Educational Equity Resources for Parents

CWEALF

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. Founded in 1973, CWEALF is one of the oldest women's rights organizations in the country. CWEALF is committed to achieving gender equity for all students in Connecticut.

Last updated: August 2009

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What is gender equity?

> Gender equity offers a framework for educational reform in which all females and males are engaged, reflective learners, regardless of the subject; are prepared for future education, jobs, careers, and civic participation; set and meet high expectations for themselves and others; develop as respectful, inclusive, and productive individuals, friends, family members, workers, and citizens; and receive equitable treatment and achieve equitable outcomes in school and beyond.
>
> *Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Equity Resource Center, 2001*

What does this mean?

As we see it, gender equity, as it applies to education, is both acknowledging that there *may* be different ways that boys and girls learn – influenced by nature and/or nurture – and that there may be larger differences among girls and among boys which are far greater that those between girls and boys. The bottom line is that both genders – males and females – need the knowledge and the opportunity to make educational and occupational decisions that are right for them. We must do all we can to make possible a girl's dream to be an astronaut, or a boy's dream to be a preschool teacher, without bias, and with mindful encouragement.

To encourage and assist parents in supporting girls' and boys' decisions about school and careers, we have put together this booklet. In it we are including brief pieces on:

- Girls, STEM education, and test scores;
- Why girls turn away from science, math, engineering and technology;
- (STEM) educational and occupational paths;
- Why boys turn away from the caring professions; and
- What we can do to promote educational equity.

In addition, we've included two charts that detail the percentages and salaries of women employed in the top twenty leading occupations for women, and percentages and salaries for women employed in nontraditional fields. We've also included some links to educational equity websites, a recommended reading list, and our brochures on Title IX and Sexual Harassment in Schools. We hope that you will find these materials helpful.

Please email or call us (860.247.6090) with any comments or suggestions.

Girls, STEM education, and test scores.

The story behind all of the hype about boys falling behind in school is a story that describes the cost of being poor, of being black or Puerto Rican, and even a story of being female. A review of Connecticut's standard measurements of academic success suggests that one story of equity in education, the one told by scores, varies depending upon many variables.

CWEALF staff has accessed and analyzed information on student performance on standardized academic measures such as the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Testing (CAPT), as well as information available on Connecticut students' test-taking behavior and scoring on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and exams (available through the State Department of Education). Our public policy and applied research work, which includes promoting gender equity in education, specifically in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), is grounded in the realities of student performance and student experiences. What is apparent from our more than 25 years of work is that girls and boys from all Connecticut communities navigate their school days and years based upon a number of intersecting realities.

Let's take a look at some of the data.

A review of proficiency scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) reveals that girls, overall, did well in 2007 on the Mathematics component of the test in grades 3, 6 and 8, outscoring boys slightly at all three grade levels. However, the scores at or above *goal* level (a higher level of mastery) reveal that boys outperformed girls in Grades 3 and 8, although not in Grade 6. Taking the scores apart provides a picture that is more accurate, which is obscured by lumping together all girls and all boys. At proficiency levels, African American girls outscored African American boys at all three grade levels; American Indian girls outscored boys in Grades 6 and 8, but not in Grade 3; Asian girls outscored Asian boys in Grades 3 and 6, but not in Grade 8; Caucasian girls are outscored by Caucasian boys in Grade 3, but not in Grades 6 and 8, and Latinas outscored Latinos in Grade 6, but not in Grades 3 or 8. Yet, even looking at scores by gender or by race conceals the cost of being poor, as a large gap is found in the performance of high poverty and low poverty students across all grades in math on the CMT.

Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) scores tell much the same story. On the CAPT Math exam, boys slightly outperformed girls at the proficiency level, while girls outpaced boys on the CAPT Science exam, and boys outperformed girls in both subject areas at the *goal* level of mastery. And again, African American and Latino students and high poverty students did less well than their white counterparts, at both proficiency and goal levels, in all four tested subject areas – Science, Math, Reading Across the Disciplines and Writing Across the Disciplines.

On the Math portion of the SAT exam in 2007, boys continued to outscore girls – by 32 points. This held true across all racial and ethnic groups. Advanced Placement data (2005-2006) on test-taking and scores reveals that boys were more likely to take an exam in calculus, chemistry or physics and more likely to pass the test. Yet, again, minority and high poverty students overall were less likely to have access to AP level courses and also less likely to have taken or passed an exam.

