

## **GSUSA Family Engagement: The Key to Success**

### Course Topic & Resource Outline

Completion Time: Approx. 30 minutes

#### Part I (20 minutes)

- Lay the Foundation
  - Six Girl Scout Program Levels: Daisy (K-1), Brownie (2-3), Junior (4-5), Cadette (6-8), Senior (9-10), Ambassador (11-12)
  - Resource Pack: Bookmark pages for your use: [Council Finder](#), [Uniform Guides](#), [Award and Badge Explorer](#), [Volunteer Toolkit](#), [Girl Scout Shop](#), [Badge Booklets & Handbooks](#), and [Activity Zone](#)
  - Organizational Structure:
    - Girl Scouts
    - Troops
    - Service Units
    - Councils
    - GSUSA
  - What Girl Scouts do: earn badges and awards, celebrate traditions, complete community service projects, take part in outdoor experiences, sell cookies, attend field trips and council events
  - The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE): girl-led, learning by doing, & cooperative learning
- What is Family Engagement?
  - When family members are actively involved in their Girl Scout's experience
  - Communication with families, including them in celebrations, actively seeking their participation in activities, enlisting their support in Troop Support Roles
- Benefits to Girl Scouts, Leaders, and Families
  - Troop Leaders
    - Diverse group of adults
    - Hands lighten the work load
    - Help in the following key areas:
      - Cookies
        - Cookie Manager
        - Cookie Booth sales
      - Badge Work
        - Parent guest speaker based on area of expertise
        - Families can lead badges when leader's schedule conflicts
      - Outings
        - Volunteer chaperones meet safety ratios
  - Girl Scouts
    - Promotes healthy social and emotional development
    - Feel pride when family members help in what they are doing
    - Role model important skills

- Learn cooperation
- Girl Scout Safety Ratios
  - **Troop Outings:** Adult-to-girl ratio: minimum of 2 registered, approved, adult volunteers who are unrelated, including one female, for up to this number of girls:
    - 6 Daisies
    - 12 Brownies
    - 16 Juniors
    - 20 Cadettes
    - 24 Seniors
    - 24 Ambassadors
  - **Troop Meetings:** Adult-to-girl ratio: minimum of 2 registered, approved, adult volunteers who are unrelated, including one female, for up to this number of girls:
    - 6 Daisies
    - 12 Brownies
    - 16 Juniors
    - 20 Cadettes
    - 24 Seniors
    - 24 Ambassadors
  - There should be one extra registered, approved, adult volunteer for every additional:
    - 1-4 Daisies
    - 1-6 Brownies
    - 1-8 Juniors
    - 1-10 Cadettes
    - 1-12 Seniors
    - 1-12 Ambassadors
- Family Members
  - Volunteering boosts sense of purpose and social well-being.
  - Adults get to spend special time with their Girl Scout.
- Troop Support Squad
  - Troop Leader
    - Bring Girl Scout experiences to life by planning troop activities, coordinating meetings and field trips, engaging families, attending service unit meetings, and creating a positive, healthy environment for troop members.
    - Time Commitment: 4-6 hrs per month plus meeting times
    - Required membership and background screening
    - Critical role: with no leader, there is no troop
    - Skills: Planning and organization, communication, leadership
    - Top 3 Responsibilities: Plan troop activities, assemble Troop Support Squad, promote GSLE
  - Troop Co-Leader
    - Supports the leader in bringing the Girl Scout experience to life by planning troop activities, coordinating meetings and field trips,

- engaging families, attending service unit meetings, and creating a positive, healthy environment for troop members. Establish main point of contact to streamline communication with families.
  - Time Commitment: 4-6 hrs per month plus meeting times
  - Required membership and background screening
  - Critical role: every troop leader should have a co-leader.
  - Skills: Planning and organization, communication, leadership
  - Top 3 Responsibilities: Serve as Leader's backup, help leader coordinate and plan activities, promote the GSLE
- Troop Treasurer
  - Maintains accurate troop banking account records; responsible for the collection of receipts and reimbursements; reviews bank statements; completes Troop Financial Report; complies with Girl Scout fundraising guidelines.
  - Time Commitment: 3-4 hrs per month
  - Required membership and background screening
  - Critical role: ideally Troop Leaders should not handle troop funds as it is a conflict of interest.
  - Skills: Spreadsheet software knowledge, record-keeping, math/money-handling
  - Top 3 Responsibilities: Monitor/manage troop bank account, maintain troop budget, maintain receipts and submit end-of-year report
- Cookie Sale Manager
  - Manages product and logistics for the troop's cookie sale. Picks up product from warehouse facility and stores troop cookies prior to distribution; manages cookie inventory using online system by recording transactions; collects and deposits money from troop members for boxes sold; coordinates, stocks, and manages cookie booths.
  - Time Commitment: Seasonal role; 4-6 hrs per month during cookie season
  - Required membership and background screening
  - Critical role: every Troop Leader should have a cookie manager; too much work to handle alone.
  - Skills: communication, record-keeping, organization
  - Top 3 Responsibilities: Stock inventory, distribute product, collect and deposit money
- Outdoor Coordinator (Troop Helper)
  - Work with Troop Leaders to plan outdoor experiences in compliance with Girl Scout Safety Guidelines; complete all required trainings for outdoor events; create a positive, diverse, and healthy environment.
  - Time Commitment: occasional (as planned)
  - Membership required and background screening for chaperones/Troop Helpers

