



# GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1

MARCH 2024

**girls  
inc.**

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

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We are pleased to release the 2024 edition of the Girls Inc. Fact Book. As you know, Girls Inc. is committed to providing accurate and timely information related to the state of girls, and we believe that you will find this book to be a useful reference as you engage in the work of promoting the well-being and success of girls and young women.

Girls Inc. is unsurpassed in its expertise when it comes to girls and young women, and is the nation's longest-running girls' leadership organization. We are proud to be shaping the new generation of girl leaders who are making meaningful contributions in their schools and communities today and are poised to influence the future of our society.

The role of the National office of Girls Inc. is to provide technical assistance to our network of Affiliates so they can focus on delivering quality services to girls. We ensure that they have access to essential resources that assist in offering evidence-based programming that is proven to help girls grow up to be healthy, educated, and independent young adults. It is also our role to provide thought leadership and ongoing training, to equip staff to meet girls' evolving needs.

We are reintroducing the Fact Book in order to provide you with the latest statistics and data, along with guidance on how to use this information effectively and accurately.

I would like to thank the Research and Evaluation team and all those involved in producing this important document. And I thank you, too, for your dedication to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

**Stephanie J. Hull, Ph.D.**

Girls Inc. President & CEO

# INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT THIS FACT BOOK

Girls Inc. strives to provide accurate and up-to-date information on what girls experience today. This Fact Book contains statistics about the lived experience of girls and young women, and aims to help readers develop a clear, evidence-based picture of what matters in girls' lives. Statistics included here relate to key elements that Girls Inc. addresses through its mission and girl-focused programming.

## HOW TO USE THIS FACT BOOK

The information presented in this Fact Book consolidates a wealth of publicly available research on key issues impacting girls, offered in accessible and easy-to-consume topical summaries. Where possible, comparison points from national datasets are provided to offer further context into what it is like to be a girl today and demonstrate how the intersections of race and gender impact the lives of girls.

Audiences may find many selections from this Fact Book beneficial for use in grant writing or other fund development opportunities, to develop and share impactful messages about the Girls Inc. Experience, or for making important program implementation decisions. Additionally, each topic includes an example program statement, demonstrating how the Girls Inc. approach to working with girls is building a more equitable society. While a single program is mentioned in alignment with each topic, the comprehensive nature of Girls Inc. programming is such that many programs work to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes for any given topic.

When using a statistic from this Fact Book in a printed or web-published document, it is important to provide a citation using either the author's or publishing organization's name and date of publication or an asterisk or other symbol that directs the reader to a full citation.

You are encouraged to use the wording provided, and may use the reported statistic exactly as it is presented in this Fact Book. Make sure to include the source of the statistic, along with a link to its source if appropriate. Both appear near the bottom of the page. If you would like to phrase a fact differently or compare statistics in a way not presented in this Fact Book, please consult the [Girls Inc. Research and Evaluation Department](#) before disseminating your rewritten version.

This fourth volume of the Fact Book includes separate versions for the United States and Canada. Feel free to consult the Girls Inc. Research Team ([research@girlsinc.org](mailto:research@girlsinc.org)) if you have any questions about a statistic, its source, or how to incorporate this information into your materials.

We'd love to hear from you! If you are familiar with a recent, reliable source of statistics that relate to girls' strengths and needs that is not cited in this Fact Book, please tell us about it at [research@girlsinc.org](mailto:research@girlsinc.org).

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### **A note about the 2024 Fact Book**

*As a revision to the 2018 Fact Book Volume 3, Number 1 - United States, the opening chapter on the Intersectional Experiences of Girls, has been excluded from this volume. While the approach of considering intersectionality is still of utmost importance, and the specific topics covered are relevant to Girls Inc. participating members, the Research & Evaluation Department is working on a more comprehensive, intentional, and collaborative update to these topics areas. Thus, the 2024 Fact Book Volume 4, Number 1 - United States, contains only chapters on the 3 Core Essential Service areas of Girls Inc. programming: Strong, Smart, and Bold.*

*For more information about the revision process or the topics originally included in the 2018 Fact Book, please contact [research@girlsinc.org](mailto:research@girlsinc.org).*

# GIRLS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Girls Inc. is proud to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold members of their communities. In 2023, Girls Inc. provided over 110,000 girls across the U.S. and Canada with intensive life-changing programming and experiences. The Girls Inc. 2021-2025 Strategic Plan renews Girls Inc.'s commitment to positive impact through organizational resiliency and innovation.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2021 Population Estimates, girls under the age of 18 make up just over a quarter of the total female population ([US Census Bureau, 2022](#)), which translates to over 35 million young girls in communities across the United States. They represent not only a sizeable population but also a population characterized by increasing racial and ethnic diversity. Girls Inc. girls reflect this growing diversity with 69% of Girls Inc. service provided to girls from minority backgrounds (including Black, Indigenous, Middle Eastern/North African, Asian American/Pacific Islander, or Multiracial) and 27% of Girls Inc. girls identifying as Hispanic or Latina (according to 2023 Annual Affiliate Survey data).

Girls Inc. is committed to advancing the rights and opportunities of girls and young women, to reduce and eliminate the barriers girls face, and to reform systems that impede their success. Informed by the lived experiences of girls in our network, Girls Inc. has developed a network-wide [Policy & Advocacy Platform](#) to provide information on key issue areas facing girls in the U.S. today.

Girls in the United States face many challenges to their well-being, success, and safety. Girls also have strengths, positive experiences, and potential to build upon in order to accomplish their goals. From health and academic indicators to career outcomes, this Fact Book provides evidence-based snapshots of just some of the obstacles and opportunities girls face. Girls Inc. is dedicated to addressing these complex challenges while embracing the diverse capabilities of girls today.

**STRONG**

GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

# STRONG

## HEALTHY DIET

---

**Only 20% of high school girls in the U.S. ate breakfast every day in the past week.**

### **Importance:**

Regularly eating breakfast can increase an adolescent's academic performance in school, including better performances on standardized tests, improved cognitive function, and increased attention. Furthermore, children and adolescents who regularly eat breakfast have more favorable health outcomes including more nutrient-dense diets, decreased risk of obesity, and fewer visits to the school nurse.

