

# 7

## CUB SCOUTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Feeling Accepted in the Den	7-1
Feeling Accepted in the Pack	7-3
Feeling of Competence	7-3
Feeling of Self-Satisfaction	7-5
Special Activities	7-5



Every boy has needs. Three important ones are to feel accepted by a group, to feel a sense of competence as he approaches a task, and to feel a sense of self-satisfaction at its completion. For some boys, these needs are easily met. For others, it takes a little more thought and planning on the part of leaders to help the boys. That's what this chapter is about.

The parents or guardians of a boy with special needs will be the best resource for information about their son's abilities, limits, and goals. Other resources include the boy's teachers and the *Cub Scout Leader Book*.

## Feeling Accepted in the Den

Many people wonder how a boy who is different from other members of the den will be accepted. You will find that with proper preparation of the den, these boys are accepted into the fellowship of the den easily.

Before a boy with special needs joins the den, the den leader should plan some time to prepare the boys to meet their new member. During the two meetings before the new boy's joining the den, devote part of the regular meeting time to activities that will prepare everyone. The assistant den leader and den chief will need to take part in planning these activities and will need to understand the needs of the new Cub Scout.

### FIRST DEN ORIENTATION

**Materials:** Chalkboard, chalk, appropriate simulation items (blindfolds, newspapers, rope, etc.) to simulate the new boy's disabilities

Announce that you are having a "rap session." Tell the boys that a new member is joining the den. If they don't already know, tell the den his name and tell them that he is a little different from them. Don't mention the boy's disability yet. Ask the boys to name all the things they can all do (run, jump, see, ride bikes, hear, etc.).

If the den does know the new boy, have them share any experiences they have had with him. Ask the boys whether they have already helped him in some way. List these on the board. Also list the ways the new boy is just like the boys in the den.

- Point out that no one can do everything. Each of us needs help at certain times. Identify things the individual members of the den and the leaders need help with.
- Describe the disability in simple terms, explaining that the new boy may do some things differently from other boys. Use the Cub Scout motto "Do

Your Best" to explain that everyone does his best in everything he undertakes and that each den member's "best" is different.

**Simulation Game:** After a discussion of the boy's condition, ask the den members whether they have an idea of what it would be like not to be able to do something they enjoy or take for granted. Suggest a game to find out. For example, if the new Cub Scout is blind, blindfold each boy in turn and ask him to bring you a specified object. If the new Cub Scout is deaf, have boys communicate without talking. If the new boy has trouble focusing on a task or performing tasks at a normal pace, play a version of "Simon Says." In this version, all commands are to be followed. Begin slowly, allowing time for each boy to complete the command. Then speed up the game until the commands are coming at so rapidly that no one can keep up.

### SECOND DEN ORIENTATION

With the den, plan the next meeting when the new Cub Scout will attend for the first time. Learn a welcome song such as "We're Glad to See You Here" from the *Cub Scout Songbook*. Have everyone make suggestions for activities for the day. Follow the meeting structure outlined in the *Cub Scout Leader Book*. You may want to plan for special refreshments during this welcome meeting so that it seems more like a party.

With some boys with special needs, a "buddy system" can be very effective. If it is appropriate for the new Cub Scout, explain the system to the den. Each week, a different den member will be responsible for helping the new Cub Scout during the meeting. Emphasize that the important factor is to "Do Your Best" and that the boy who is helping must be *patient*—not only because of the special needs of the Cub Scout but because the new boy is new to Cub Scouting. Practice the planned activities, with each boy taking a turn at helping and being helped. Often, boys learn more about helping others when they themselves are helped.

## FIRST DEN MEETING WITH THE NEW CUB SCOUT

The process described here is a good one for planning all den meetings. Consult *Cub Scout Program Helps* and the *Webelos Leader Guide* for weekly den meeting ideas that follow the monthly theme or activity badge.

The purpose of this first den meeting is to introduce the new Cub Scout to the members of the den. Use a ceremony from *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs* to welcome the new boy.

### Icebreaker

Choose an icebreaker or two to help everyone get to know one another. You can use a simple one from *Group Meeting Sparklers* or use one suggested here.

