



# **GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK**

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2 - CANADA  
FALL 2025

**girls  
inc.**

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

Copyright © 2025 Girls Inc.

Permission to copy, in whole or in part, is granted provided full credit to Girls Inc. is included and all citations are retained.

120 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005 • (212) 509-2000

National Resource Center • 9449 Priority Way, West Drive, Suite 100 Indianapolis, IN 46240 • (317) 634-7546  
[girlsinc.org](http://girlsinc.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>LETTER FROM PRESIDENT &amp; CEO</b>	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>GIRLS IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY</b>	2
<b>STRONG</b>	
HEALTHY DIET	4
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	5
SPORTS TEAM PARTICIPATION	6
BODY IMAGE	7
MENTAL HEALTH	8
SUBSTANCE USE: CIGARETTES	9
SUBSTANCE USE: ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES/VAPES	10
SUBSTANCE USE: ALCOHOL	11
SUBSTANCE USE: MARIJUANA	12
SUBSTANCE USE: PRESCRIPTION DRUGS	13
HEALTHY SEXUALITY: SEXUAL INTERCOURSE	14
HEALTHY SEXUALITY: CONTRACEPTIVE USE	15
HEALTHY SEXUALITY: TEEN PREGNANCY RATE	16
HEALTHY SEXUALITY: TEEN BIRTH RATE	17
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT	18
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: SEXUAL ASSAULT/ FORCED INTERCOURSE	19
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE/ SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE	20
<b>SMART</b>	
SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT	22
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: ON-TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION	23
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES	24
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: COLLEGE ENROLLMENT	25
WOMEN IN STEM: GIRLS AND STEM	26
WOMEN IN STEM: DEGREES IN STEM FIELDS	27
WOMEN IN STEM: DEGREES IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING	28
<b>BOLD</b>	
LEADERSHIP	30
MEDIA LITERACY: SOCIAL MEDIA USE	31
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN RUNNING FOR ELECTED OFFICE	32
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN IN CONGRESS	33
CAREER READINESS: FEMALE CEOS IN THE UNITED STATES	34
ECONOMIC LITERACY: GENDER-BASED WAGE DISPARITIES	35
CONFLICT RESOLUTION: BULLYING	36
CONFLICT RESOLUTION: FIGHTING	37
<b>REFERENCES</b>	38

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

---

We are pleased to release the 2025 edition of the Girls Inc. Fact Book. Girls Inc. is committed to providing accurate and timely information related to the state of girls, and we believe that you will find this Fact Book to be a useful in helping advance the opportunities and success of girls and young women.

With a legacy of over 160 years, Girls Inc. is the preeminent girls' leadership organization and is unsurpassed in our expertise on girls. 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 Girls Inc. Headquarters is to provide technical assistance to our Network of Affiliates so they can focus on delivering quality services to girls. We provide them with essential resources to deliver the research-based programming that is proven to help girls grow up to be healthy, educated, and independent adults. Headquarters also provides thought leadership and ongoing training, to equip staff to meet girls' evolving needs.

The Fact Book will provide you with the latest statistics and data, along with guidance on how to use this information effectively and accurately.

Thank you to our excellent Research & Evaluation team and to all those involved in producing this important document. Thank you as well to the dedicated supporters and partners who believe, as we do, in inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

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

Girls Inc. President & CEO

# INTRODUCTION

---

## 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.

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 creates positive outcomes in the lives of girls.

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 fifth 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).

Beth Pilonis, MSW, Interim Director of Research and Evaluation  
Monet Deadwyer, B.S.E., Information Specialist  
Purnima Aggarwal, B.A., Researcher  
Elle Baker, Research and Evaluation Fox Fellow

# GIRLS IN CANADA TODAY

---

Girls Inc. is proud to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold members of their communities. In 2024, Girls Inc. provided approximately 120,000 girls across Canada and the US with meaningful 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 [Statistics Canada 2024 Population Estimates](#), girls under the age of 19 make up approximately one fifth of the total female population. This translates to over four million girls in communities across Canada. They represent not only a sizeable population but also a population characterized by a myriad of differences in cultural, social and economic experiences.

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 Canada today.

Girls in Canada 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 many capabilities of girls today.