Statistics suggest that gender has an enduring effect on academic performance in STEM areas. However, gender discrimination, whether overt or covert, is experienced differently in school by a young Latina, or by a young African American, Asian or Caucasian girl. And social class and race have equally, if not more significant effects upon students' educational experiences. Because some girls may be doing better on some academic measures does not mean that *all* are; because girls are doing better does not mean that boys are somehow doing *worse…*

"Occupations which did not exist at the beginning of the 20th century, computer scientists and analysts, for example, have become increasingly important in the information technology revolution. Yet, women's employment is actually falling behind, widening the occupational gap between women and men."

US Department of Labor,
"Future Work Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century"

Why do girls turn away from science, technology engineering and math (STEM) educational and occupational paths?

Stereotypes are powerful, and often difficult to overcome. Our culture surrounds us with images of young women as subordinate or weak – images that take a toll on the self-confidence of girls and women. Girls and boys are affected by these stories that tell them that they are incapable or not sufficiently smart (think of all the dumb blonde jokes!). In the case of specific courses of study like science, technology engineering and math, gender differences in enrollment may be related to a lower sense of self-efficacy in girls. It is suggested that girls may carry these lowered expectations for success with them throughout their school years. Researchers do suggest, however, that this may differ by race and ethnicity, and that African American girls may, in fact, express greater confidence than Caucasian girls, while Latinas may lag behind.

Reactions of teachers, friends and family may not be positive. There is still overt sexism at work in classrooms and labs, and teachers and school counselors who discourage gender-nontraditional role behaviors. This "chilly" educational environment can operate to exclude girls and women from study groups and project teams. Parents and families can be either a great asset or a difficult barrier to a young woman entering a nontraditional field of study.

Girls have less familiarity with technology at young ages. Most computer software (both gaming and learning) is not designed with a broad range of learning styles, or interests, in mind. The AAUW suggests that materials targeted for the classroom reproduce rather than address gender inequity. In software reviewed by the AAUW neither the identifiable characters (most characters are either male or have no discernible gender) nor the subject matter (conflict and action) were found to be attractive to girls. When female characters do exist, they are often shown in traditional female roles as caretakers, or highly sexualized. At home, moms tend to be less computer literate than dads, especially when it comes to hardware. All of these factors are reflected in how children approach technology.

> "Only 12% of characters in elementary math software are women, even then they are generally portrayed as either a mother or a princess."
>
> *Rachel Hartigan, "Girls Byte Back," Teacher Magazine*

Girls may not make the connections between education and potential careers. Explicit connections between STEM education, at any level, and possible career paths are not often made. It is essential to share information with young women that describes the breadth of career options, as some of the paths that are possible may not be immediately evident. For example, young women, when considering automotive careers may think narrowly, thinking that their only option may be to be a mechanic, yet there are many jobs in design and safety of which they may be unaware. Young women often have little knowledge of the tasks actually involved in engineering, like problem-solving, design and teamwork. Even graduate students have said that they have had little preparation for corporate and academic careers.

Girls are lacking in financial literacy skills or…whose prince will come? In our work, we often find that young women lack a true understanding of what it will take to become financially self-sufficient. Fantasies of Prince Charming, arriving on his trusty steed to save and forever care for his treasured princess are still woven through popular culture, and the realities of the modern family are sometimes eclipsed by the myth. More than 90% of women will work outside of the home at some point in their lifetime (Girls Incorporated of Greater Santa Barbara). Yet, most young women do not understand rudimentary budgeting or the kind of income they will need to take care of themselves financially. They also often lack information on salary ranges for the occupations in which they are interested, an understanding of basic living expenses, and an awareness of correlations between education, occupation and salary expectations.

Young women enrolled in STEM areas in post-secondary education have an attrition rate that is higher than their male classmates. Some of the reasons mentioned for the women's higher attrition rate, which has been cited in research as being twice as high are: an absence of role models, isolation, the persistence of gender stereotyping, differences in learning styles**,** exclusion from informal networks and lack of mentoring opportunities.

And why do boys turn away from the caring professions?

Boys may be locked into more strictly defined gender roles. Being a boy may bring with it some privilege, but wearing a "gender straightjacket (Pollack, 1998)" often results in boys choosing from a narrow range of career options. Socialized to be active and competitive, they can lack opportunities to develop nurturing capacities and enhance interpersonal skills. Boys receive the message early on that product is more important than process, and that competition is more important than collaboration. These dicta can often preclude them from considering occupational fields in which attention to human interaction is essential, as their comfort with the range of human emotion is less developed.