**Have You Ever?:** Visit with the parents of the new Cub Scout to find out what his interests are. Find out about things he has done that he especially enjoyed. Armed with that information and similar knowledge about the den members, devise a list of questions. Direct the boys to raise their hands when the answer is "I have." The questions should demonstrate that not all members of the den have done everything and that the new Cub Scout has something in common with other members of the den. Consider questions such as the following:

- Have you ever been to the circus?
- Have you ever found a snail?
- Have you ever eaten a snail?
- Have you ever caught a fish?
- Have you ever traveled out of the state?
- Have you ever spent the night in a tent?
- Have you ever cooked your own breakfast?
- Have you ever cooked breakfast for someone else?
- Have you ever been to a ball game?
- Have you ever talked to the mail carrier?

**Who Am I?:** Ask den members to line up in two rows facing each other about 6 feet apart. Ask the new boy to stand at the head of the two lines and throw a ball to the boy whose name the leader calls at random. The boy whose name is called should be encouraged to act silly, wave his hand, or in another way attract the attention of the new Cub Scout. This should reveal personalities and help the new Cub Scout learn the names of the den members.

### Game

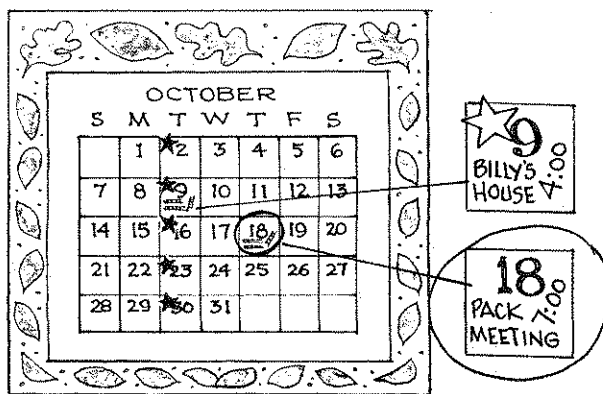
Choose a game from the ones at the end of this chapter (they are arranged by specific disability), choose one from the "Games" chapter of this book

(keeping in mind everyone's abilities), or adapt a game so that everyone can play. Information on how to adapt games is provided in the "Feeling of Competence" section below.

### Activity Period

The activity period should include only things that all the boys can easily do. Choose from one of the many projects in the "Crafts" chapter, keeping in mind everyone's abilities, or use the one suggested below. (Most Cub Scouts can do this with a little help.)

### Scout Calendar



### Materials:

11-by-17-inch piece of heavy paper or cardstock  
9-by-13-inch piece of paper with calendar for the month printed on it

Tempera paint

Sponges cut into small pieces

Stickers to designate den meeting days and pack meeting

Clothespins

Glue

Wet the sponges with water and squeeze the water completely out of them. Using the clothespins to hold the sponges, dip the sponges into the tempera and press onto the 11-by-17 paper, leaving a print. This should be repeated in a haphazard manner, using different colors of tempera if desired. When dry, glue the calendar in place, leaving a border of the sponge print around it. Attach stickers to the days for den meetings and pack meetings. Write the time and place down on those days.

### Closing

For the closing of the meeting, the den leader should give a brief talk on what is expected of each den member—that he *do his best*. Then tell boys what they will be doing at the next meeting. If the new Cub Scout's abilities are such that familiarity

with the activities before den meetings is helpful, be sure that his parent or guardian is aware of this. A den take-home note or newsletter for all the boys could be a subtle way of communicating with them. Close with a Living Circle (see *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs*).

## DEN DISCIPLINE

A boy knows that he is cared for when he knows that others care about his behavior. A boy's parent will be the best resource for understanding what a boy is able to do and how strict the code of conduct should be. If it is necessary to relax the rules for one Cub Scout, it will be necessary to relax them for all den members. The "Accentuate the Positive" chapter of this book has several helpful ideas for monitoring boy behavior in the den. Clear communication about what is expected and appreciated is a key to a boy's developing self-discipline.

For instance, instead of the usual "Good job!" try saying something like this: "I felt \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_ and it made me want to \_\_\_\_\_." When encouraging (or discouraging) particular behavior, it is helpful to fill in these blanks as specifically as possible. It isn't necessary to have them in this order. Other examples: "I was so happy when you shared your special ball with Matt that it made me want to shout"; "I just wanted to tell you how proud I was when you helped Matt with his project"; "When you asked Matt to sit next to you so he would feel welcome, it made me so pleased that I want to shake your hand."