# **STRONG**

## GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

# STRONG

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

---

**36% of girls ages 12-17 get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise per day.**

### **Importance:**

It is recommended that young people get at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity per day for greater health benefits ([CSEP, 2025](#)). Youth with less access to financial resources have fewer opportunities to be physically active than their more financially secure peers ([Frederick, Snellman, and Putnam, 2013](#)). Due to lack of opportunities to be physically active, girls from less-resourced communities may not be experiencing the benefits of physical activity as frequently as their more affluent peers.

### **National Comparisons:**

- 54% of boys aged 12-17 met the recommended guidelines

### **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?**

Just over one third of girls exercise for 60 minutes per day

Girls are much less likely than their male peers to participate in 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main physical activity statistic was taken from the 2021 Canadian Community Health Survey analyzed by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. The survey is conducted every occasionally. It is unclear when this survey will next be updated. Further information can be found at <https://cflri.ca/>.

# STRONG

## SPORTS PARTICIPATION

---

**64% of Canadian girls between the ages of 5 and 17 participate in an organized physical activity and/or sport (according to parents).**

### **Importance:**

Sports participation can help girls in many areas of their lives. Most obviously, sports are important to keep girls healthy at all ages. Sports help girls develop problem solving skills, learn how to communicate, and learn how to be strong. As teens, sports help girls feel better about themselves, be confident, and feel strong. Additionally, girls who play sports are less likely to engage in unhealthy behavior ([Draaisma, 2024](#)). Playing sports when they are young can also help girls when they are adults. 94% of female C-Suite executives played sports when they were young and varsity college athletes are more likely to go to grad school than their non athlete counterparts ([Lebel, 2024](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

- 71% of Canadian boys participate in organized physical activity and/or a sport

### **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?**

Girls participate in sports and organized physical activity at a lower rate than their male peers

Almost two in three girls in Canada play a sport or participate in organized physical activity

### **Statistic Source:**

The main physical activity statistic was taken from the 2021 Canadian Community Health Survey analyzed by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. The survey is conducted every occasionally. It is unclear when this survey will next be updated. Further information can be found at <https://cflri.ca/>.

# STRONG

## BODY IMAGE

---

**23% of girls aged 12 to 17 reported being preoccupied with a desire to be thinner.**

### **Importance:**

As girls enter puberty, physical and hormonal changes can affect their self-esteem and self-image in a society that equates female beauty with thinness. Young girls who spend more time online are especially susceptible to images in popular media, as increased internet use is positively associated with lower body confidence and satisfaction ([Carter et al., 2017](#)). Having a healthy body image is important for girls because it allows them to feel confident and to live comfortably in their body.

Girls Inc. codifies its commitment to boosting girls' confidence and promoting body positivity within the Girls Inc. Bill of Rights, stating "Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies."

### **National Comparisons:**

- 10% of boys reported being preoccupied with a desire to be thinner

### **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?**

Almost a quarter of Canadian girls are preoccupied with a desire to be thinner

Girls reported being preoccupied with being thinner at more than twice the rate of their male peers

### **Statistic Source:**

The body image statistic was taken from the 2023 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted occasionally. Further information can be found [here](#).

# STRONG

## MENTAL HEALTH

**48% of girls ages 12-17 report excellent or very good mental health.**

**26% of girls aged 12-17 report that their life is quite a bit or extremely stressful**

### **Importance:**

Despite increasing national awareness and dialogue surrounding mental health, young girls still struggle to balance increasing daily pressures, ranging from family and school obligations to peer pressure and media stereotypes. In Canada, suicide remains the third-leading cause of death for girls aged 10-14, and the second leading cause of death for girls aged 15-19 ([Bushnik, 2016](#)). Risk factors for suicide-related behaviors include a history of depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. Lack of access to mental health resources makes suicide prevention more difficult ([Canada Health, 2023](#)). This means early interventions for mental health are vital, as most people living with a mental illness see their symptoms begin before age 18. However, in Canada, only around 1 in 5 children receive appropriate mental health services ([Chevrier, 2023](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

- 21% of girls reported poor or fair mental health
- 69% of boys reported excellent or very good mental health
- 10% of boys reported poor or fair mental health
- 13% of boys say their life is quite a bit or extremely stressful

### **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?**

Less than half of girls report excellent or very good mental health.

Boys report having better mental health than their female peers.