Jobs in the caring professions, especially those that involve direct care, are less valued by society and the marketplace. Think about direct care jobs – nurse's aides, early childhood educators, home health aides. Is the value of these important jobs reflected in the salaries people earn for doing them? Is there economic return on advanced training? Are these jobs high status? The sexual division of labor has led to the creation of a hierarchy of work in which jobs that are associated with women's work are less valued, and therefore less attractive, to boys and men who equate money with success.

Homophobia is alive and well. There is both overt and subtle homophobia at work in schools and beyond. Attitudes and actions of classmates, educators and families are powerful deterrents to male students enrolling in nontraditional areas.

> 9.6% of students enrolled in baccalaureate nursing programs in 2002 students were men; 9.6% of those enrolled in masters' programs were men; doctoral programs included 6.7% men, nursing doctoral programs included 10.3% men, and postdoctoral programs included 7.5% men.
>
> *The American Association of Colleges of Nursing*

What can we do to promote educational equity?

With your daughter and other daughters…

- Reach out to girls early…and often!
- Give girls permission to take their time.
- Encourage them to persist; allow them to fail.
- Maintain high academic expectations for your child and provide support and/or request/demand support from your school.
- Help your child think about the *wide* array of careers that are available.
- Help girls to think about economic self-sufficiency.
- Take opportunities with girls to use non-sexist language and reverse stereotypes.
- Think about and investigate extracurricular opportunities, especially single-sex opportunities.
- Tune in to what your child is saying about school climate: sexual harassment, teacher interactions, safety and security issues, peer social dynamics, and homophobia.

With your son and other sons…

- Encourage skill building in the area of interpersonal dynamics; help boys pay as much attention to process as product.
- Provide your son with opportunities to express the more emotional or affective side of his personality through nurturing play.
- Take a boy's style of sharing information into consideration and use the time in which you are doing something together to explore his dreams and feelings.
- Provide support for learning, and recreational activities, that may be nontraditional for gender.

In schools, for all of our children…

- Help raise school consciousness about gender, race and class issues and STEM areas.
- Encourage or request that schools separate data on student performance by gender and race.
- Encourage professional development for teachers around teaching/learning styles, adolescent development and sexual harassment.
- If you are involved in Parent Organizations and making meeting arrangements consider the audience you want to attract, parents who might not be participating, and offer other services (dinner and child care) so that all parents can attend.
- Partner with your child's school to help bring in role models and mentors in nontraditional fields.

Career exploration: What parents can do

Elementary School

- Point out the many jobs that make everyday 'work', talk with your child about workers at home and volunteer workers.
- Start to explore what your family does as work, and how that contributes both to the family and to the community.
- Assign your child household tasks to be accomplished.
- Have your child visit with you and other family members in the workplace.
- Explore media images of working.
- Make connections from classroom learning to workplace skills and jobs.

By sharing workplace stories, expressing concern for children's future, and modeling work behaviors, parents serve as a context for interpreting the realities of work

Sandra Kerka, "Parenting and Career Development", ERIC Digest No.214

Middle School

- Use popular media – like TV & content on the internet – to further career exploration.
- Encourage your child to brainstorm different careers that might be possible.
- Help your child to write a new script about working that accounts for the work that all members of society do, even those who aren't compensated with money.
- Talk about commitment to education and lifelong learning.
- Encourage hobbies or interests and encourage your child to explore careers that are connected to those interests.
- Make connections from school classes and interests to possible careers.
- Talk about college as a 'when', not an 'if'. Encourage your child to persist in difficult class work or challenging subjects.

High School

- Help your child to make connections between coursework and specific career paths.
- Be an advocate for your child's educational needs in her/his school.
- Make certain that your child has good computer technology skills.
- Don't accept socialized notions of what girls do and what boys do. Seek opportunities for your child, either through school or outside of it, for creative career exploration through job shadowing, internships, etc.
- Explore what opportunities are available on college campuses for students to get a look at college life.

Becoming a career mentor for *all* girls: Gender, race and class

Mentoring is a sustained relationship between an adult (a mentor) and a young person (a mentee) whereby the adult shares his/her experiences, either in the workplace, or in the world at large, and offers support to a young person. The mentoring experience can be valuable – for both the young woman involved and for the mentor. The number of mentoring programs has grown dramatically in recent years, as many researchers and participants have spoken about the benefits of these relationships.