## "IT'S NOT FAIR!"

It isn't uncommon for boys or adults to notice when one boy is getting special treatment. Then, you might hear the phrase, "It's not fair!" First, be sure that all boys are being treated equally—that no one is being corrected for something that others are not. If all the boys are being treated equally, then it may be time for you to choose one or more of the following activities to do with the individual who is complaining or with the den as a whole.

- Discuss the concepts of *fair* versus *equal*. "Fair" means that the needs of everyone in the den are being met. Because those needs are not the same, treatment is not the same. Ask whether adults in their family get more on their plates at dinner than they do. Why is that? Would it be fair to expect everyone to eat as much as the adults do? When someone is sick in the family and has to have supper in bed instead of with the family, would it be fair to make everyone have supper in bed? Ask the boys to come up with another example. End the

conversation with, "Is it fair that some boys don't have all the abilities that others do?"

- Replay the simulation game that you played in the preparation meeting for the new Cub Scout. Now that everyone is familiar with the limits of the boy with special needs, this game may have more significance.
- Redo the rap session from the first den orientation meeting. This time, focus on what each of the boys can do, including the boy with special needs, and then focus on who is the best at different activities. The den leader may have to suggest several things at which each boy is the best.

## Feeling Accepted in the Pack

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For the first pack meeting with a boy with special needs, the Cubmaster should consider these suggestions:

1. Have the den introduce their new member to the pack and do a cheer.
2. Use the normal induction ceremony, including the induction of the boy's parents, but emphasize the Law of the Pack and the Cub Scout motto, particularly "to help other people."
3. Be sensitive: Try not to embarrass the new Cub Scout or his family in any way.

## Feeling of Competence

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Every boy should feel "I can do that!" when each project is presented to him. Often, a boy with special needs hasn't had that feeling before. Because the Cub Scout program is flexible and based on the idea of a boy doing his best, it is important to consider every boy's abilities and modify activities or advancement requirements when necessary. Each boy should feel challenged but not feel that anything is beyond his capabilities. Meeting the challenge will build a sense of competence.

It is important for all concerned to consider how complete the activity is rather than how incomplete it is. No boy's level of achievement should be used as a measuring stick for any other boy. Celebration needs to occur when improvement has been made or when it has been determined that a boy has done his best.

## ADAPTING ACHIEVEMENTS

The *Cub Scout Leader Book* has directions for the Cubmaster and pack committee on how to substitute requirements for an achievement. When modifying an achievement, consider these things:

- It is imperative that boys feel that they are working and *earning* achievements. An achievement should not be modified so much that boys feel it is being *given* to them.
- Consider reducing the number of repetitions of a particular activity.
- Substitute an activity that will be a stretch for the boy but still within his capabilities.
- If the boy can't physically do the activity itself, can he teach or lead someone else through the activity?
- If applicable, consider substituting dictation for writing.
- Allow for extra time for completion.

## ADAPTING CRAFTS

In addition to altering achievements, you may have to adapt some crafts.

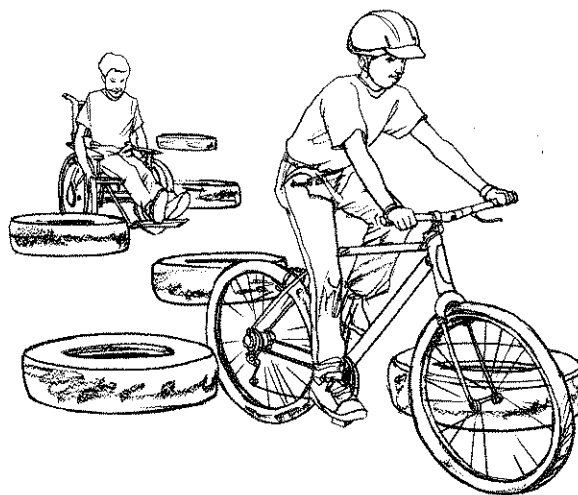
- Some part of the project may need to be precut for ease of construction. For some boys it is best to put "their" materials in a bag so that they know whose is whose. If that is the case, use bags for every boy in the den. This can be a subtle way to ensure that some boys get a bag with more of the preconstruction done for them.
- Keeping instructions simple and few in number will help those boys who have trouble focusing or retaining information. Crafts that take a long time to complete should be divided up into several short tasks for such boys.
- It may be necessary to allow additional time for some boys to finish a project (perhaps at home or after the meeting) while the rest of the den moves on to something else.
- Some crafts may require an adult to help the Cub Scout with special needs in addition to the help he will receive from his "buddy of the week."