Over a quarter of girls say their life is quite a bit or extremely stressful

Girls are twice as likely as boys to report that their lives are quite a bit or extremely stressful

### **Statistic Source:**

The main mental health statistic was taken from the 2023 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, which relies on self-reported data and is occasionally. Further information can be found [here](#). <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3226>

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: CIGARETTES

**1.7% of girls ages 12-17 have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days.**

### **Importance:**

Cigarette smoking is associated with numerous negative health outcomes including cancer, heart disease, other problems with the heart and blood vessels, lung and respiratory problems, and premature death. Additionally, female smokers face an increased risk of cervical cancer, menstrual issues, and fertility issues. For those who already smoke, quitting can start to reverse some of these risks almost immediately, sometimes in a matter of hours ([Health Canada, 2024](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

- 0.7% of girls smoked cigarettes daily in the past 30 days
- 1.5% of boys smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days
- 0.3% of boys smoked cigarettes daily in the past 30 days

### **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?**

Less than two percent of girls 12-17 smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days and less than one percent smoke daily

### **Statistic Source:**

The statistic on cigarette use was taken from the 2023 Canadian Health Survey on Youth and Children, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted every occasionally. Further information can be found [here](#).

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES/VAPES

**8% of girls ages 12-17 have used an e-cigarette or vaping device in the last 30 days**

### Importance:

Use of tobacco in any form by young people is unsafe, including the use of vapes. Vaping nicotine can lead to physical dependence and addiction, while also exposing users to a variety of chemicals that can be harmful to their health. Moreover, children and teens are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of vaping nicotine because research suggests the developing brain may be more sensitive to nicotine compared to adults ([Health Canada, 2023](#)).

### National Comparisons:

- 6% of boys have used an e-cigarette or vaping device in the last 30 days

### 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?

Less than 1 in 10 girls ages 12-17 in Canada have used an e-cigarette or vaping device in the last 30 days

Girls report using e-cigarettes at a slightly higher rate than boys

### Statistic Source:

The statistic on e-cigarette use was taken from the 2023 Canadian Survey on Children and Youth, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted occasionally. Further information can be found [here](#).

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: ALCOHOL

### 23% of Canadian girls in grades 7-12 reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days

#### Importance:

Alcohol is the most consumed controlled substance in Canada and is the first controlled substance that the majority of youth will try. Short-term risks of alcohol include increased risk of injury, and alcohol poisoning. Drinking alcohol can also lead to a higher risk of motor vehicle crashes as drinking impairs vision and depth perception, slows reaction time, and reduced coordination and alertness. Regular alcohol use can impact physical health and mental well-being and increase the risk of long-term harmful effects such as substance use disorders, learning and memory issues, problems with school performance, increased risk of school dropout, and increased risk for chronic diseases such as liver disease, stroke, and cancer ([Drug Free Kids Canada](#)).

#### National Comparisons:

- 20% of boys grades 7-12 reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.
- 0.4% of girls report drinking alcohol more than 5 times a week
- 0.9% of boys report drinking alcohol more than 5 times a week

#### 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 a quarter of girls reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

Boys reported drinking alcohol at a slightly lower rate than their female peers.

Boys are more likely to report drinking alcohol more than 5 times a week than their female peers

#### Statistic Source:

The main mental health statistic was taken from the 2023/24 Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs Survey, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted every other school year. Results are released in the year after the survey is conducted, and further information can be found [here](#).

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: MARIJUANA

### 10% of Canadian girls ages 12-17 reported using cannabis in the past 12 months

#### Importance:

Teens and young adults who use cannabis are more likely to experience harmful effects because their brains are still developing until age 25. Using cannabis regularly as a teen can impair cognition and negatively affect academic performance including difficulty studying and higher likelihood of dropping out of high school or university. Long term, regular cannabis use is also associated with an increased risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and psychosis. Additionally, cannabis smoke contains some of the same harmful substances as tobacco smoke, and can cause permanent damage to the lungs over time ([Health Canada, 2018](#)).

#### National Comparisons:

- 1.5% of girls reported using cannabis daily or almost daily in the past 12 months
- 9% of boys reported using cannabis in the past 12 months
- 0.8% of boys reported using cannabis daily or almost daily in the past 12 months

#### 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?

1 in 10 girls ages 12-17 have used cannabis in the past 12 months

Girls report using cannabis at a slightly higher rate than their male counterparts

Less than two percent of girls reported using cannabis daily or almost daily

#### Statistic Source:

The main mental health statistic was taken from the 2023 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted occasionally. Further information can be found [here](#).