There are certain important elements of the mentor relationship that are alike, no matter what the girl's background. But for girls whose background may be different than our own, we need to be especially considerate of how your race, ethnicity, or income level, may affect the mentoring relationship. Also, it is important to remember that a girl's race/ethnicity is an essential part of her identity. Value and respect of different cultures is essential to build trust, as is open communication. Also, mentors should have a certain understanding of what it means to be a girl in a gender-biased society.

Knowing something about a girl's family is as important. What culture(s) play a role in her life? What is her native language? Is she from a working class family? Has her family just arrived in the United States? Is she part of the second generation? The twenty-fifth? Girls of color may have needs that come from common cultures and experiences. Some of these may include: a different view of how the world works; believing society's messages that they are "less than"; and pressure from friends not to "act white" and reject success as defined by white standards. Also, "family" may be a more inclusive term to girls of color.

According to Dr. Harriet McAdoo, of Howard University, combined experiences of social class and race affect young women of color. Middle and upper-middle class families can feel pressure to obey white cultural rules and "shift" between cultures, creating two separate identities to make their way in both worlds. Young women of color who are from poor families may sometimes lack adequate supervision if their parents work long hours. Because of parents' absence from the home, family responsibilities may come first.

For immigrant girls, losing contact with friends or family in other countries is a painful experience. In addition to this loss, they may have a hard time adjusting to a different culture, different language and a different way of family life.

As young as eight years old, girls begin to narrow their career aspirations because of gender stereotypes that tell them that certain careers are male or female. This leads young women to drop from consideration many high-wage, nontraditional careers. Yet, there are many things we can do for, and with, girls that can encourage them to consider these jobs. Girls need to feel self-efficacy, that "I can do it!" spirit and also have the tools to be able to stand up to gender segregation in schools and jobs, especially in careers in which fewer women work. In technology fields, where there are few women as teachers and role models this is especially important.

Career mentors can act as role models and bridge the world of school and work, providing valuable information about jobs and careers as well as sharing personal experiences. Gender and race should play an important role in designing personalized mentoring programs for young women. A mentoring relationship that includes a more personal connection between mentor and mentee, where the mentee can safely and honestly talk about issues of prejudice and discrimination is crucial.

Some important considerations for gender- and race/ethnicity- sensitive career mentoring:

- Gender- and race- bias are so much a part of our daily lives that they often go unnoticed, and therefore, are not challenged.
- Gender bias in schools can track girls into more traditionally female occupational areas and lead them away from high-wage, tech-based careers.
- Some girls in middle school experience a loss of confidence in their ability and a decline in their self-esteem.
- Active recruitment and retention techniques help to get girls interested in nontraditional careers.
- Most young women do not see themselves as working in a nontraditional career, and will need consistent and meaningful support in order to do so.
- Mentoring helps to reduce isolation and provide support for students of color. It is assumed, but not proven, that having a mentor of the same race/ethnicity can enhance the experience of a student of color.

"It is critical to help young low-income minority women understand and overcome the effects of perceived barriers and negative outcomes on their own beliefs in their career abilities, interests, and goals.

Jeanne Weiler
"Career Development for African American and Latina Females"
ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education

Nontraditional occupations for women

A nontraditional occupation for women is one in which women comprise 25% percent or less of total employment. Nontraditional occupations span all major occupational groups. Growth in the economy is projected to expand employment in many of these occupations and there will be strong demand for workers in these fields due to projected retirements or transfers of current workers to other occupations. Nontraditional jobs are attractive to women because they offer higher entry-level wages and a career ladder with pay between $20 and $30/hour.

Occupation	Women employed	% Women
Architects, except naval	58,000	24.8
Network systems and data communications analysts	100,000	23.7
Drafters	38,000	23.4
Chief executive	387,000	23.4
Computer programmers	119,000	22.4
Network and computer systems administrators*	49,000	21.4
Computer software engineers	216,000	20.9
Computer hardware engineers	13,000	19.4
Detectives and criminal investigators	27,000	19.2
Engineering technicians, except drafters	77,000	18.5
Transportation, storage, and distribution managers	41,000	17
Broadcast/sound engineering technicians and radio operators	16,000	16.1
Industrial engineers, including health and safety	26,000	14.9
Industrial production managers	35,000	14.5
Chemical engineers	8,000	13.1
Engineers, all others	42,000	11.5
Civil engineers	36,000	10.4
Aerospace engineers	14,000	10.3
Construction and building inspectors	9,000	9.5
Computer control programmers and operators	6,000	8.7
Water and liquid waste treatment plant/ system operators	6,000	8.6
Construction managers	102,000	8.2
First-line supervisors of mechanics/installers/repairers	24,000	8
Electrical and electronics engineers	27,000	7.7
Mechanical engineers	21,000	6.7
Engineering managers	7,000	6.3
Surveying and mapping technicians	5,000	4.9
Aircraft pilots and flight engineers	4,000	2.6
Heating, air conditioning, refrigeration mechanics and installers	8,000	2
Aircraft mechanics and service technicians	3,000	1.7
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	6,000	1.5
Carpenters	24,000	1.5
Electricians	9,000	1

*Occupations in red are among the jobs with the fastest job growth.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Averages 2008.