## ADAPTING GAMES

Games can be a problem for boys with special needs, but you can adapt them with great success. Sometimes, helping a boy merely means clarifying directions. Perhaps the rules need to be simplified so that all boys can easily understand them. Often, a "practice game" helps clarify the rules and cement the order of play for boys who have trouble with retaining auditory directions. Some boys will need to see written directions. Competing against a clock

or for a "personal best" rather than competing against other boys can be a good way to enable everyone to be a winner.

There are many ways to adapt games. For example, if a game involves throwing a paper airplane but making the airplane is too complicated, substitute throwing a piece of paper wadded up into a ball. If a game involves running a short distance and one boy can't run, perhaps he can use his arms to move from one point to another, much like a soldier in the field. Perhaps *all* the boys could do this. Consider ways, for instance, that a boy in a wheelchair can mimic the actions of a boy on a bike or running. Choosing games carefully and adapting them can make this part of Cub Scouting fun for all.



## ADAPTING SKITS

Skits should include everyone. When planning them, be sure that everyone in the den has a significant part. Remind boys that announcers and narrators are important. So are the people who do special effects, sounds, and lighting. Make sure that everyone rotates through these positions so that everyone has his time behind and on stage.

When writing skits, don't overlook the contributions that can be made by boys who have trouble maintaining focus. Because they pay attention to everything at once, they often associate two things that are wildly different from each other—which can be the basis for skit humor.

## ADAPTING THE DEN MEETING

Structuring the den meeting with the Cub Scout with special needs in mind may help him be more successful in the den. Boys who have trouble paying attention thrive when activities change frequent-

ly—particularly when an “active” game or activity follows a “quiet” one. If a boy still needs additional activity, ask him to run little errands—go and get the glue, etc. A den leader should always have an extra activity ready for those days when the planned activities have been exhausted.

## Feeling of Self-Satisfaction

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Every boy wants to be proud of his achievement. Advancement and achievement may be especially important to the boy with special needs—he wants to feel he did it just like everyone else. Often, these boys are not able to master an activity at the same level of others in the den, but they are able to improve. The best way for them and the den leader to see improvement is to measure it.

When introducing a new activity, ask all the boys to do their best to accomplish it without any instruction. Make a chart. Measure the activity in some way. Maybe there is a written comment, a picture is taken, or a number of repetitions is noted. Then give the instruction and set goals for each boy based on their ability. Do the activity again. Measure again. Celebrate improvement with a cheer, a pat on the back, or something tangible. Reevaluate the goals: Were they set too high for some? Too low for others? Repeat the activity. Measure. Celebrate any improvement. When the boys have reached their goal, or when it has been determined that a boy has done his best, declare the activity completed and celebrate immediately. Advancement recognition for all boys should occur as soon as possible.

## Special Activities

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Careful planning, choosing appropriate activities, and adapting them when necessary should create an atmosphere in the den in which all members are successful. The following activities are grouped by specific disabilities, but consider using one from a different category if you know your boys and think it will work. It is hoped that these suggestions will help you learn how to create and adapt other games and crafts to introduce to the den. These tested activities have been enjoyed by all boys—not just those with disabilities.

### FOR BOYS WHO HAVE VISION IMPAIRMENTS

Choose activities that don't require sight. Since every boy likes a mystery, why not try one of these?

### Kim's Game

**Materials:** Bag, variety of objects familiar to the boys

Place all the objects into the bag out of sight of the boys. Allow each of them to place their hand in the bag without looking and feel each of the objects. They should then write down or whisper to the game leader all the things they can remember.

### Don't Eat Pete

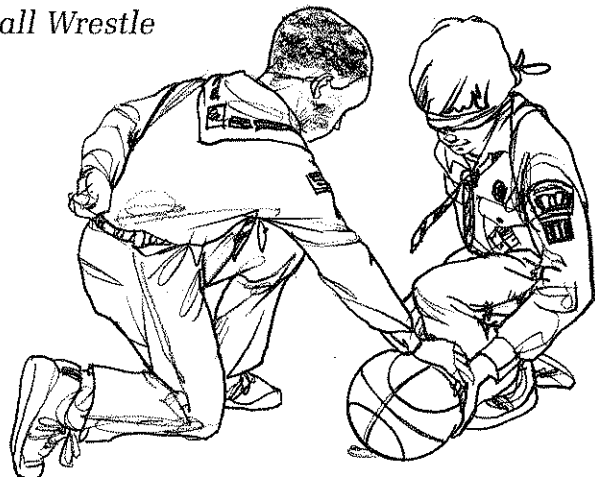
**Materials:** Sheet of construction paper divided into nine equal spaces, nine wrapped candies that will fit in the game spaces