Alternatively, teens experiencing hunger are more likely to have difficulty getting along with their peers ([Food Research and Action Center, 2016](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

- 30% of male students
- 17% of Hispanic or Latina students
- 12% of Black female students
- 22% of White female students

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**The Girls Inc. Mind+Body program supports the physical health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls identify a strategy for healthy eating that works for her body, circumstance, budget, home life, culture, and activity level.**

### **How can I say this?**

High school girls are more likely than their male peers to have skipped or missed breakfast in the past 7 days.

Hispanic/Latina and Black high school girls are less likely than their White peers to have eaten breakfast every day in the past 7 days.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main Healthy Diet statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbps>.



# STRONG

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

---

**Only 36% of high school girls were physically active for five or more days in the past seven days.**

### Importance:

Children ages 6-17 should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day, including aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activities each week. Physically active youth have improved cardiorespiratory fitness, stronger bones, improved cognition, and reduced symptoms of depression. Furthermore, regularly active youth are more likely to have a healthy adulthood ([U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018](#)). In addition to the health benefits of physical activity, physical activity in the form of play is associated with a variety of positive outcomes for youth, including improved intellectual, social, and emotional development ([Shafer, 2018](#)).

Low-income youth have fewer opportunities for safe play and physical activity than their financially secure peers ([Chang & Kim, 2017](#)). Due to lack of opportunities to be physically active, girls from low-income and under-resourced communities may not be experiencing the benefits of physical activity as frequently as their more affluent peers.

### National Comparisons:

- 55% of male students
- 29% of Hispanic or Latina students
- 25% of Black female students
- 43% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. Sporting Chance programs support the physical health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls build a foundation for enjoying sports, adventure and physical activity throughout their lives.**

### How can I say this?

High school girls are much less likely than their male peers to participate in 60 minutes of physical activity five or more days per week.

Black and Hispanic/Latina high school girls are less likely than their White female peers to participate in 60 minutes of physical activity five or more days per week.

### Statistic Source:

The main Physical Activity statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbps>.

# STRONG

## SPORTS TEAM PARTICIPATION

---

**Almost half (47%) of high school girls played on at least one sports team in the past year.**

### Importance:

Sports participation provides many benefits for youth and adolescents. Girls who participate in sports are also more likely to exhibit skills critical to success in school and in the workplace, such as leadership, teamwork, and goal-setting ([Women's Sports Foundation, 2016](#)). While there are many benefits for girls who participate in sports, not all girls have the same access to sports and other physical activity opportunities. Girls of color especially experience unequal access to both sports teams in their schools, as well as opportunities to be physically active in their communities ([National Women's Law Center & The Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 2015](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 52% of male students
- 34% of Hispanic or Latina students
- 42% of Black female students
- 55% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. Sporting Chance programs support the physical health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls build a foundation for enjoying sports, adventure and physical activity throughout their lives.**

### How can I say this?

High school girls are less likely than their male peers to participate on a sports team.

Black and Hispanic high school girls are less likely to participate on a sports team than their White female peers.

### Statistic Source:

The main Sports Team Participation statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## BODY IMAGE

---

**48% of U.S. girls ages 10-17 have high body esteem.\***

### Importance:

Body image during adolescence has a profound impact on the way youth experience these crucial years of development. High body esteem is associated with increased likelihood to participate in social engagements, increased confidence to assert personal opinion, increased likelihood to complete important health tasks like doctors visits, and decreased pressure to look like images of females seen in the media ([Nathan-Tiloy, Shann, & Skea, 2016](#)).

Having a healthy body image allows girls to live comfortably and with confidence. Girls Inc. codifies its commitment to body positivity within the Girls Inc. Bill of Rights, “Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies.”

### Global Comparisons:

#### Girls in the U.S.

- 10% have low body esteem
- 48% have high body esteem

#### Girls in Great Britain

- 17% have low body esteem
- 38% have high body esteem

#### Girls in Canada

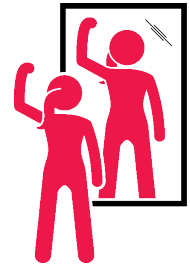
- 17% have low body esteem
- 51% have high body esteem

#### Girls in Germany

- 8% have low body esteem
- 53% have high body esteem

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. Mind+Body program supports positive body image for girls ages 6-18 by helping girls of all shapes, sizes, weights, and capabilities know they have the right to feel good about their bodies and appreciate the bodies of others.**



### How can I say this?

Less than half of girls ages 10-17 have high body esteem.

### Statistic Source:

The main Body Image statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2017 Dove Global Girls Beauty and Confidence Report, which used data collected in 2016. At the time of publication, this particular dataset has not been updated and no future update is expected.

\*Body Esteem was calculated using the Mendelson Scale. This scale assesses body-esteem by measuring how individuals evaluate their general appearance, body weight and shape.

# STRONG

## MENTAL HEALTH

---

**Between January-June 2021, 57% of high school girls experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and 12% of high school girls attempted suicide.**

### Importance:

Suicide is in the top 3 causes of death for young people between ages 10-24 and 90% of those who die by suicide experienced symptoms of a mental health condition, such as feeling very sad or withdrawn, drastic changes in mood, extreme difficulty concentrating, and intense worry or overwhelm. (NAMI, 2022). LGBTQ+ youth are at an increased risk for suicidal ideation (Trevor Project, 2019). With 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 living with a mental health condition, and 50% of lifetime mental illness beginning by age 14, early identification and treatment is key to minimizing the isolating and stigmatizing effects mental illness can have on the emotional and social well-being of youth (NAMI, 2016).

Positive relationships and a feeling of mutual support can promote positive mental health and reduce stress. In fact, girls who befriend, trust, and get along well with other girls are less likely to report feeling depressed (Hinkelman, 2017).

### National Comparisons:

- 31% and 5% of male students
- 46% and 8% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 40% and 10% of Black students
- 44% and 9% of White students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. Mind+Body program supports the mental health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn how to handle stress in healthy ways.**



### How can I say this?

More than half of high school girls experience persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

1 in 8 high school girls have attempted suicide.

High school girls experience symptoms of depression at much higher rates than their male peers.

### Statistic Source:

The main Mental Health statistics (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, which was published in 2022. This was the first ABES conducted and future plans to update ABES data has yet to be determined. More information about the ABES can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/abes.htm>.

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: CIGARETTES

---

**18% of high school girls have ever tried smoking cigarettes.**

### Importance:

Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. More women die from lung cancer than breast cancer. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body, leading to increased rates of heart disease, stroke, cancer (throughout the body), preterm delivery and still births, and type 2 diabetes ([CDC, 2021](#)).