- Mission-helpful role: helpful to have additional adult who has completed outdoor training and versed in safety guidelines.
  - Skills: Values outdoor experiences, respects nature, enthusiasm
  - Top 3 Responsibilities: attends outdoor training, maintain safety standards, gets Girl Scouts outdoors
- Driver/Chaperone (Troop Helper)
  - Provides supervision and support for troop members to safely enjoy meetings, field trips, and other activities. Helps transport troop members to and from Girl Scout meetings, field trips, and other events. Provides an extra set of hands at meetings or other Girl Scout activities as needed.
  - Time Commitment: occasional (as needed)
  - Membership required and background screening for Drivers/Chaperones listed as Troop Helpers. **GSofSI Drivers should see the Driver Information Form and Guidelines on our website for more requirements and information.**
  - Mission-helpful role: Girl Scouts can only participate if there are enough adult supervisors present to satisfy safety guidelines.
  - Skills: Good driving record, punctual, friendly and helpful
  - Top 3 Responsibilities: Drive Girl Scouts, supervise Girl Scouts, help as needed
- Troop Helper
  - Assist as needed. Support troop meetings, share knowledge for a skill workshop or to earn a badge.
  - Time Commitment: Occasional
  - This GSUSA course states Troop Helpers do not need membership or screenings; however, **GSofSI council requires membership and background screening for Troop Helpers.**
  - Mission-helpful role: Sharing expertise enhances the Girl Scout experience.
  - Skills: Sewing, costume design, Spanish or secondary language-speaking
  - Top 3 Responsibilities: Have fun, be helpful, make a difference
- Be Flexible
  - Try to meet families in the middle; some help is better than no help
- Be Specific
  - Think about the types of activities you will do and the help you will need
  - Distribute a Family Involvement form
- Be Transparent
  - Certain roles have more of a time commitment than others
  - Some roles have a heavier involvement than others throughout the year
  - Be honest and open about the lift involved with each role and when help is needed
- Get Comfortable Delegating
  - By delegating tasks to your Troop Support Squad, you free yourself up to become the calm and collected Leader your Girl Scouts need.

- Asking for Help
  - Communicate the consequences if no one steps up to help. This fosters transparency.
  - Example: Cookie Manager needed. Consequence- Troop cannot participate in the Cookie Program without a manager. This is the primary way to raise money to do the things they want to do. That means no field trips or overnight camping this spring. Outcome: It wasn't that families didn't want to help; they didn't have space to store inventory. Agreed to split the role between 3 volunteers, who were responsible for only a specific set of troop members' inventory.

## Part II

- Parent/Caregiver Meeting Overview
  - 100% of most satisfied troops report they held a parent/caregiver meeting at the beginning of the year
  - Sets the tone for the year
  - Helps them understand the roles they play in the troop
  - Older girls can help plan the Parent/Caregiver meeting
  - Lasts up to an hour
  - Recommended structure for the meeting with specific agenda items- Can be found in the VTK
- Parent/Caregiver Meeting Agenda
  - Welcome and Introductions- Leader Introductions. Parent/Caregiver Introductions, Troop Meeting Logistics
    - Inclusive environment- emphasize it doesn't matter if they don't have previous Girl Scout experience
    - Have families tell about themselves and their daughter's interest in Girl Scouting
    - Review day, time, length, frequency, and location of your troop meeting
  - Discover the Girl Scout Difference- Mission, Promise, and Law; what Girl Scouts do; how Girl Scouts do it (GSLE); troop year plan
    - Promise and Law is lived by and recited at every meeting
    - Provide an overview of what Girl Scouts do: earn 3-5 badges in different topics, complete at least 1 community service or Take Action project, do at least one outdoor activity or go camping overnight, participate in the GS cookie program, try to attend one field trip or GS event, include 1-2 GS holidays or celebrations
    - GSLE- let three processes guide them: Girl-Led, Learning by Doing, Cooperative Learning
    - Distribute a troop calendar or go over the Year Plan in the VTK so families can stay current on what the troop is doing
  - Family as Part of the Formula- Why family engagement, communication method

- Families and leaders are partners and work together as a team to support the troop
- Active communication to keep them aware of activities and special events; need for family support in the troop with volunteering, Girl Scout Activity Zone site and Family Resources handout
- Decide on a communication method that works for the troop. Recaps of troop meeting can be provided
- Get Them Hooked on Helping- Troop Leadership Opportunities, Other Ways to Help
  - Troop Support Squad- share specific roles parents can choose from as well as the time commitments of each
  - Emphasize there are lots of ways to help even if they are short on time. Consider sharing an interest form to gather the types of skills parents have
- Money Matters and More- Uniforms, Supplies, and Other Costs; How Troops Pay for Things; Paperwork
  - List of troop costs- uniforms, handbooks, materials
  - Income: caregivers pay, troop dues, cookie profits
  - Caregivers can pay for items like uniform and membership dues; troop dues pay for badges, patches, and membership stars, as well as troop supplies, program materials, and space rental; cookie profits can pay for events and troop outings
  - Health forms, Permission slips, and photo release forms should be distributed at the meeting. Visit our website to download these forms.
- Wrap It Up- Close with Intention, Q&A
  - Make sure everyone has your phone number and email, knows the troop number, and has info about next troop meeting.
  - Collect any completed forms distributed
  - Review how you plan to keep families engaged—recommend sending an email after each meeting to review what took place
  - Leave time for questions and to get to know people better
- Remember, a Parent/Caregiver Meeting Agenda can be found on the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)