



DSA Junior Scouts Program

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 now offers a Junior Scout badge to young dog handlers, ages 6 to 16. The Junior Scout program offers youngsters an opportunity to earn a Jr. Scout badge through local Dog Scout troops or at summer DSA camps. Children in the age 6-16 group may choose to attempt the Jr. Scout badge rather than the adult Dog Scout badge, guided by troop or camp leaders as to the most appropriate Scout badge to seek.

It should be noted that children 6 years of age or younger will receive a Certificate of Achievement and will be observed – but not actually tested – in the Jr. Dog program; this youngest group will not be eligible for merit badges until they reach the age of seven.

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.

The Junior Scout program, still in its developmental stage, is subject to evaluative review and change. **Members and troop leaders are invited to provide input** as we attempt to refine this certification program.

A chart that outlines the basic minimal requirements of children seeking the Jr. Scout is shown below. Children and their dogs who meet the standards required for those in the age groups of either 7-12 or 13+ will be eligible to earn all merit badges.

Troop leaders and instructors at DSA camps will, in general, follow the Criteria for DSA Junior Scout Certification Evaluation Guidelines for Scoutmasters. Please refer to Criteria for DSA Junior Scout Certification.

Jr. Scouts need to perform the following skills for a certified Scoutmaster:

Junior Scout Checkoff/Test

- _____ dog is friendly and comfortable with strangers
- _____ child has mastered the use of the phrase, "please get your dog back"
- _____ child knows how to encourage a proper greeting behavior between dogs
- _____ dog is friendly and comfortable with other dogs
- _____ child can have dog perform a "Leave it" with food
- _____ child can have dog perform a "Leave it" with another animal



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- _____ dog can demonstrate the ability to heel on a loose leash without pulling
- _____ dog will sit when child stops while heeling
- _____ dog will sit on child's cue
- _____ dog will lie down on child's cue
- _____ dog will come when called by the child
- _____ dog will stay in either a sit or a down position, while child steps away
- _____ at least two plastic bags are carried by child at all times
- _____ child consistently practices responsibility and picks up dog's waste
- _____ child knows the dog scout laws and promises to uphold them

The chart below outlines the basic requirements children in each age group will be expected to meet in earning the Junior Scout Certificate (age 6 and under) or the Junior Scout Badge (ages 7-12 and ages 13-16).

Age 6 & under	Ages 7-12	Ages 13-16
Responsible Dog Owner: Picks up after dog; applies to all groups.	Sit: no treat	Sit: no treats
Safe: Can play nicely with his/her dog & can meet another dog safely	Down: may use treats	Down: no treats
Other: Can teach his/her dog a few basic exercises (i.e., sit, down, come) and can use treats.	Stay: From a sit or down, from 4' leash length away for 10 seconds	Stay: from sit or down, from 6' leash for 20 seconds
Dog is friendly with people & dogs: Both elements basically the same as for adults	Come: from 4', handler can back up in calling; no treats	Come: From 6', handler stationary with dog at end of leash; no treats
Caring for dog: Shows love & respect for dog; knows how to protect dog by standing up for it and learning to train it.	Leave it: Dog should notice treat; dog may back away from treat. Dog may not get the food. Dog will not need to do "leave it" with an animal.	Leave it: Same as for ages 7-12. For both age groups, dog must demonstrate leave it successfully on at least 2 passes.
<i>The above applies to all age groups for the Jr. Scout badge requirements</i>	Child is friendly with dogs: Handler knows safety rules (i.e., approaching a dog, coming across a loose dog, meeting a dog while riding a bike, etc.)	Child is friendly with dogs: same as 7-12 age group.
Heeling: Child can walk the dog on a leash without the dog pulling the child.	Heeling: Child can get the dog into heel position and walk 20 steps 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 30 steps with the dog staying in proper position, including 2 turns in either direction. No treats or hand targeting.