Each day, approximately 1,600 youth smoke their first cigarette, culminating in 5.6 million youth under 18 in the United States who will die early because of smoking ([CDC, 2022](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 18% of male students
- 20% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 10% of Black female students
- 19% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. FRIENDLY PEERsuasion program supports the physical health of girls by strengthening skills needed to resist pressure to use harmful substances.**

### How can I say this?

Almost 1 in 5 high school girls have tried smoking cigarettes.

Hispanic/Latina and White high school girls are twice as likely than Black high school girls to have ever tried smoking cigarettes.

### Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Cigarettes statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES/VAPES

---

**41% of high school girls have ever used an electronic vapor product.**

### Importance:

While teen cigarette use had decreased in the past several years ([CDC, 2019d](#)), another concerning trend has emerged-- e-cigarettes/vape use. Most notably, the vast majority of vaping products have been found to contain nicotine, an addictive substance that can negatively impact adolescent brain development and particularly impacts attention, learning, mood, and impulse control ([CDC, 2022](#)). Though electronic vaping may expose users to marginally fewer chemicals than traditional cigarettes, early evidence suggests use of vaping products leads to a higher likelihood of also using burned cigarettes simultaneously or in the future ([CDC, 2022](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 32% of male students
- 46% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 39% of Black female students
- 41% White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. FRIENDLY PEERsuasion program supports the physical health of girls by strengthening skills needed to resist pressure to use harmful substances.**

### How can I say this?

2 in 5 high school girls have tried electronic vaping products.

High school girls try or use electronic vaping products more frequently than their male peers.

### Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Electronic Cigarettes/Vapes statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: ALCOHOL

---

**27% of high school girls have had at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days.**

### Importance:

A girl's adolescent years are important in terms of her growth physically, socially, and emotionally, but alcohol and other substance use can endanger these developmental processes. In contrast to historic trends, female high school students are more likely to binge drink than male high school students. Young people who use alcohol are more likely to have poorer educational outcomes; have unwanted and unprotected sex; misuse other substances; engage in behaviors that can lead to involvement in the juvenile justice system; and have increased risk of suicide and homicide ([CDC, 2022](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 19% of male students
- 27% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 18% of Black female students
- 30% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. FRIENDLY PEERsuasion program supports the physical health of girls by strengthening skills needed to resist pressure to use harmful substances.**

### How can I say this?

Almost 1 third of all high school girls currently drink alcohol.

High school girls are more likely than their male peers to drink alcohol and to binge drink alcohol.

Hispanic/Latina and White high school girls are more likely than their Black peers to currently drink alcohol.

### Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Alcohol statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: MARIJUANA

---

**31% of high school girls have tried marijuana at least once.**

### Importance:

Marijuana use is associated with poorer than expected academic performance, and neurological studies suggest that marijuana use can lead to changes in brain structure, resulting in permanent problems with brain functioning ([Jacobus & Tapert, 2016](#)). Marijuana use in adolescence is also associated with other risk factors, such as increased risk for mental health issues, impaired driving, and potential for addiction ([CDC, 2021](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 25% of male students
- 35% of Hispanic or Latina students
- 37% of Black female students
- 29% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. FRIENDLY PEERsuasion program supports the physical health of girls by strengthening skills needed to resist pressure to use harmful substances.**

### How can I say this?

Nearly 1 third of all high school girls have tried marijuana at least once.

High school girls across all races are more likely to have tried marijuana, as compared to their male peers.

### Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Marijuana statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.



# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

---

**15% of high school girls have taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to take them.**

### **Importance:**

Misuse of prescription drugs such as stimulants, opioids, and depressants is especially dangerous for children and adolescents, as they can impair the development of young people's brains and bodies and increase the risk for long term addiction. During adolescence, the brain is still growing and drug use can inhibit the development during this critical time. Drug use also impairs judgment, decision-making skills, and inhibitions, putting youth at risk for making harmful choices with life-long consequences ([SAMHSA, 2019](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

- 10% of male students
- 16% of Hispanic or Latina students
- 15% of Black female students
- 14% of White female students

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**The Girls Inc. FRIENDLY PEERsuasion program supports the physical health of girls by strengthening skills needed to resist pressure to use harmful substances.**

### **How can I say this?**

Nearly 1 in 7 high school girls have misused prescription drugs.

Female students are more likely than their male peers to misuse prescription drugs.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main Substance Use: Prescription Drugs statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## HEALTHY SEXUALITY: SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

---

### 31% of high school girls have had sexual intercourse.

#### Importance:

Sexual health is a critical part of a young person's well being. Deciding when and how to engage in sexual activity is a personal decision each girl should be able to make for herself free from stigma and misinformation. Educating girls about healthy relationships, consent, and how to practice safe sex, allows girls to be empowered advocates and make informed, thoughtful decisions about their sexual health, and does not promote increased sexual activity ([Dreweke, 2019](#)).

#### National Comparisons:

- 29% of all male students
- 31% of Hispanic or Latina students
- 29% of Black female students
- 33% of White female students

#### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality programs support the physical health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn about and develop an appreciation for the human body and all it can do, engage in healthy relationships, be inclusive and supportive of sexual diversity and rights, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.**

#### How can I say this?

Nearly 1 out of every 3 high school girls have had sexual intercourse.

Female high school students are just as likely as their male peers to have had sexual intercourse.

#### Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Sexuality: Sexual Intercourse statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## HEALTHY SEXUALITY: CONTRACEPTIVE USE

---

**47% of sexually active high school girls used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse.**

**85% of sexually active high school girls used some method to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sexual intercourse with an opposite-sex partner.**

### **Importance:**

While all forms of contraceptives can reduce the risk of unintended pregnancies, using a condom during sexual activity also reduces the risk to both partners for most STIs, including HIV ([CDC, 2020](#)). Using any form of contraception, such as the pill, the patch, or IUDs, can reduce the likelihood of unplanned teen pregnancies, which can significantly impact a teen girl's social and economic opportunities. Teenage mothers are more likely to drop out of school, have increased health challenges, and face unemployment as a young adult. ([CDC, 2021](#)). Knowledge about contraception can empower girls to take charge of their sexual health.