Each boy takes a turn leaving the room while the rest decide which candy will be “Pete.” When the Cub Scout returns, he chooses a candy, by touching it, to eat—hoping it isn't “Pete.” If it is, the rest of the den will shout, “Don't eat Pete!” If it isn't “Pete,” he is allowed to eat the candy.

### What Is That Sound?

This is a good game to play outdoors or as a night hike. All members of the den should close their eyes and be silent for 2 minutes. At the end of that time, they should write down or whisper to a leader all that they heard and could identify.

### Ball Wrestle



**Materials:** Basketball, blindfold

Two boys kneel facing each other with a basketball between them. (The boy whose vision is not impaired should wear a blindfold.) They place one hand on the ball and the other behind their backs. The object of the game is to wrestle the ball away from the opponent and stand with the ball held overhead in one hand. If no one wins in 2 minutes, declare the game a draw.

## FOR BOYS WHO ARE EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED

Choose one of the noncompetitive games found in the "Games" chapter of this book, or have boys compete for a personal best rather than against one another. Choose crafts that are process-oriented rather than achievement-oriented.

### *Flying Bat*

**Materials:** Box, black paper for paper airplanes

Cut a hole in a box and decorate the exterior as a cave. Each boy makes a paper airplane out of the black paper and then throws his "bat" into the bat cave. Allow each contestant as many turns as time allows.

### *Roll the Marble*

**Materials:** Shoe box, five marbles per boy

Take the lid off a shoe box and turn it upside down. Cut two or three "doors" in one of the long sides. Boys shoot their marbles through the doors. Allow as many turns as time permits.

**Variation:** Increase the distance, reduce the number of doors, or use marbles of different sizes.

## FOR BOYS WHO ARE AUTISTIC

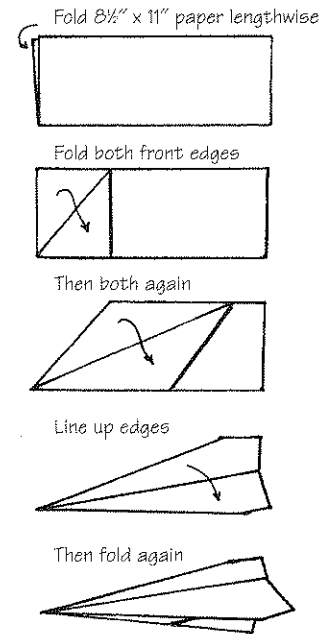
- Choose games and activities that have simple directions and can be completed in a short amount of time.
- Clearly and simply state the directions several times.
- Many autistic children are very artistic and can complete detailed artwork.
- Present all the steps to a project as an overview, and then allow the den to work on the project one step at a time. It is important to the autistic boy to know what is coming next.

### *Fly the Airplane*

**Materials:** Wire coat hanger, paper for paper airplanes

Each boy makes a paper airplane. Create a target for the airplanes by stretching the hanger into a circle and hanging it at the boys' chest level. The object is to throw the airplane through the hoop. To vary the game, change the height or swing the target from side to side.

## Making a Paper Airplane



### *Ring Toss*

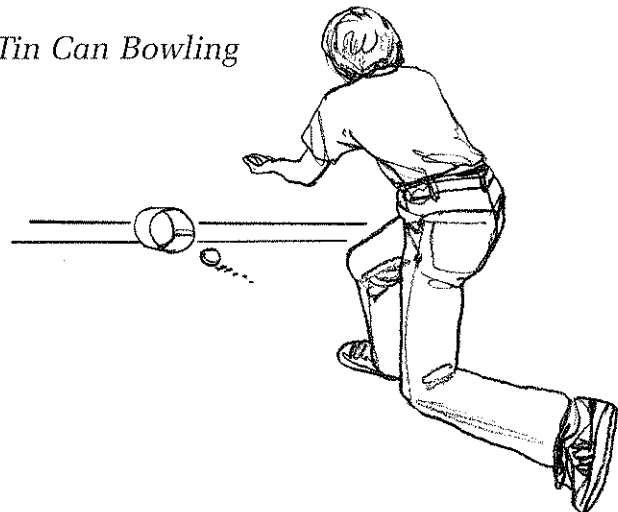
**Materials:** Washers or plastic rings, pan for the target

Toss the washer or plastic ring into the target. Score one point for each successful attempt.

