

# How to Involve Girls in Planning - Before You Start

Girls need time and space to think. Any planning activity will be more focussed with a preceeding knowledge of possible choices. This could include a list of words which suggest activities, such as cycling, cooking, clothes etc. Give girls individual space (a piece of paper and pens are a good idea) and encourage quiet thought so that each girl gets a chance to contribute. Leaders need to set rules such as: *No idea is a silly/stupid idea* or *Safety rules will be applied to ideas afterwards, but do not apply now*. Once girls have at least one suggestion, encourage them to go into their patrols and use one or a combination of the techniques below.

## Ideas Box

This is an great patrol planning resource. Each girl is encouraged to contribute ideas to a box in the patrol area. Girls can then pull out the ideas and use them either to mind map, or as a "lotto" choice. The advantage of this system is that girls can contribute through the term when they are actually 'fired up' about an idea. Encourage girls to make patrol rules about the box, to ensure all girls have a fair share in the choices. Rules could include "We have to do something for each idea we pull out of the box, even if we change the choice a little to fit in with what we can and are allowed to do", or "We have to use one idea from each of our patrol on the mind map before we start". Rules need to be written down and displayed in a prominent place in the patrol corner, so that they cannot be arbitrarily changed.

## Mind Mapping

Mind mapping refers to a technique where a central idea is put in a circle and as it stimulates further ideas they are shown as circles radiating from the idea which spurred the thought.



The amount of leader involvement will depend on the age group of the girls. Leader involvement in this activity could be putting key words into some circles (these could include those activities which arise during the term such as Father's Day, Clean Up Australia etc.) Leaders need to be aware of encouraging quiet, shy girls to contribute, as well as requesting bossy, loud girls to give others a say.

## Thinking Ball/Cap

This is a good technique for younger girls as it encourages everyone to have a say. A brightly coloured ball or cap (similar to the cap in Harry Potter) is passed around the ring. Only the girl with the ball/cap can make a suggestion – anyone without the ball/cap has to listen and not talk. With older girls this can be used as a brain-storming aid with girls having to think of an idea quickly then throw the ball onto someone who hasn't yet contributed. Leaders may need to act as secretary if this technique is used.



## Especially For Leaders

Encouraging girls to make decisions is an important part of the AGP. It will also have its rewards in decreasing the amount of time and effort you need to contribute. Your primary responsibility is safety, but encouraging girls to think of their own safety in participating in activities, has far greater value than informing them that certain activities can't be done. Consider modifying activities or substituting equally exciting alternatives rather than scrapping activities because of safety considerations. Older girls can be taught risk assessment as part of the planning process.