### **National Comparisons:**

#### **Used a condom**

- 58% of all male students
- 42% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 42% of Black female students
- 52% of White female students

#### **Used some method**

- 88% of all male students
- 76% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 76% of Black female students
- 90% of White female students

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality programs support the physical health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn about and develop an appreciation for the human body and all it can do, engage in healthy relationships, be inclusive and supportive of sexual diversity and rights, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.**

### **How can I say this?**

Nearly 6 in 7 sexually active high school girls report using some method of contraception the last time they had sexual intercourse with an opposite-sex partner.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main Healthy Sexuality: Contraceptive Use statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## HEALTHY SEXUALITY: TEEN PREGNANCY RATE

---

**In 2017, the teen pregnancy rate was 31 pregnancies per 1,000 teen girls (ages 15-19).**

### **Importance:**

Pregnant teens are at higher risk (as compared to women aged 20-24) for severe health complications, such as eclampsia, endometritis, and system infections, while their babies face increased risk of low birth weight, preterm birth, and chronic medical conditions ([WHO, 2022](#)).

For more information about how Girls Inc. continues to advocate for the rights and dignity of girls, young women, and all youth, see the Youth and Reproductive Rights Fact Sheet on our website.

### States\* with the highest teen pregnancy rates in 2017 were:

- Arkansas (44 per 1,000)
- Mississippi (43 per 1,000)
- New Mexico & Louisiana (41 per 1,000)

\*The 2017 Teen Pregnancy Rate for Washington, DC was 47 per 1,000

### States with the lowest teen pregnancy rates in 2017 were:

- New Hampshire (16 per 1,000)
- Massachusetts (16.5 per 1,000)
- Vermont (17.5 per 1,000)

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality programs support the physical health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn about and develop an appreciation for the human body and all it can do, engage in healthy relationships, be inclusive and supportive of sexual diversity and rights, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.**

### **How can I say this?**

In 2017, 1 in every 32 teen girls became pregnant.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main Healthy Sexuality: Teen Pregnancy Rate statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the most recent Guttmacher Institute Report on U.S. Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions, which was published in 2021 and utilized data through 2017. Updated reports are published every 1-3 years and can be found at <https://www.guttmacher.org/>

# STRONG

## HEALTHY SEXUALITY: TEEN BIRTH RATE

---

**In 2020, there were 15 births for every 1,000 teen girls ages 15-19.**

### Importance:

Teen mothers often experience discrimination and lack the support they need to succeed. According to a national survey of girls ages 14-18, girls who were pregnant or parenting were less likely to report that they had someone at their school who cared about them and wanted them to succeed, and 26% say that they received little to no counseling or help in planning their futures. Pregnant and parenting young women also report stigmatization, bullying, harassment, and discrimination at school ([NWLC, 2017](#)). These factors can push teen mothers out of school and prevent them from pursuing their educational and career goals. Furthermore, due to lower educational attainment rates coupled with the costs of raising children, teen mothers may experience economic hardships and are more likely to live in poverty ([DHHS, 2017](#)).

For more information about how Girls Inc. continues to advocate for the rights and dignity of girls, young women, and all youth, see the Youth and Reproductive Rights Fact Sheet on our website.

### National Comparisons:

The birth rate among teen girls age 15-19 in 2020 was:

- 26 births per 1,000 among Native American/Alaska Native teens
- 24 births per 1,000 among Hispanic teens
- 24 births per 1,000 among Black teens
- 23 births per 1,000 among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander teens
- 10 births per 1,000 among White teens
- 2 births per 1,000 among Asian American teens

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality programs support the physical health of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn about and develop an appreciation for the human body and all it can do, engage in healthy relationships, be inclusive and supportive of sexual diversity and rights, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.**

### How can I say this?

Teen birth rates among Native American, Hispanic, Black, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth (26, 24, 24, and 23 per 1,000 respectively) are more than double the birth rate among White youth (10 per 1,000).

### Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Sexuality: Teen Birth Rate statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from a 2022 Congressional Research Service Brief on Teen Birth Trends. Update frequency for these briefs are unknown but can be found at <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>

# STRONG

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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**55% of girls say that they hear boys making sexual comments or sexual jokes about girls at least several times a week.**

**56% of girls in grades 7-12 reported experiencing sexual harassment during the past school year.**

### Importance:

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual conduct, which can take place in the form of verbal or written comments, gestures, displaying pictures or images, using physical coercion, or harassment based on failure to conform to gender norms ([Hill and Kearl, 2011](#)). Often, sexual harassment goes underreported for reasons such as fear for what other people will think, beliefs that reporting will not make a difference, not being sure if comments are serious enough to report, and being worried about not being believed ([Udem and Wang, 2018](#)). Sexual harassment is harmful for adolescent development, as girls who have reported experiencing sexual harassment report having trouble sleeping, a desire to avoid school, and negative emotional and mental health associated with harassment ([Hill and Kearl, 2011](#)).

### National Comparison 1:

- 32% of boys feel pressure to join in when other boys are talking about girls in a sexual way.

### National Comparison 2:

- 40% of boys grades 7-12 reported experiencing sexual harassment during the past school year.

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality programs support the relationship safety of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn to identify, establish, and cultivate healthy relationships through assertiveness and negotiation skills. Activities focus on personal awareness of rights, boundary setting, and communication within relationships of all kinds.**

### How can I say this?

More than half of middle school and high school girls overhear sexual comments by their peers frequently and experience sexual harassment each year.

Middle and high school girls are 40% more likely than their male peers to experience sexual harassment.

### Statistic Source 1:

[Udem, T. and Wang, A. \(2018\). \*The state of gender equality for U.S. adolescents\*. Warwick, RI and Washington, DC: Plan International USA and PerryUdem.](#)

### Statistic Source 2:

[Hill, C. & Kearl, H. \(2011\). \*Crossing the line: sexual harassment at school\*. Washington, DC: American Association of University Women.](#)

# STRONG

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: SEXUAL ASSAULT / FORCED INTERCOURSE

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**27% of girls experiences sexual assault before the age of 18.**

**14% of high school girls have been physically forced to have sexual intercourse.**

### Importance:

Girls and young women are at especially high risk for sexual assault and forced intercourse, with the greatest risk occurring in late adolescence. Over 80% of women who have been raped were first forced to have intercourse before age 25, including almost 50% of them before age 18 ([CDC, 2022](#)). Sexual violence can result in immediate and lifelong consequences, including chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder ([CDC, 2022](#)). Survivors may also struggle with social challenges, including strained relationships with friends and family and isolation or ostracism from their family and community.

### National Comparisons (Sexual Assault):

- 5% of boys experience sexual assault before the age of 18.