# STRONG

## SUBSTANCE USE: PHARMACEUTICALS

### 6% of Canadian girls in grades 7-12 reported using Prescription drugs for non-recommended purposes in the past 12 months

#### Importance:

In 2022, youth were more likely to report using pharmaceuticals and prescription medication to get high than illegal drugs. This is because some young people think that these types of drugs are safe or safer than illegal drugs. Prescription drugs are often also easier to obtain because many young people may be able to find them in their own homes. Examples of prescription drugs include opioids, fentanyl, sedatives, and stimulants. While all of these types of drugs have different effects on the body, incorrect or overuse of these drugs can have harmful effects on young people including overdose and death ([Drug Free Kids Canada, 2025](#)).

#### National Comparisons:

- 6% of boys reported using prescription medication for non-recommended purposes in the last 12 months

#### 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?

More than 1 in 20 girls in grades 7-12 have used prescription drugs for non-recommended purposes in the last 12 months

Girls and boys reported using prescription drugs for non-recommended purposes at the same rate

#### Statistic Source:

The main pharmaceuticals statistic was taken from the 2023/2024 Student Alcohol and Drugs Survey, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted every two to three years. Further information can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en.html>

# STRONG

## HEALTHY SEXUALITY: SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

### 22% of girls ages 15 to 17 have had sexual intercourse.

#### Importance:

Sexual health is a critical part of a young person's well being. Having sex earlier in life, having sex with multiple partners, or having unprotected intercourse can place teens at an increased risk for unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV ([Alberta Health Services, 2017](#)). 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.

#### National Comparisons:

- 20% of all male ages 15-17 have had sexual intercourse

#### 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, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.**

#### How can I say this?

Almost a quarter of 15-17 year old girls in Canada have had sexual intercourse.

In comparison to their male peers, girls are more likely to report having sexual intercourse.

#### Statistic Source:

The main sexual intercourse statistic was taken from a 2020 report that uses data from the 2015/16 Canadian Community Health Survey, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted every year. Further information can be found at [here](#).

# STRONG

## HEALTHY SEXUALITY: CONTRACEPTIVE USE

**90% of girls 15 to 24 years old reported using some type of contraception the last time they had intercourse**

### Importance:

Having unprotected intercourse can place teens at an increased risk for unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV ([Alberta Health Services, 2017](#)). Teenage pregnancy is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes for both the mother and baby, as well as an increased risk of academic underachievement and poorer economic status ([CIHI, 2011](#)). Using a condom during sexual activity can reduce the likelihood of unintended pregnancies and STIs, including HIV ([Rotermann & McKay, 2020](#)). Other forms of contraceptives such as the pill and IUDs can reduce the likelihood of unplanned teen pregnancy.

### National Comparisons:

- 54% of girls 15-24 said they used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse
- 50% of girls 15-24 said they used the birth control pill last time they had sexual intercourse

### 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, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.**

### How can I say this?

9 in 10 girls used contraception the last time they had sexual intercourse

More girls reported using condoms than the birth control pill

### Statistic Source:

The main statistic was taken from a 2020 report that uses data from the 2015/16 Canadian Community Health Survey, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted every year. Further information can be found at [here](#).

# STRONG

## HEALTHY SEXUALITY: TEEN BIRTH RATE

**In 2023, the birth rate for Canadian girls ages 15-19 was 4.1 births per 1,000.**

### **Importance:**

Teenage pregnancy is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes for both the mother and baby, as well as an increased risk of academic underachievement and poorer economic status ([CIHI, 2011](#)). Teen mothers also face significant stigmatization in many parts of their lives. For instance, stigmas and stereotypes about teen mothers not being responsible often make it difficult for them to find housing. Additionally, teen mothers often deal with emotional and financial struggles including planning for adult life at a young age and juggling school, a job, and a child ([CBC, 2019](#)).

### Provinces with the lowest birth rates:

- British Columbia (2.2 per 1,000)
- Ontario (2.8 births per 1,000)

### Provinces with the highest birth rates:

- Saskatchewan (13.3 births per 1,000)
- Manitoba (11.6 births 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, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.**

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

The birth rate for 15-19 year old girls in Canada is just over 4 births per 1,000

### **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken from the Canadian Vital Statistics Birth Database (CVSB), which collects demographic information annually from all vital statistics registries on all live births in Canada. Results are released yearly, and further information can be found [here](#).