Educational equity: Links for parents

American Association of University Women (AAUW):
www.aauw.org

Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education (AGELE):
www.agele.org/

Association for Women in Mathematics:
www.awm-math.org/

Association for Women in Science:
www.awis.org/

Career Voyages – U.S. Departments of Education and Labor:
www.careervoyages.gov/

Center for Excellence and Equity in Education at Rice University:
www.ceee.rice.edu/

College Board Educational Testing Services:
www.collegeboard.com/apps/careers/index

Connecticut Academy for Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology, Inc: www.ctacad.org/

Connecticut Career Choices:
www.CTCareerChoices.org

Connecticut State Department of Labor – Job and Career Connection:
www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/jcc/

Connecticut State Department of Labor – Labor Market Information for Connecticut: www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/index.htm

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund
www.cwealf.org

Cool Jobs for Girls:
www.work4women.org/cooljobs/cooljobs.cfm

Education Development Center, Inc:
www.edc.org/

Expect the Best from a Girl:
www.academic.org

Gender Equity Expert Panel of the U.S. Department of Education:
www.ed.gov/pubs/genderequity/

Gender Equity in Western Massachusetts:
www.genderequity.org

Girl Geeks:
www.girlgeeks.com

GirlTech:
http://math.rice.edu/~lanius/club/girls.html

Institute for Women in Trades, Technology and Science:
www.iwitts.com

National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity:
www.napequity.org

National Girls Collaborative Project:
http://www.ngcproject.org/

National Talent Network:
www.eirc.org

New Moon:
www.newmoon.org

Not so Wild a Dream:
www.hhmi.org/dream

Occupational Outlook Handbook:
www.stats.bls.gov/oco

Wellesley College Centers for Women:
www.wcwonline.org/resources-linkseducation.html

Women of NASA:
www.quest.arc.nasa.gov/women/resources.html

Recommended reading

Educational Equity – General

A License for Bias: Sex Discrimination, Schools, and Title IX
AAUW Educational Foundation

Beyond the "Gender Wars": A Conversation About Girls, Boys, and Education
AAUW Educational Foundation

Codes & Contradictions: Gender, Identity and Schooling
Jeanne D. Weiler

Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls
Myra & David Sadker

Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children
AAUW Educational Foundation

Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School
Barrie Thorne

Girls in the Middle: Working to Succeed in School
AAUW Educational Foundation

Growing Smart: What's Working for Girls in School
AAUW Educational Foundation

How Schools Shortchange Girls: The AAUW Report
AAUW Educational Foundation

Invisible Again: The Impact of Changes in Federal Funding on Vocational Programs for Women and Girls
National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education

Jossey-Bass Reader on Gender in Education
Susan M. Bailey

School Girls: Young Women, Self-Esteem and the Confidence Gap
Peggy Orenstein

Separated by Sex: A Critical Look at Single-Sex Education for Girls
AAUW Educational Foundation

Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America
AAUW Educational Foundation

Title IX at Thirty: Report Card on Gender Equity
National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education

Tools of the Trade: Using the Law to Address Sex Segregation in High School Career and Technical Education
National Women's Law Center

Trends in Educational Equity of Girls & Women
National Center for Educational Statistics

Voices of a Generation: Teenage Girls on Sex, School, and Self
AAUW Educational Foundation

What About the Boys? What the Current Debates Tell Us and Don t Tell Us About Boys in School
Michael Kimmel

Work Left Undone: Choices and Compromises of Talented Females
Sally Morgan Reis

Educational Equity – Gender, Race and Class

Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education
Sonia Nieto

Race, Class, and Power in School Restructuring
Pauline Lipman

Race in the Schoolyard: Negotiating the Color Line in Classrooms and Communities
Amanda E. Lewis

¡Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can: Latinas in School
AAUW Educational Foundation