### National Comparisons (Forced Intercourse):

- 4% of male high school students
- 15% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 11% of Black female students
- 14% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality programs support the relationship safety of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn to identify, establish, and cultivate healthy relationships through assertiveness and negotiation skills. Activities focus on personal awareness of rights, boundary setting, and communication within relationships of all kinds.**

### How can I say this?

More than 1 in 4 girls experience sexual assault as a minor.

Girls under the age of 18 experience sexual assault at 5 times the rate of their male peers.

1 in 10 high school girls have experienced forced intercourse.

### Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Relationships: Sexual Assault statistic (and comparison data) is taken from a [2014 article in the Journal of Adolescent Health](#) and utilizes data collected between 2003-2011. No replication of the study or article are expected, but more information can be found at the [National Library of Medicine](#).

The main Healthy Relationships: Forced Intercourse statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.

# STRONG

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE / SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

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**10% of high school girls who have dated during the past 12 months reported being physically abused by a dating partner.**

**15% of high school girls who had dated during the past 12 months reported experiencing some type of sexual dating violence.**

### Importance:

Physical abuse is never acceptable in a relationship. As a direct result of the abuse, they suffer injuries that range from minor to major, including permanent disability or death. In addition, girls who are being physically abused by dating partners are at high risk of additional health consequences such as depression, anxiety, and substance use. Teenage victims of dating violence have increased risk for further victimization in young adulthood ([CDC, 2023](#)).

Young women who experience sexual violence (defined as kissing, touching, or sexual intercourse against their will) are at high risk for depression and anxiety, alcohol and drug use, and antisocial behavior. Many young women who have experienced sexual violence in relationships begin to think of this behavior as normal and are at higher risk for sexual violence in later relationships ([CDC, 2023](#)).

### National Comparisons (Physical Violence):

Among high school students who had dated in the previous 12 months:

- 7% of male students
- 9% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 8% of Black female students
- 11% of White female students

### National Comparisons (Sexual Violence):

Among high school students who had dated in the previous 12 months:

- 4% of male students
- 16% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 6% of Black female students
- 18% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Healthy Sexuality programs support the relationship safety of girls ages 6-18 by helping girls learn to identify, establish, and cultivate healthy relationships through assertiveness and negotiation skills. Activities focus on personal awareness of rights, boundary setting, and communication within relationships of all kinds.**

### How can I say this?

At least 1 in 10 high school girls have experienced some type of dating violence in the past 12 months.

### Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Relationships: Physical & Sexual Violence statistics (and accompanying comparison data) were taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbs>.



**SMART**

GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

# SMART

## SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

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**55% of girls say they like going to school.**

**55% of girls believe they are not smart enough for their dream careers.**

### Importance:

While a majority of girls say that they enjoy school, girls' views of their academic abilities and successes demonstrate that even girls who enjoy and excel in school are not always confident in their own achievement. Girls often learn to follow rules in school, and in turn, perform well, but may not learn effective strategies to build confidence and a sense of self-efficacy (Hinkelman, 2018). It is important that girls are given the support to succeed in school, while also being encouraged to develop self-confidence and academic efficacy.

### National Comparisons:

- 76% of elementary girls say they enjoy school
- 67% of middle school girls say they enjoy school

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. SMART programs support school-based learning and engagement of girls ages 6-18 through activities promoting literacy skills, STEM interest, and homework help to strengthen girls' academic confidence.**

### How can I say this?

Girls reported enjoyment with school decreases as they move from elementary through middle and on to high school.

At least half of all girls believe they are not smart enough for their dream career.

### Statistic Source:

The main School Engagement statistics was taken from a 2023 Girls Index report from the organization [Ruling Our eXperiences](https://rulingourexperiences.com) and utilizes data collected in 2022-2023 from 17,502 girls in grades 5-12. Plans for updated data collection and reporting is unknown, but more information can be found at <https://rulingourexperiences.com/the-girls-index-report/>

# SMART

## EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: ON-TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

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**85% of girls who enter high school as freshmen graduate within four years.**

### Importance:

Completing high school is a critical milestone for girls to achieve positive and empowering life outcomes, such as financial independence and good health. In 2016, the average income for women who were high school graduates was \$8,000 more than their peers without a high school diploma, cutting their risk of poverty by more than half. Additionally, women who graduate high school are more likely to have health insurance and less likely to require government support systems for their household ([NWLC, 2017](#)).

National graduation rates are lower for several demographic groups and in many communities. Students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, English Learners, and students attending poor-performing schools are less likely to graduate from high school often due to lack of opportunity and support ([Reeves, et al, 2021](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 79% of male students
- 83% of Hispanic students
- 75% of Black female students
- 88% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Post Secondary Readiness programs support the academic achievement of girls ages 6-18 through activities that focus on goal-setting, highlight girls' skills and interests, and provide resources for successful homework completion.**

### How can I say this?

Approximately 1 out of every 7 girls (15%) does not graduate high school on time. For Hispanic girls, the number is 1 out of 6 (17%), and for Black girls the number is 1 out of 4 (25%).

High school girls are more likely than their male peers to graduate high school on time.

### Statistic Source:

The main Educational Aspirations: On-Time High School Graduation statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the National Center for Education Statistics database, from a table published in 2017, using data from 2012-2013. Updated statistics, which are typically updated annually, can be found at [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp)

# SMART

## EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES

**4% of young women between the ages of 16 and 24 have either dropped out of high school or never enrolled.**

### Importance:

Systemic barriers can push young women out of school and prevent them from achieving their academic and career goals. Inequitable school discipline, sexual harassment, and a lack of trauma-informed school policies can negatively impact a girl's education. Compared to boys, girls who do not finish school are at higher risk of experiencing unemployment or are more likely to earn lower wages ([NWLC, 2017](#)). Additionally, adults who do not finish high school are more likely to have lower incomes and poorer health, and are involved in crime at higher rates than those with higher levels of educational attainment ([Child Trends, 2015](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 6% of all young men ages 16-24
- 6% of Hispanic young women ages 16-24
- 3% of Black young women ages 16-24
- 4% of White young women ages 16-24

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Post Secondary Readiness programs support the academic achievement of girls ages 6-18 through activities that focus on goal-setting, highlight girls' skills and interests, and provide resources for successful homework completion.**

### How can I say this?

High school girls are less likely to drop out of high school than their male peers.

Hispanic girls are more likely to drop out than their White and Black female peers.

