly comfortable saying what they like and don’t like about your ideas when you offer them as possibilities rather than as “must-do’s.”
11. Girl Scouts know they can come to you for help whenever they decide they need it.
12. You are always ready to offer support and encouragement.



Progression Within the Girl Scout Processes

Girl-Led Examples

Program Level	Girl Scout Processes	Girl Scout Processes in Action	Adult Facilitation	Adult Facilitation in Action
Daisy (K-1)	Freely express their feelings, opinions and choices or report that they could even if they don't act on it.	Choose a song for the group to sing.	Identify some activities and/or decisions that Girl Scouts can take the lead on for each session.	Make a list of activity choices for the next meeting and have Girl Scouts vote by a show of hands.
Brownie (2-3)	Express what activities they want to do, how they would like to do them and act on them.	Decide on a skill they would like to learn and come up with some ideas on how, why, and where they can learn it.	Provide options for Girl Scouts to choose from only if they cannot think of options themselves.	Assist Girl Scouts in designing a project or a procedure for caring for materials, cleaning up, etc.
Junior (4-5)	Strategize about how to carry out an activity or project, determining what their project goal is and what resources they need.	Devise their own questions, pose own problems, and think about how to answer/solve them.	Model and provide strategies for solving problems and making decisions.	Pose open-ended and "W" questions (e.g. Why did you choose this strategy over that one?)
Cadette (6-8)	Initiate discussion & activities, & take responsibility for organizing and implementing them with little adult input.	Give reports on their activities giving clear reasons for what they did/plan to do and their thought process.	Observe Girl Scout planning and give input when asked.	Use statements like: "I trust your opinion..." or "You're good at X...I think you will do well with that."
Senior (9-10)	Articulate the reasons behind their decisions and reflect on their implications.	Make connections (e.g. write letters or make calls) with service based organizations.	Encourage Girl Scouts to volunteer for activities and responsibilities without being asked.	Encourage Girl Scouts to participate in projects related to community outreach and service.
Ambassador (11-12)	Girl Scouts participate in activities that challenge their assumptions in positive ways.	Travel and speak on behalf of their troop of Girl Scouts.	Model self-control, independence, a sense of humor, and positive confident attitude.	Pose questions and ask Girl Scouts to think critically about issues.

Progression in Action

Examples of Different Levels of Girl Scouts and Adult Control

	Mostly Adult Controlled			Mostly Girl Scout Controlled	
	1	2	3	4	5
INTRODUCE “Who chooses the initial activity?”	Adults choose the initial activity.	Adults choose an activity based on Girl Scouts' interests.	Adults give Girl Scouts options; they choose an activity from those options.	Girl Scouts and adults generate ideas; they choose which activity to pursue.	Girl Scouts generate ideas based on their interests; they choose the activity.
PLAN: PART 1 “Who generates ideas and chooses what Girl Scouts will do with this activity?”	Adults generate and choose the idea.	Adults make a list of ideas; Girl Scouts pick which one(s).	Girl Scouts brainstorm ideas. Adults eliminate any unworkable ideas; they choose from this list.	Girl Scouts brainstorm ideas. Adults guide in evaluating ideas to see if they're “do-able”, then Girl Scouts choose.	Girl Scouts brainstorm questions, evaluate them for “do-ability” and choose. Adults support as needed.
PLAN: PART 2 “Who plans the activity?”	Adults make the plan (what, when, where, etc.)	Adults do most of the planning. Adults give girls choices from certain options.	Adults provide the framework for planning how to vote, what decisions need to be made, delegation. Girl Scouts plan using this framework.	Adults give Girl Scouts options for how to plan; different ways to vote, delegate, etc. Girl Scouts choose from these options, then plan.	Girl Scouts decide how they want to plan (delegation, decision making methods, etc.). Adults then help them identify decisions that need to be made and Girl Scouts make them.
DO “When Girl Scouts are carrying out the activity, who identifies issues and creates solutions?”	Adults identify issues as they arise and tell Girl Scouts how to solve them.	Adults identify issues as they arise, and give Girl Scouts options for how to solve them. They choose from these options.	Adults identify issues as they arise, and ask Girl Scouts open-ended questions to help them find solutions.	Adults ask open-ended questions to help Girl Scouts identify issues and find solutions.	Girl Scouts identify issues as they arise, problem-solve, and carry out solutions. Both girls and adults use open-ended questions to work through issues.
REFLECT “Who identifies what Girl Scouts did and learned?”	Adults tell Girl Scouts what they did and learned.	Adults tell Girl Scouts what they did and learned; Girl Scouts add additional thoughts.	Adults plan and lead a reflection; Girl Scouts share what they did and learned. (Adults share their thoughts in the reflection as well.)	Adults identify ways to reflect (drawing, verbal, skits, ceremonies). Girl Scouts choose. Adults help them reflect and are included in the reflection.	Adults ask Girl Scouts how they want to reflect. They then identify ways to reflect, choose one, and carry it out. (Adults are included in the reflection as well.)