# STRONG

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: SEXUAL ASSAULT

**In Canada, 71 out of 1,000 girls and women ages 15-24 experience sexual assault.**

### **Importance:**

Sexual assault disproportionately affects women with less access to certain educational, social, and financial resources. Victims of sexual assault often deal with trauma as a result of the experience which can manifest in many ways including fear, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, isolation, detachment, anger, feelings of betrayal, and more ([Department of Justice Canada, 2023](#)).

### **National Comparisons (Sexual Assault):**

- Average sexual assault rate for all women: 37 per 1,000
- Rate for women 25-34: 32 per 1,000
- Male sexual assault rate: 5 per 1,000

### **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?**

Girls ages 15-24 are sexually assaulted at the highest rate of any age group

Women experience sexual assault at over 7 times the rate of men

### **Statistic Source :**

The main statistic was taken from the Department of Justice of Canada fact report on sexual assault. Further information can be found [here](#).

# SMART

## GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

# SMART

## EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: ON-TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

**In 2022, 86% of Canadian girls graduated from high school within three years of starting grade 10.**

### **Importance:**

A high school education is crucial to achieving more positive life outcomes. On average, for every dollar a woman can earn without a high school degree, she could earn \$1.37 with a high school diploma, and \$1.71 with a bachelor's degree ([Statistics Canada, 2017](#))

### **National Comparisons:**

- 71% of Canadian high school boys graduated on time

### **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?**

Almost 9 in 10 high school girls graduate on time (within three years of starting grade 10).

Young women in Canada have a higher on time high school graduation rate than their male peers.

### **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken from the 2022 surveys from the Pan Canadian Educational Indicators Program and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Relations Canada. Data is collected twice per year and occasionally for each survey respectively. Further information can be found at [Pan Canadian Educational Indicators Program](#) and [Council of Ministers of Foreign Relations Canada](#).

# SMART

## EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: EXTENDED TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

**In 2022, 93% of girls graduated high school within five years of starting grade 10.**

### **Importance:**

More women complete high school when given extended time to graduate. This is important because high school graduation prepares girls for postsecondary education, as well as preparing them for entrance into the labor market, where high school graduation is generally considered the minimum requirement for successful entry. ([Statistics Canada, 2020](#)). Women who do not have a high school diploma are more likely to have children younger, to rely on government transfers for a majority of their income, and are less likely to participate in the labor force ([Uppal, 2017](#)).

### **National Comparisons:**

- 89% of boys graduated high school with extended time

### **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?**

Over 9 in 10 girls graduates high school within 5 years of starting grade 10

Girls graduate within 5 years of starting grade 10 at a higher rate than their male peers

### **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken from the 2022 surveys from the Pan Canadian Educational Indicators Program and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Relations Canada. Data is collected twice per year and occasionally for each survey respectively. Further information can be found at [Pan Canadian Educational Indicators Program](#) and [Council of Ministers of Foreign Relations Canada](#).

# SMART

## WOMEN IN STEM:

### UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT IN STEM FIELDS OF STUDY

**38% of those enrolled in STEM programs at colleges and universities in Canada are women.**

#### **Importance:**

While female enrolment in postsecondary institutions is higher than male enrollment, women enroll in STEM programs at a lower rate than their male peers. This can limit them in the labor market as those who graduate from STEM programs earn higher salaries on average than those who graduate from other programs. The biggest gender gap in enrollment is in engineering programs while the gap in other math intensive programs is much smaller. In other STEM fields, women are actually slightly more likely to enroll than their male counterparts ([Chan, 2021](#)).

#### **National Comparisons:**

- 62% of those enrolled in STEM programs are men
- 69% of those enrolled in science and science technology programs are women
- 22% of those enrolled in engineering and engineering technology programs are women
- 33% of those enrolled in mathematics, computer, and information sciences are women

#### **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?**

Less than 2 in 5 people enrolled in a STEM program are women

Women are more likely to enroll in science and science technology STEM programs than other STEM fields

#### **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken from the 2022/23 Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS), which collects information on the programs and courses offered at an institution, as well as information regarding the students themselves. Data is collected every year, and further information can be found [here](#).

# **BOLD**

## GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

# BOLD VOLUNTEERING

---

**49% of girls & women aged 15-30 report having volunteered in the past year.**

## **Importance:**

Participating in volunteering and civic engagement are important parts of youth development. This type of activity helps youth develop democratic skills and other skills that will help them in other areas of life including collaboration and problem solving. Such activities can also improve youth and community wellbeing ([Arriagada, 2022](#)).