### Statistic Source:

The main Educational Aspirations: High School Dropout Rates statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the National Center for Education Statistics database, from a table published in 2021, using data from 2020. Updated statistics, which are typically updated annually, can be found at [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp)

# SMART

## EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

**66% of young women ages 16-24 who completed high school in 2020 enrolled in a two-year or four-year college the same year they completed high school.**

**47% of young women ages 18-24 are enrolled in college.**

### Importance:

Taking college courses, and all the more so graduating from college, increases earning power. In 2020, median annual earnings for women working full time were \$36,260 for high school graduates, \$45,810 with an associate's degree, and \$61,340 with a bachelor's degree ([NCES, 2021](#)). Further, the unemployment rate in 2021 was 6.3% for women with a high school diploma, 5.7% for women with some college, 4.5% for women with an associate's degree, and 3.5% for women with a bachelor's degree ([Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021](#)).

### National Comparisons:

Young adults ages 16-24 enrolled in college the same year they completed high school:

- 59% of young men enrolled in a two-year or four-year college
- 21% of young women enrolled in two-year colleges
- 46% of young women enrolled in four-year colleges

Percentage of young adults ages 18-24 enrolled in college:

- 38% of young men
- 42% of Hispanic young women
- 42% of Black young women
- 48% of White young women

### Girls Inc. Comparison:

**Girls Inc. Post Secondary Readiness programs support the academic achievement of girls ages 6-18 through activities that focus on goal-setting, highlight girls' skills and interests, and provide resources for successful homework completion.**

***\*Girls Inc. also operates a scholarship program for participants transitioning from high school to post secondary school.***

### How can I say this?

Two-thirds of young women enroll in college the same year they graduate high school.

Among young people ages 18-24, more women than men are enrolled in college.

Nearly half (47%) of young women ages 18-24 are enrolled in college.

### Statistic Source:

The main Educational Aspirations: College Enrollment statistics (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the National Center for Education Statistics database, from a table published in 2021, using data from 2019. Updated statistics, which are typically updated annually, can be found at [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp)

# SMART

## WOMEN IN STEM: GIRLS AND STEM

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### 73% of girls say they are good at math and/or science

### 45% of girls say they are interested in STEM careers

#### Importance:

STEM careers require a great deal of creativity and cooperation. In addition, many of these careers can have a positive impact on the world. A large majority of girls (91%) describe themselves as creative, and nearly 3 in 4 (72%) express an interest in careers that have a positive impact on society ([Microsoft, 2018](#)). When exposed to STEM education and careers, girls are more likely to see STEM careers as creative and having a positive impact, thereby encouraging more girls to consider STEM career paths. Participation in STEM clubs and activities makes girls more likely to pursue STEM and computer science education. Girls of color are also less likely to be confident in their STEM abilities. All girls should have the opportunity to explore STEM in a fun, safe, encouraging environment.

#### National Comparisons:

- 77% of White girls say they are good at math/science
- 73% of Native American girls say they are good at math/science
- 72% of Black girls say they are good at math/science
- 71% of Multiracial girls say they are good at math/science
- 56% of Asian American girls say they are good at math/science
- 46% of Hispanic girls say they are good at math/science

#### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Operation SMART programming develops girls' enthusiasm for and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Through hands-on activities, girls explore, ask questions, persist, and solve problems.**

#### How can I say this?

3 out of 4 girls say they are good at STEM, and less than 2 out of 4 girls are interested in a STEM career.

#### Statistic Source:

The main Women in STEM: Girls and STEM statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from a 2017 Girls Index report from the organization [Ruling Our eXperiences](#) and utilizes data collected in 2016-2017 from 11,000 girls in grades 5-12. Plans for updated data collection and reporting is unknown, but more information can be found at <https://rulingourexperiences.com/the-girls-index-report/>

# SMART

## WOMEN IN STEM: DEGREES IN STEM FIELDS

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### Women earn 34% of all post-secondary STEM degrees.

#### Importance:

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that underrepresentation of women and minorities in STEM fields of study could contribute to their underrepresentation in the rapidly growing and high-paying STEM employment sector. Women, especially women of color, are underrepresented in the STEM workforce ([Landivar, 2013](#)). Increasing representation in STEM fields begins with increasing representation during postsecondary education, since three quarters of STEM workers earn a degree in a STEM field, according to PEW Research. Average earnings for STEM jobs are 65% higher than non-STEM jobs (\$77,400 versus \$46,900, respectively) ([Fry, Kennedy, & Funk, 2021](#)).

For more information about how Girls Inc. can help advance STEM accessibility for girls, see the Increasing Opportunities for Girls in STEM Fact Sheet on our website.

#### National Comparisons:

Of all post-secondary STEM degrees awarded in the U.S. in 2019-2020:

- 4% went to Hispanic women; 8% to Hispanic men
- 3% went to Black women; 4% to Black men
- 16% went to White women; 34% to White men

#### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Operation SMART programming develops girls' enthusiasm for and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Through hands-on activities, girls explore, ask questions, persist, and solve problems.**

#### How can I say this?

Men outnumber women as STEM graduates across all racial/ethnic groups.

Only one third of post-secondary STEM degrees are received by women.

#### Statistic Source:

The main Women in STEM: Degrees in STEM statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the National Center for Education Statistics database, from a table published in 2021, using data from the 2019-2020 academic year. Updated statistics, which are typically updated annually, can be found at [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp)

# SMART

## WOMEN IN STEM:

### DEGREES IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

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**Women earn 21% of all computer and information sciences bachelor's degrees and 21% of all engineering and engineering technologies bachelor's degrees.**

#### **Importance:**

Despite minor advances over the past decade, women, Black, and Hispanic young adults continue to be drastically underrepresented in STEM fields undergoing considerable growth: engineering and computer science. STEM occupations typically experience lower rates of unemployment than non-STEM fields, therefore providing more consistent wages and other benefits to workers in these fields ([Fry, Kennedy, & Funk, 2021](#)).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the top 6 STEM occupations employing the most people are rooted in computer and information sciences ([U.S. Department of Labor, 2021](#)). From 2021-2031, the BLS projects computer and mathematical occupations to experience the second largest amount of growth, only outpaced by healthcare ([U.S. Department of Labor, 2022](#)). Similarly, according to the World Economic Forum, all of the top 25 degrees (based on pay and demand) are in STEM fields, and the majority of them in computer science and engineering ([World Economic Forum, 2021](#)).