## FOR BOYS WHO HAVE LIMITED MOVEMENT

Choose activities that keep participants in a small area.

### *Tin Can Bowling*



**Materials:** 48-oz. empty can with lid cut off, one per team; rubber ball, one per team

Place the empty can against a wall on its side with the open side toward the players. Two teams stand 12 to 15 feet away from the can. Each team member

bowls or rolls the ball toward the can. The object is to get the ball to stay inside the can rather than bouncing back out. Score one point for each successful attempt.

### *Pass It*

**Materials:** One lemon per team, small paper cup per player

Balance the lemon on the small paper cup. Without dropping the lemon, transfer it to the next boy's paper cup. If dropped, pick up the lemon at that place in line. The first team to transfer the lemon to the back of the line wins.

## **FOR BOYS WHO HAVE DOWN SYNDROME**

Choose games that don't require much coordination or energy.

### *Clothespins in a Bottle*

**Materials:** Narrow-mouthed jar, five clothespins per team

Place a narrow-mouthed jar on the floor. Boys hold a clothespin at chin level and drop it into the bottle. It looks like it won't fit, but it will! The team with the most clothespins making it into the bottle wins. The leader keeps the cumulative score. As this is not a race, each boy can have the time he needs.



### *Leaf Prints*

**Materials:** Variety of leaves, thin paper, crayons or soft pencils

Place thin paper on top of a leaf that has been placed vein side up. Using a crayon or soft pencil, color over the leaf so that the veins of the leaf are visible. Repeat using other leaves and colors.

## **FOR BOYS WHO HAVE BREATHING DIFFICULTIES**

Choose indoor activities involving little or no physical activity.

### *Bean Jacks*

**Materials:** 20 dried beans per boy

Arrange the beans in a single layer on a table or the floor. Each boy picks up one bean with his left hand, transfers it to his right hand, and with his right hand, places the bean on the back of his left hand. Repeat until one bean falls off.

### *Toothpicks and Peanuts*

**Materials:** Toothpicks, plastic foam peanut packing material

Using toothpicks to join the peanuts, allow the boys to make anything they want. This makes a mess, but boys love it. To make this craft a game, challenge boys to create an animal, an invention, or whatever fits the monthly theme. Judge the entries and give prizes. Every boy should get a prize. To vary the activity, use glue and craft sticks.

## **FOR BOYS WHO HAVE ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER**

Most of the time boys with attention deficit disorder merely need more time to process the directions to a game or art project. Demonstrating the game or art project can be very helpful because of the additional processing time that demonstration allows. Divide the directions up into steps and let each step "register" before moving on. Limit the number of directions given at one time.

### *Egg Carton Paper Clip Drop*

**Materials:** Egg carton per team, paper clip per boy

Open the egg carton and write a number at the bottom of each cup so that it is visible. Give each boy a paper clip and line the teams up at the opposite side of the room. Each boy runs to the egg carton, holds the paper clip at nose level, and drops it into one of the egg carton cups. If the paper clip bounces out, he should pick it up and try again until the paper clip stays in a cup. The leader records his score. The boy then runs back to his team and tags the next player.

## Splatter Painting

**Materials:** Tempera or acrylic paint, old toothbrush per boy, plastic gloves, paper or object to be painted

This is a great way to decorate many things: a painted box or bookshelf, paper to be folded for note cards or invitations, etc. The boy dips the bristles of the toothbrush in the paint and rubs his thumb across the bristles (wearing the gloves) so that the paint splatters onto the object. Use single colors or lots of colors for different effects.

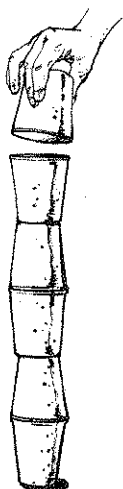
## FOR BOYS WHO HAVE ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER WITH HYPERACTIVITY

In addition to having the problems that boys with attention deficit disorder have, these boys are unusually active. The key to helping them is switching activities often.