## **Comparisons:**

- 42% of boys aged 15-30 report having volunteered in the past year.

## **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?**

Girls are more likely than their male counterparts to volunteer

Almost half of girls volunteer

## **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken from the Portrait of Youth in Canada Data Report published in 2022. This data is updated occasionally and can be found [here](#).

# BOLD

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

### As of December 2023, 104 women (30.3% of the total membership) served as Members of Parliament\*

#### Importance:

In an international ranking of countries by the percentage of female legislators, Canada ranks at 71 out of 181 ([Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2025](#)). This is below the average for the Americas in total (35.5%) and the average for North America which is 37.6% ([Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2025](#)).

#### Comparisons:

- 50.2% of Mexico's legislators are women.
- 36.2% of France's legislators are women.
- 40.5% of the United Kingdom's legislators are women.
- 29% of the United States' legislators are women

#### 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?

As of July 2025, almost one third (30.3%) of Canada's Members of Parliament are women.

Representation of women in Canada's legislature falls behind Mexico, France, and the United Kingdom, but surpasses the United States.

\*The Canada stat and the stats about each country refer to the lower house of parliament as the first house of parliament is elected differently and has a different roles in each country

#### Statistic Source:

The main statistic was taken from the Inter-Parliamentary Union's data on women in parliament. Further information can be found at <https://data.ipu.org/>

# BOLD

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN ON THE SUPREME COURT

**Currently, five out of the nine sitting Supreme Court Justices (56%) are female.**

### **Importance:**

The Canadian supreme court has a majority representation of women. In 1990, the Honorable Justice Bertha Wilson, the first female Supreme Court Justice in Canada said “If women lawyers and women judges, through their differing perspectives on life, can bring a new humanity to bear on the decision-making process, perhaps they will make a difference... Perhaps they will succeed in infusing the law with an understanding of what it means to be fully human” ([Hamilton, 2024](#)). Since Justice Wilson’s appointment in 1982, there have been 11 other women who have served or are currently serving on the court.

### **Comparisons:**

- 44% of the current Supreme Court Justices are men.

### **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?**

The majority of the sitting justices on the Canadian supreme court are women (56%) as of October 2023, and the remaining justices are men (44%).

### **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken from the website of the Supreme Court of Canada, which is continually updated as new judges are appointed. Further information can be found at this [website](#).

# BOLD

## CAREER READINESS: FEMALE BUSINESS LEADERS IN CANADA

**29% of total board seats at companies in the Toronto Stock Exchange are occupied by women.**

### **Importance:**

Although every CEO brings her own individual strengths to the position, female corporate leaders often bring leadership skills that benefit the companies they work for. Research has shown that women often possess skills such as persistence in achieving goals, building strategic networks, problem solving, and relationship building in leadership roles ([Carucci, 2016](#)). For girls, representation of diverse leaders can be particularly inspiring to take on leadership positions themselves. However, in Canada today, women hold few top executive positions and often earn less than their male counterparts.

### **Comparisons:**

- 5% of companies have a woman CEO
- 8% of board chairs are women
- 90% of companies have at least one woman on their board
- 72% of companies have at least one woman in an executive officer position

### **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 a third of board positions are occupied by women.

The majority of companies have at least one woman on their board and slightly fewer but still the majority, have at least one woman in an executive officer position

Only 1 in 20 companies has a woman CEO

### **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken from a report from the Ontario Securities Commission. Further information can be found at <https://www.osc.ca/en>.

# BOLD

## ECONOMIC LITERACY:

### WAGE DISPARITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN CANADA

**Canadian women ages 20-54 make an average of 10.6% less than Canadian born men.**

#### **Importance:**

In Canada, on average, women make 88 cents for every dollar that a man is paid. That means that women would have to work more than three extra months a year to make what a man is paid in a year. For underrepresented women this gap is even wider. Women often work in lower paid jobs like care work and retail and are often underpaid and undervalued in their work. This leads to women living in poverty, struggling to pay for basic needs, and makes it difficult for women to leave unsafe relationships. On a bigger level, paying women less means families and communities lose out on spending power ([Unifor, 2025](#)).

#### **Comparisons:**

- Canadian born women as a whole earn 9.1% less than Canadian born men
- Indigenous women earn 18.3% less than Canadian born men
- Female immigrants who come to Canada as children make 12.1% less than Canadian born men
- Female immigrants who came to Canada as adults make 24.2% less than Canadian born 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?**

Canadian born men earn more money than Canadian born women.