#### **National Comparisons:**

- 57% of all bachelor's degrees awarded
- 63% of biological and biomedical sciences bachelor's degrees awarded
- 42% of mathematics and statistics bachelor's degrees awarded

#### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**Girls Inc. Operation SMART programming develops girls' enthusiasm for and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Through hands-on activities, girls explore, ask questions, persist, and solve problems.**

#### **How can I say this?**

Men are awarded 4 times the number of Computer Science and Engineering bachelor's degrees as women.

#### **Statistic Source:**

The main Women in STEM: Degrees in Computer Science and Engineering (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the National Center for Education Statistics database, from a table published in 2021, using data from the 2018-2019 academic year. Updated statistics, which are typically updated annually, can be found at [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp)



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GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

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## LEADERSHIP

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**60% of girls say that they like to be in charge.**

**55% of girls say that they are afraid to be leaders because they don't want their peers to think they are "bossy".**

**66% of girls say that they do not say what they are thinking or disagree with others because they want to be liked.**

### **Importance:**

While a majority of girls say they like to be in charge, girls are often discouraged from taking on leadership roles either by their peers or by their own perceptions about leadership. Girls report not wanting to speak up or take on leadership roles for fear of what others might think of them. Confidence plays a role in girls' self-perceptions as leaders, as girls who consider themselves to be less confident are twice as likely to report that they do not speak up or disagree with others because they want to be liked ([Hinkelman, 2017](#)). Yet, while Black girls are more likely than their peers to exhibit assertive behavior and leadership qualities, these behaviors instead are often labeled as behavior infractions like defiance ([NWLC, 2017c](#)).

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**Girls Inc. Leadership and Community Action programming builds leadership skills for girls ages 6-18 by deepening their understanding of leadership as a collective process grounded in belonging to, and having responsibility for, one's community. Girls get the opportunity to create lasting social change through community action and advocacy projects.**

### **How can I say this?**

More than half of girls fear being a leader because of how their peers will perceive them.

Two thirds of girls prioritize being liked over sharing their ideas and opinions.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main School Engagement statistics was taken from a 2023 Girls Index report from the organization [Ruling Our eXperiences](#) and utilizes data collected in 2022-2023 from 17,502 girls in grades 5-12. Plans for updated data collection and reporting is unknown, but more information can be found at <https://rulingourexperiences.com/the-girls-index-report/>

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## MEDIA LITERACY: SOCIAL MEDIA USE

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**92% of girls ages 13-17 use at least 1 social media platform.**

**48% of girls ages 13-17 report being online almost constantly.**

### Importance:

While online spaces can help girls connect to their peers and form online communities, girls who spend more time on social media are more likely to report feeling sad or depressed nearly every day, are more likely to want to change their appearance, report distrust of other girls, and have fewer supportive relationships ([Hinkelman, 2017](#)). Because of how they spend their time online differently, teenage girls are more likely than their male peers to be negatively impacted by viewing and participating in social media platforms ([Twenge, 2020](#)).

Due to the teenage brain having limited capacity for impulse control, teens are at risk of engaging in social media without considering privacy concerns or other consequences, such as harassment, peer pressure, disruptions to sleep, and increased rates of anxiety and depression ([Mayo Clinic, 2022](#)), therefore teens should still be encouraged to set limits with their social media use and maintain regular in-person social interactions. As technology will only become more ever-present in girls' lives, it is important that they have the skills to navigate today's complex social media landscape.

### National Comparisons:

#### All teens:

- 67% are on TikTok
- 62% are on Instagram
- 59% are on Snapchat
- 32% are on Facebook
- 23% are on Twitter

#### Males (13-17)

- 60% are on TikTok
- 55% are on Instagram
- 54% are on Snapchat
- 31% are on Facebook
- 24% are on Twitter

#### Constantly Online:

- 46% of all teens
- 43% of teen males

#### Females (13-17)

- 73% are on TikTok
- 69% are on Instagram
- 64% are on Snapchat
- 34% are on Facebook
- 22% are on Twitter

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Media Literacy programming builds digital citizenship skills for girls ages 6-18 by increasing their awareness of the scope and power of the media and the effects of media messages on girls and women.**

### How can I say this?

Half of teen girls report being online constantly.

Teen girls outnumber teen boys on most social media platforms.

### Statistic Source:

The main Media Literacy: Social Media Use statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from a 2022 PEW Research Center report and utilizes data collected between 2014-2022. A similar survey is typically conducted every few years, and more information can be found at <https://www.pewresearch.org/>

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## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN RUNNING FOR ELECTED OFFICE

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**In the 2022 election cycle, 70 women ran for Senate seats (21 in final November ballots), 583 for House seats (260 in November), and 69 ran for Governorship (25 in November).**

### Importance:

In 2022, the United States saw a record number of women running as Senate, House of Representatives, and gubernatorial candidates ([CAWP, 2022](#)). Though women continue to be underrepresented in political offices, trends indicate increasing civic engagement, not only reflected in record numbers of women running for office, but also in record numbers of voter registration and voter turnout among women ages 18-24 ([CAWP, 2022](#)). Exposure to these examples of female candidates and elected officials may also inspire girls and young women to pursue careers in public affairs and politics ([Lawless & Fox, 2013](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- The previous record for women running for Senate was set in 2020, with 60 women candidates.
- The current record for women running for House of Representatives was first set in 2020, with 583 women candidates.
- The previous record for women running for Governor of a US state was set in 2018, with 61 women candidates.

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. She Votes program teaches girls ages 6-18 about civic engagement and the democratic process through activities where girls gain the skills and confidence to be future voters, candidates, and legislators.**

### How can I say this?

More women than ever before ran for office in the 2022 election cycle.

### Statistic Source:

The main Civic Engagement: Women Running for Elected Office statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from a 2022 analysis by the Center for American Women and Politics and utilizes data collected between 1980-2022. Similar data is summarized at each election cycle and more information can be found at <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/>.

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## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN IN CONGRESS

**As of January 2023, 149 women (28% of the total membership) are serving in Congress. Of these Congresswomen, 124 are serving in the House of Representatives and 25 in the Senate.**

### Importance:

In an international ranking of countries by the percentage of legislators who are women, the U.S., alongside Iraq, ranked 68th out of 187 as of January 2023 ([representwomen.org](https://representwomen.org)).