### Cup Stacking

**Materials:** Lots of small paper cups per boy

Challenge the boys to build a tower of paper cups with only one cup as the base. The tallest standing tower wins. The trick is to place cups alternately on their top and then their bottom.



### Fill the Basket

**Materials:** Large basket or other container, as many balls as possible

This is a den–against–den leader game. Boys unite and try to fill the basket by throwing the balls into it. The leader tries to keep the container empty by tossing the balls as far away as possible. The winner is determined by where the majority of the balls are located after a given time period.

## FOR BOYS WHO ARE GIFTED AND TALENTED

These boys will need enrichment activities to keep them interested because they finish projects quickly.

### Marble Mazes

**Materials:** Assorted cardboard tubes (from toilet paper or paper towels, etc.), tape, chair, several books, marbles

Give the boys several cardboard tubes to make a marble maze with. They will need to tape them together or cut some of the longer ones for corner pieces. When their maze is completed, they can use the chair and several books for support so that the beginning of the maze can be elevated. Then let the good times roll!

## FOR BOYS WHO HAVE HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

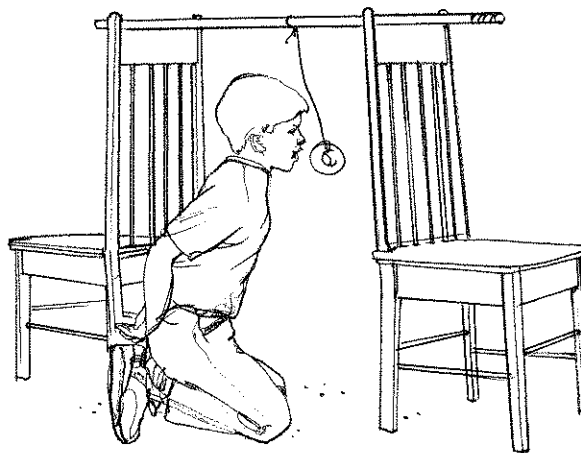
Boys with hearing impairments can play most games. Depending on the severity of the impairment, however, the leader may have to help them keep track of the game.

### Hat Pantomime

**Materials:** Slips of paper with directions written on them, hat

Write directions on slips of paper such as “Wash the dog,” “Buckle your seat belt,” “Take out the garbage,” or “Do your homework.” Place them in a hat. Boys take turns drawing one out of the hat and pantomiming the action for the rest of the group. The player who guesses first what the boy is doing is next.

### Doughnuts on a String



**Materials:** Doughnut, string, broom, two chairs

Tie a doughnut onto a string. Suspend it from a broom handle and attach the broom handle across the backs of two chairs. With their hands behind their backs, boys must get down on their knees and try to eat the doughnut.

## FOR BOYS WHO HAVE MEMORY PROBLEMS

Be sure to write down directions to all activities so that boys with memory problems can refer back to them.

### *Alphabet Scavenger Hunt*

**Materials:** Paper with alphabet listed vertically, pencils

Each boy has a pencil and specially prepared paper. Assign them a designated area of the room or outdoor area. Ask them to write down the names of things they see next to the appropriate first letter of the object. Example: A—apple.

### *Leather Neckerchief Slide*

**Materials:**

Scraps of leather	Leather stamps
Hammer	Glue
Plastic ring	Markers or leather stain

Provide several leather stamps for boys. Let them choose a piece of leather and stamp their desired design on it. They can color it with markers or stain it with leather stain. When finished, they can attach a ring to the back with glue.

## FOR BOYS WHO HAVE LIMITED VITALITY

Boys with limited vitality do best with short activities and need frequent breaks.

### *Marble Croquet*

**Materials:** Paper clip for each boy, marble for each boy (preferably different colors), plastic centers from pizza delivery boxes

Each boy bends his paper clip to form a miniature croquet club. Use the plastic centers from pizza delivery boxes to make wickets for the course. Each boy can use his club to move the marble through the course.

### *Earth, Water, Air, and Fire*

**Materials:** Beanbag

Boys sit in a circle with one boy in the center holding a beanbag. He throws the bag at someone and shouts “earth,” “water,” “air,” or “fire.” If it is “earth,” the chosen boy must reply with the name of an animal before the boy in the center can count to 10. If it is “water,” he must think of a fish; if “air,” a bird; and if “fire,” he must whistle for the fire engine. Once a creature has been named, it may not be named again. If a boy can’t reply with a new item in time, he changes places with the thrower.

