



Dog Scouts of America Jr. Scout Program Evaluation Criteria

Jr. Scout Certification

PURPOSE: The future of our canine friends, dog sports and activities, and the Dog Scouts of America organization truly lies with today's youth! To encourage our younger generation in becoming responsible dog parents and participants in a wide variety of activities with their dogs, DSA offers a Junior Scout badge to young dog handlers, ages 6 to 16. The Junior Scout program offers children an opportunity to earn a Jr. Scout badge. Handlers age 6 and under receive a certificate rather than a badge upon completion of the program.

Dog Scouts of America initiated the Junior Scout Certification program in the summer of 2005, testing this new curriculum with 8-year-old Richelle Meyers, who worked very hard with her rather difficult miniature Schnauzer, Oreo, in earning the first ever Junior Scout badge in this new program. They proved that the Jr. Scout curriculum is an effective new DSA program in which our young people and their dogs can be most successful.

This badge is subdivided by age groups to accommodate varying abilities as children age and gain experience and skills. Scoutmasters approved to certify adults for the Dog Scout badge are also approved to certify children for the Jr. Scout badge (or certificate) using the age appropriate check-off sheet.

Age divisions for Jr. Scout are as follows:

- Age 6 and under
- Ages 7-11
- Ages 12-16

Adult supervision is required for children under age 11. Kids 12-16 may perform independently. However, supervision is advised for those 12-16, appropriate to the needs of the individual child. Parents must follow the direction of the Scoutmaster in providing supervision.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog requirements for children ages 6 and under are greatly abbreviated. The majority of the test for children above ages 7-16 is the same as the adult Dog Scout test. Differences for all age groups are outlined in the chart below.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS: Children in the age 7-16 group may choose to attempt the Jr. Scout badge or the adult Dog Scout badge. Troop Leaders or Scoutmasters should be consulted as to which badge is most appropriate based on the understanding and/or experience of the individual child. However, it is recommended that children in the 7-11 age group complete the Jr. Scout program prior to testing for the Dog Scout Certification. The [Handler Written Test](#) is a part of the certification process for children above age 7 though they can receive assistance and may be verbally quizzed on their knowledge rather than completing it in written format if desired.

Children ages 6 and under will be observed – but not actually tested – based on the age appropriate Jr. Scout Check Off Sheet program. Children are not eligible to earn Specialty Merit Badges until after they reach the age of 7.



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Jr. Scout Certification Program Requirements		
Required of all ages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child acts as a responsible dog owner and always picks up after his/her dog ▪ Dog is safe around others as demonstrated by child playing with dog appropriately and child greeting another dog ▪ Child cares for the dog by always showing him love and respect, working to keep him safe, and continually seeking to teach him new things 		
Ages 6 & Under	Ages 7-11	Ages 12-16
Please see Dog Scout Certification CRITERIA and Dog Scout Certification TRAINING for information on requirements and training.		
Child must teach the dog a few behaviors such as sit, down and come. Treats may be used. Dog will walk calmly on a leash in the same direction as the child. Dog should not pull on the leash and child should pull or jerk the dog. Dog is comfortable meeting a friendly stranger and meeting a friendly dog while on leash.	Sit: Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification. No treats are allowed.	Sit: Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification. No treats are allowed.
	Down: Behavior must be performed as with Dog Scout Certification, but the child may use treats or a toy to assist.	Down: Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification. No treats are allowed.
	Come: Distance is reduced to 10'. Treats and toys are not allowed.	Come: Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification at a distance of 20'. No treats are allowed.
	Stay: Must be performed as with the Dog Scout Certification except distance is reduced to 7-10'.	Stay: Must be performed as with the Dog Scout Certification except distance is reduced to 15'.
	Heeling: Child can get the dog into heel position and walk 20' with the dog staying in proper position. Hand targeting is allowed, but no treats.	Heeling: Child can get the dog into heel position and walk 20' with the dog staying in proper position. Path must include 2 turns in either direction. Treats and hand targeting are not allowed.
	Leave It: Can be a stationary exercise. Dog must notice the food and may back away from it. Dog may not get the food. Leave it with an animal is not required.	Leave It: Same as for the 7-11 age group. Exercise must be completed 2 times for both age groups. Leave it with an animal is required.
	Meet a friendly stranger: Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification.	Meet a friendly stranger: Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification.
	Safe around dogs (on leash): Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification.	Safe around dogs (on leash): Must be performed just as with Dog Scout Certification.

Questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the Jr. Scout Program should be addressed to the Merit Badge Program Administrator. Detailed contact information can be found on our [web site](#).