Young women are less likely than young men to receive encouragement to run for office, are less socialized by their parents to think about politics as a career path, and are exposed to less political information and discussion than young men are ([Lawless & Fox, 2013](#)). With increased representation of women, people of color, people with disabilities, and other intersecting identities, girls may be more likely to see themselves as being able to pursue a career in public service.

### National Comparisons:

#### Senate

- 75 Senators (75%) are men
- 22 Senators (22%) are White women
- 2 Senators (2%) are Asian American/Pacific Islander women
- 1 Senator (1%) is a Latina woman

#### House of Representatives

- 311 members of the House of Representatives (71%) are men
- 72 Representatives (17%) are White women
- 27 Representatives (6%) are Black women
- 18 Representatives (4%) are Latina women
- 8 Representatives (2%) are Asian/Pacific Islander American women
- 2 Representatives (.5%) are Native American/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian women
- 1 Representative (.25%) is a Middle Eastern/North African woman

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**The Girls Inc. She Votes program teaches girls ages 6-18 about civic engagement and the democratic process through activities where girls gain the skills and confidence to be future voters, candidates, and legislators.**

### How can I say this?

1 in 4 United States Senators are women and less than 1 in 3 United States House of Representatives members are women.

### Statistic Source:

The main Civic Engagement: Women in Congress statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was organized by the Center for American Women and Politics. Data is actively kept current with changes to congressional offices and more information can be found at <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/>.

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## CAREER READINESS: FEMALE CEOs IN THE UNITED STATES

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**Women comprise only 29% of all CEOs in the United States and on average make 78 cents to their male counterparts' dollar.**

### **Importance:**

Not only do female executives bring skills like collaboration, emotional intelligence, and financial efficiency to their roles, but research has shown that businesses with women in senior leadership positions are “more profitable, more socially responsible, and provide safer, higher quality customer experiences” ([Post, Lokshin, & Boone, 2021](#)). For girls, representation of diverse leaders can be particularly inspiring to take on leadership positions themselves. However, in the United States today, women hold few top executive positions and often earn less than their male counterparts.

### **Comparisons:**

- 8.8% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women.
- 7.4% of Fortune 1000 CEOs are women.
- 6.6% of S&P 500 CEOs are women.

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**Girls Inc. Leadership and Community Action programming identifies and develops leadership skills for girls ages 6-18, ensuring they have the knowledge, experience, and confidence to take on a variety of leadership roles throughout their communities.**

### **How can I say this?**

Less than one third of all CEOs in the United States are women.

Less than one tenth of all CEOs within major corporation indices are women.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main Career Readiness: Female CEOs statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from a 2023 table from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and utilizes data collected in 2022. Data for these tables are typically updated annually and more information can be found at <https://www.bls.gov/>.

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## ECONOMIC LITERACY: GENDER-BASED WAGE DISPARITIES

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**On average, women who work full time make 82 cents to their male counterparts' dollar.**

### **Importance:**

Over and above the ethical argument of equal pay for equal work, many women are the sole breadwinners for themselves or their families. Even when women share income and expenses with other earners, their incomes are no less critical for the support of their households. These disparities are even greater for women of color. If working women were paid on parity with similarly qualified men, poverty for working women would drop by more than 40%, the economy of every state would grow, and thousands of families would have increased financial stability, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic which pushed many women out of the workforce ([Shaw and Mariano, 2021](#)).

If current trends continue, women as a whole will not reach pay parity until 2063, with women of color facing an even longer wait. Black women are not projected to reach parity until 2144 and Hispanic women until 2210 ([Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2022](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

- Median earnings for young women ages 16-24 are 95% of those of their male peers.
- Median earnings for Black women are 92% of those for Black men.
- Median earnings for Latina women are 88% of those for Latino men.
- Median earnings for White women are 82% of those for White men.
- Median earnings for Asian American women are 79% of those for Asian American men.

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**Girls Inc. Economic Literacy programming supports the life skills of girls ages 6-18 by exploring how the economy affects everyone locally and globally and building skills critical to being financially savvy, economically independent adults.**

### **How can I say this?**

Women are paid less than men across all age and racial demographic groups.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main Economic Literacy: Gender-based Wage Disparity statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from a 2021 table from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and utilizes data collected in 2021. Data for these tables are typically updated annually and more information can be found at <https://www.bls.gov/>.

# BOLD

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION: BULLYING

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**21% of high school girls have been electronically bullied during the past year.**

**17% of high school girls have been bullied on school property in the past year.**

### **Importance:**

Victims of bullying are especially likely to suffer from substance abuse and have increased rates of mental illness, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal behavior. Victims and perpetrators of bullying are at risk for lower academic performance and experiencing violence later in life, than do their peers ([CDC, 2021](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

Percentage reporting having been electronically bullied in the past year:

- 11% of male students
- 16% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 12% of Black female students
- 26% of White female students

Percentage reporting having been bullied on school property in the past year:

- 13% of male students
- 14% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 12% of Black female students
- 21% of White female students

### **Girls Inc. Approach:**

**Girls Inc. Project BOLD programs support personal safety skills for girls ages 6-18 by educating girls about gender violence, equipping girls with self-defense skills, and helping girls determine strategies for maintaining healthy relationships.**

### **How can I say this?**

High school girls are more likely than their male peers to be electronically bullied or bullied on school property.

At least 1 in 5 high school girls has been the victim of bullying in the past year.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main Conflict Resolution: Bullying statistics (and accompanying comparison data) were taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbps>.



# BOLD

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION: FIGHTING

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**13% of high school girls were in a physical fight during the past year.**

### Importance:

In addition to the physical harm of violent behavior, youth who engage in or are exposed to violence may suffer from a variety of negative outcomes including increased rates of mental health challenges, suicidal behavior, substance abuse, obesity, and school dropout ([CDC, 2022](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 23% of male students
- 12% of Hispanic/Latina students
- 21% of Black female students
- 11% of White female students

### Girls Inc. Approach:

**Girls Inc. Project BOLD programs support personal safety skills for girls ages 6-18 by educating girls about gender violence, equipping girls with self-defense skills, and helping girls determine strategies for maintaining healthy relationships.**

### How can I say this?

Nearly 1 in 8 high school girls was in a physical fight during the past year.

High school girls are nearly half as likely as their male peers to have been in a physical fight in the past year.

### Statistic Source:

The main Conflict Resolution: Fighting statistic (and accompanying comparison data) was taken from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was published in 2023. Updated statistics are anticipated every other year and can be found at <https://cdc.gov/yrbps>.

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