Urban Girls
Bonnie J. Ross Leadbetter & Niobe Way

Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life
Annette Lareau

Educational Equity – Science, Math, Engineering and Technology

Fair Play: Violence, Gender and Race in Video Games
ChildrenNOW

Math & Science for Girls: Convening the Experts, Reforming the Classroom, Finding the Right Equation
National Coalition of Girls' Schools

Tech-Savvy: Educating Girls in the New Computer Age
AAUW Educational Foundation

The Third Shift: Women Learning Online
AAUW Educational Foundation

Under the Microscope: A Decade of Gender Equity Projects in the Sciences
AAUW Educational Foundation

Gender and Development

Beyond Appearance: A New Look at Adolescent Girls
Eds. Norine G. Johnson, Michael C. Roberts & Judith Worrell

Growing a Girl: Seven Strategies for Raising a Strong Spirited Daughter
Dr. Barbara Mackoff

Lost Boys
James Garbarino, Ph.D.

Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girl's Development
Lyn Mikel Brown & Carol Gilligan

Mother Daughter Revolution
Elizabeth DeBold, Marie Wilson & Idelisse Malave

Odd Girl Out
Rachel Simmons

Real Boys
William Pollack

Reviving Ophelia
Mary Pipher

The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls
Joan Jacobs Brumberg

The Difference: Growing Up Female in America
Judy Mann

Things will be Different for my Daughter
Mindy Brigham and Sandy Stryker

101 Books for Girls to Grow On
Shireen Dodson

Sexual Harassment in Schools

Classrooms and Courtrooms: Facing Sexual Harassment in K-12 Schools
Nan Stein

Flirting or Hurting
Nan Stein & Lisa Sjostrom

Gender Violence, Gender Justice
Nan Stein and Dominic Cappello

Harassment-Free Hallways: How to Stop Sexual Harassment in Schools (online)
AAUW Educational Foundation

Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in Schools (2001)
AAUW Educational Foundation

Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools (1993)
AAUW Educational Foundation

Righting the Wrongs: A Legal Guide to Understanding, Addressing, and Preventing Sexual Harassment in Schools
National Women's Law Center

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Articles

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Stitt-Gohdes, W.L. (1997). *Career Development: Issues of Gender, Race and Class. Information Series No. 371.* ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, career and Vocational Education.

Warren-Sams, B. (2001). *Mentors confirm and enhance girls' lives.* WEEA Digest September 2001, pp. 11-12, 17.

Weiler, J. (1997). *Career Development for African American and Latina Females*. ERIC/CUE Digest, Number 125. Available Online. http://www.parentsassociation.com/education/career_develop.html

Empowering a Girl and Improving Her World

Praise a girl for her skills and her success, not only for her appearance. Say "you did a terrific job," instead of "you look pretty today." ♀ Watch your language. Get "boys will be boys" and "you know how girls are" out of your vocabulary.♀ Introduce a girl to dynamic women and men who combine paid work, volunteer work, and family life in innovative ways. ♀ Confront the widespread notions of female fragility. ♀Teach a girl to watch television and movies with a critical eye, discuss what you've seen together, and look for strong, smart women who are not limited to traditional roles. ♀ Address sexism in areas where young people are sorted by gender into educational or sports programs based on interests or skills they are *supposed* to have. ♀ *Create opportunities for a girl to be a leader! Let her choose the activity, make the rules,settle the disputes.* ♀ Avoid rescuing a girl. ♀ Encourage her to make an imperfect product, to get disheveled and sweaty in pursuit of a goal, and to make big, interesting mistakes. ♀ Teach a girl that it's okay to let success go to her head. Redefine pride as an "attractive" feminine trait. ♀ Teach a girl that it is not acceptable for someone to get into her space without first asking her for and then getting her permission. ♀ *Debunk the myth of Prince Charming. Teach a girl that most women will work for pay for most of their lives and every girl needs to be prepared to support herself.* ♀ *Counteract the pressure on a girl to ask for less and be satisfied with what she gets.* ♀ Teach a girl the importance of being paid well for something you do well. ♀ Provide opportunities for a girl to develop interests and skills that can lead to careers in non-traditional careers. ♀ Make sure that a girl has equal access and time to work on computers, use the Internet and explore other high-tech equipment. ♀ *Develop a network of working women to supplement the career guidance efforts of a girl's school.* ♀ Support programs that cultivate girls' job skills and career planning. ♀

Adapted from 101 Ways to Empower a Girl,
in C. Fine (2001), Strong, Smart and Bold: Empowering Girls for Life.

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