

# Girl Led Planning

Leaders may hear a lot about “progression” in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience but may not have a clear handle on what “girl led planning” means. Sometimes leaders or parents are so enthusiastic about certain activities, the girls’ interests and skills may get overlooked.

Remember that when working with girls, it will not be perfect! Although it may be hard to sit back and let the girls do things themselves when you could do it much more quickly and efficiently, it is vital to the girls that they be allowed to make decisions as well as safe mistakes. This allows the girls to learn and begin to grow their leadership.

As you can see below as the leadership ladder begins, the Girl Scout Daisy is present but the adult volunteer is in the principal role. She has a say and does make the decisions but the adult volunteer guides those decisions. As the Girl Scout gets older, she starts to take a more influential role in the leadership of the troop and the adult volunteer steps back to allow her to lead. By the time the Girl Scout is in her teens, she is taking an ever more prevailing role and the adult volunteer steps back even further. She never leaves completely, remaining there to advise, lend a hand when necessary and ensure the girls’ safety and well-being.



### Tips for Partnering with Girls

- 1. Recognize the amount of time needed for planning.**  
Set aside time at each meeting to plan special trips, to decide which Journeys or Badges to work on, or to set money-earning goals.
- 2. Take into account the maturity level of the girls in your group as you guide decision-making.**  
Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies can participate in the decision-making process through the use of the Girl Scout circle. All Girl Scouts can be given increasing responsibility within the troop. For example, girls ages 8-11 can be making their own troop goals while girls ages 11-14 can plan all meetings and activities.
- 3. Be sure that all girls get a chance to be part of the planning.**  
It's easy to forget about the quiet girls when a couple of outgoing girls monopolize the conversation. Make it a practice for everyone to share at least one idea when planning. Take votes so that every person counts. Ask girls to pair up to discuss their ideas. This makes it easier for a shy child to voice her opinion.
- 4. Help other adults plan with girls, not for them.**  
Parents and volunteers should understand that girl-led is one of the three Girl Scout program processes. If needed, give the other troop adults a separate task or topic to discuss, preferably in another room, so the planning is girl-led.

***Tell me and I'll forget, show me and I'll remember, involve me and I'll understand***

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## Six Steps to Girl-Led Planning

### Step 1—Do Advanced Planning

The level of advance planning will depend on the age level of the girls. With Girl Scout Daisies, leaders should determine all of the possibilities and have a solid plan. With Girl Scout Seniors, leaders should let the girls do the advance planning and provide guidance only when needed. As a leader of older girls, you can research options for them to explore, just don't do the exploring for them!

### Step 2—Ask the Girls

This may be the simplest step but it is the most important one! Ask the girls to brainstorm ideas. Write these ideas on large pieces of paper. Remember when brainstorming there are no wrong answers. Let the girls dream!

### Step 3—Sift Through Ideas and Create a Plan

Take the brainstormed ideas and begin to sift through those ideas and put them on a preliminary calendar. Remember, big dream can become a great program idea. If the girls say they want to go to Hawaii, that may not be immediately possible but having a luau and learning about it sure is! Use an age-appropriate form of troop government to agree upon and continue to plan your year long calendar.

### Step 4—Inform Other Adults

Once you know what the girls want to do and have put together a plan to accomplish it, inform other adults that support the troop. Do all adult leaders know and understand the plan? Have you communicated with parents? Informing other adults will help ensure adult support when it comes time to implement the plan.

### Step 5—Use the Plan

Follow the plan the best you can. Work with the girls to determine how to implement troop money-earning and product sales to achieve their goals. Remember that when working with girls, it will not be perfect! Allow girls to make mistakes. Encourage their hard work. If they follow the plan, girls will learn and become more independent in the future.

### Step 6—Evaluate the Activity

Once the girls have implemented their activity, take some time to evaluate how it went. Evaluating is important because it allows the girls to share ideas and gain meaning from their experience. If they understand what they learned, it can be applied to the next activity they plan. The application of learning will make your job easier as the leader.

## How do I do it?

Your attitude is the single most important factor in making girl-led planning a growing experience for the girls! **Consider these questions:**

- Do I believe in the girl's ability to plan and carry out ideas?
- Can I listen to their opinions and be guided by them?
- Can I let girls make a mistake in order to learn?
- Do I possess initiative and encourage initiative in others?
- Can I remember that Girl Scouting is for girls and that their well-being comes first?

If you answered yes, great! You are ready to begin.

## Help Girls Discover Their Spark

**Talk** to the girls about what gets them excited. Ask open-ended questions like:

- What do you love to do?
- Why do you like it?
- How do you feel when you are doing it?
- What is something you do that you are proud of?

Planning and participating in a variety of activities as a troop will help girls discover their spark. Don't let your personal feelings about an activity keep the girls from experiencing it!

## Signs of Successful Girl-led Planning

- Girls are engaged in their activities and excited about what they are doing in Girl Scouts.
- Leaders are learning along with the girls.
- Leaders see girls working cooperatively.
- Girls gain confidence through sharing and group decision making.
- Girls stay interested in Girl Scouts.
- Girls tell their parents about their experiences because they are excited.
- Girls invite their friends to join the troop/group.