#### **Statistic Source:**

The main statistic was taken a study funded by the Department for Women and gender equality. Updated statistics are not expected and further information can be found [here](#).

# BOLD

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION: BULLYING

**66% of Canadian girls ages 12 to 17 report experiencing at least one form of bullying over the past year**

### Importance:

Bullying is a form of intentional and repeated aggression where there is a power imbalance and makes the person being bullied feel afraid, alone or uncomfortable. Bullying can take on many forms, including verbal, physical, social, relational, and cyberbullying. Youth reported that the most common type of bullying is being called names, made fun of, or insulted. Bullying takes a toll on youth, with those who experience bullying reporting that their lives are more stressful, and reporting physical issues including sleep challenges, headaches, stomach aches, and backaches ([Statistics Canada, 2023](#)).

### Comparisons:

- 25% of girls experienced cyberbullying over the last year
- 65% of boys experienced at least one form of bullying over the last year
- 24% of boys experienced cyberbullying over the last year

### 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?

Two thirds of girls experienced bullying over the last year

Girls and boys experience bully at almost the same rate

### Statistic Source:

The main statistic was taken from the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, which explores issues that have an impact on the physical and mental health of children and youth. The survey is conducted occasionally and further information can be found [here](#).

# REFERENCES

## GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

# REFERENCES

---

Alberta Health Services. (2017). *Youth Sexuality: Stats and Trends*.  
<https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/Teens-and-Trends-CALGARY-20141.pdf>

Arriagada, Paula, Khanam, Farhana, Sano, Yujiro. (2022). *Portrait of Youth in Canada: Data Report Chapter 6: Political Participation, Civic Engagement and Caregiving Among Youth in Canada*.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/42-28-0001/2021001/article/00006-eng.htm>

Bushnik, T. (2016). *The Health of Girls and Women in Canada*. In *Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14324-eng.htm>

CBC News. (2019). *Teen Parents Struggle with Housing Discrimination and Isolation, Study Finds*. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/teen-parents-edmonton-alberta-research-mitacs-1.5373530#:~:text=Business,-Teen%20parents%20struggle%20with%20housing%20discrimination%20and%20isolation%2C%20study%20finds,break%20the%20cycle%20of%20poverty>

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. (2025). *Physical Activity Levels Children and Youth*.  
<https://cflri.ca/publications/physical-activity-levels/children-and-youth/>

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. (2025). *Sport Participation Children and Youth*.  
<https://cflri.ca/publications/sport-participation/children-and-youth/>

Canadian Institute for Health Information and Office of the Provincial Health Officer. (2011). *Child and Youth Health and Wellbeing Indicators Index: Appendix F – Physical Health and Wellbeing*. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/special-reports/appendix\\_f\\_-\\_physical\\_health\\_evidence\\_review.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/special-reports/appendix_f_-_physical_health_evidence_review.pdf)

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. (2025). *Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (Ages 5-17 Years): an Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep*.  
<https://csepguidelines.ca/guidelines/children-youth/>

Carter, Allison et al. (2017). *Association Between Internet Use and Body Dissatisfaction Among Young Females: Cross-Sectional Analysis of the Canadian Community Health Survey*. Journal of medical Internet research vol.19, 2: e39. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.5636>

Canadian Securities Administrators. (2024). *CSA Multilateral Staff Notice 58-317 Review of Disclosure Regarding Women on Boards and in Executive Officer Positions*. Ontario Securities Commission. <https://www.osc.ca/en/securities-law/instruments-rules-policies/5/58-317/csa-multilateral-staff-notice-58-317-review-disclosure-regarding-women-boards-and-executive>

Carucci, R. (2016). *Four Reasons Women Make Great Executives*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/roncarucci/2016/05/10/four-reasons-women-make-great-executives/#61c0952b691e>

Chan, Ping Chin Winnie, Handler, Tomasz, Frenette, Marc. (2021). *Gender Differences in STEM Enrolment and Graduation: What are the Roles of Academic Performance and Preparation?*.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021011/article/00004-eng.htm>

Chevrier, Nicole. (2023). *Brave New World*. Mental Health Commission of Canada.  
<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/catalyst/brave-new-world/#:~:text=Just%20in%205%20children,serious%20level%20of%20psychological%20distress>

# REFERENCES

---

Draaisma, Muriel. (2025). Too Many Girls in Canada are Missing Out on Sports, Research Finds. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/report-girls-participation-sports-boys-canada-1.7385361>

