

Junior Level Group Management Guide

One of the greatest challenges in leading a troop of girls is group behavior management. How do you effectively manage the behavior of the girls in your troop? Here are ways to identify the typical behavior of a Junior and some key tips on how to manage your troop of dynamic Juniors.

Dynamic Juniors

The Girl Scout Junior is in her late childhood years, ages 8-11 or fourth and fifth grade. These years are filled with a lot of activity, intellectual growth, new friendships, deepening relationships and discoveries about the world and inner self. While her family is still very important to the Junior Girl Scout, her friends and interests become increasingly more important.

1. Girls will want to make decisions and express their opinions. This means whenever possible, allow girls to want to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others' opinions and offering assistance in decision making.
2. Juniors are social and enjoy doing things in groups. This means you can allow girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects, performances and written activities.
3. Juniors are aware of expectations and sensitive to judgement of others. This means it's okay to have expectations but the expectation should not be perfection. Share your own mistakes and what you have learned. Be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs
4. Juniors are concerned about equality and fairness. This means not shying away from discussion as to why rules are in place. Girls can be responsible to develop their own rules for the group.
5. Juniors are beginning to think abstractly and critically and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feeling and attitudes of another. This means you can ask girls to explain why they made a decision, to share their visions of their rolls in the future and challenge their own and others' perspectives.

6. Juniors have strong, fine and gross motor skills and coordination. This means you can engage girls in moving their minds and bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography and so on.
7. Juniors love to act in plays/create music and dance. This means the girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument or choreographing a dance.
8. Juniors may be starting puberty, which means beginning physical development, skin changes and weight changes. Some may be getting their menstrual cycle. This means being sensitive to girls' changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.

Self Esteem Development

Studies show by about age 11, many girls start to use self-esteem and self-confidence. You may notice that various girls in your troop may become more cautious, quieter or less likely to say what is on their mind. As their leader, you play an important role in helping girls stay confident and provide an atmosphere where they feel safe to speak their mind and take risks.

Every girl wants to be viewed as unique. Girls mature at different rates. Consider each girl as a unique individual with her own talents, gifts, personality and intellectual strengths. Expect a wide biological, social and emotional difference amongst the girls in your troop.