Department of Justice Canada. (2023). Just Facts Sexual Assault.  
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/jf-pf/2019/apr01.html>

Department of Justice Canada, (2023). *The Impact of Trauma on Adult Sexual Assault Victims*.  
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/trauma/p2.html>

Drolet, Marie, Amini, Mandana Mardare. (2023). *Intersectional Perspective on the Canadian Gender Wage Gap*.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-20-0002/452000022023002-eng.htm>

Drug Free Kids Canada. *Youth and Alcohol*.  
[https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DFK\\_Info\\_YouthAlcohol\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DFK_Info_YouthAlcohol_FINAL.pdf)

Drug Free Kids Canada. (2025) *Prescription Drugs*.  
<https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/drug-spotlights/prescription-drugs/>

Frederick, C.B., Snellman, K., and Putnam, R.D. (2013). *Increasing Socioeconomic Disparities in Adolescent Obesity*. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 111(4): 1338-1342.  
<http://www.pnas.org/content/111/4/1338.full>

Hamilton, Jordan. (2024). *A Female Majority: The Women Justices of the Supreme Court of Canada*. Cox & Palmer.  
<https://coxandpalmerlaw.com/publication/a-female-majority-the-women-justices-of-the-supreme-court-of-canada/>

Health Canada. (2018). *Is Cannabis Safe to Use? Facts for Youth Aged 13-17 Years*. Government of Canada.  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/drugs-health-products/is-cannabis-safe-use-facts-youth.html>

Health Canada. (2023). *Risks of Vaping*. Government of Canada.  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping/risks.html>

Health Canada. (2023). *Suicide Risks and Prevention*. Government of Canada.  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/suicide-prevention/suicide-risks-prevention.html>

Health Canada. (2024). *Risks of Smoking*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/effects-smoking/smoking-your-body/risks-smoking.html>

Health Canada. (2025). *Drug and Alcohol Use in Canada*. Government of Canada. <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-use/csads/?topic=5-indicator=59-timeframe=2-group=3-schoolyear=2023-display=Trends-scale=fixed>

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2025). *Canada*. <https://data.ipu.org/parliament/CA/CA-LC01/data-on-women/>

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2025). *Global and Regional Averages of Women in National Parliaments*.  
[https://data.ipu.org/women-averages/?date\\_month=6&date\\_year=2025](https://data.ipu.org/women-averages/?date_month=6&date_year=2025)

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2025). *Monthly Ranking of Women in National Parliaments*.  
[https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/?date\\_month=6&date\\_year=2025](https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/?date_month=6&date_year=2025)

# REFERENCES

---

Lebel, Katie. (2024). COMMENTARY: How Sports Participation Leads to Long-Term Success for Girls. University of Guelph. <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2024/08/commentary-how-sports-participation-leads-to-long-term-success-for-girls/>

Parliament of Canada. (2025). Members of Parliament. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>

Rotermann, Michelle, McKay, Alexander. (2020). Sexual Behaviours, Condom Use and Other Contraceptive Methods Among 15- to 24-Year-Olds in Canada. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2020009/article/00001-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2017). Table 9 Average Hourly Wages of Full-Time Workers Aged 25 to 54 by Highest Level of Educational Attainment, Canada, 2015. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694/tbl/tbl09-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2022). High school graduation rates in Canada, 2016/2017 to 2019/2020. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2022002-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2023). Pink Shirt Day (Anti-Bullying Day). <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/3037-pink-shirt-day-anti-bullying-day>

Statistics Canada. (2023). True Cohort High School Graduation Rate, On-Time and Extended-Time Graduation Rates, by Gender. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710022101>

Statistics Canada. (2024). Fertility Rates, Women Aged 15 to 19 Years (per 1,000 Women). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310041802>

Statistics Canada. (2024). Population Estimates on July 1, by Age and Gender. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710000501&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.3&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2024&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2024&referencePeriods=20240101%2C20240101>

Statistics Canada. (2024). Proportion of male and female postsecondary graduates, by International Standard Classification of Education, institution type, Classification of Instructional Programs, STEM and BHESE groupings, status of student in Canada and age group. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710016402>

Statistics Canada. (2025). Health Indicator Statistics for Youth Aged 12 to 17 Years, Youth Reported. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/>

# girls inc.

Inspiring all girls  
to be strong,  
smart, and bold