

Tips for Raising Financially Empowered Girls

The Girl Scouts Global Financial Empowerment Initiative, sponsored by MetLife Foundation

The world's current economic challenges have made one thing clear: financial empowerment matters now more than ever. Research from the Girl Scout Research Institute suggests that girls need and want financial literacy skills to help them achieve their dreams. However, there's a gap when it comes to teaching young people the skills they need. Many adults are uncomfortable talking about money with children. Many schools don't have time to address topics, like financial literacy. And, the programs that are available don't start early enough—experts say that youth need to start learning about money as early as kindergarten, and that learning fosters empowerment.



Here are some tips that parents and other adults who have girls (and boys) in their lives can use to help them develop a sense of financial empowerment now and for their futures.

Start talking to girls about money at a young age

Talk to girls about the importance of saving, managing, and investing. Teach her the difference between needs and wants. Does she really need a new toy, or is that something she wants? Point out some of your own needs versus wants when you are shopping together to demonstrate that adults have to make decisions about purchases too. Work with her to develop a plan for saving for something she wants to buy.

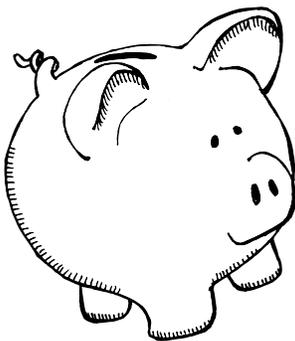


Involve girls in day-to-day financial activities to boost awareness

Ask your daughter or niece to help you with financial tasks—going to the ATM, cashing checks, paying bills, or grocery shopping—so that she can see the process of earning, spending, paying back, and so forth. Too often, children only see the spending side of money, or hear abstractly that the family “just can't afford that.” Talk through the steps of these tasks so girls understand that you pay bills from an account that needs to be filled, that there are limits to spending, and that decisions need to be made.

Include girls in discussions of family and other group finances

Invite girls to take part and offer their opinions in “adult” conversations about money, budgets, and financial decisions. Girls will better understand how to make financial choices—from managing a household to troop expenses—when they are included in straightforward discussions about everything from pay-as-you-go plans for that first phone to purchasing a family car or saving money for a Girl Scout trip. When included in these discussions at early ages, girls develop confidence to make such decisions in their own lives, and not shy away from challenging conversations about money.





Model shared financial decision making

Show girls that decisions about budgeting, planning for large expenses, and setting a cap for spending are made collaboratively by spouses, family members, and even members of a team that share responsibility for a budget. Teamwork on financial and other important decisions helps girls communicate their ideas, listen, compromise, and not get their feelings hurt in the process.



Discuss and challenge stereotypes about girls, women, and money

Watch television together and seize opportunities to ask your daughter, granddaughter, or niece what she thinks about how female characters in shows or commercials are portrayed. Let girls know that you don't assume that they are irresponsible with money, only like to shop and spend, and can't be trusted with a credit card. Point out positive and empowering role models for girls in the media—women as heads of households, companies, and financial institutions, smart women thinking through and making their own purchases.



Steer girls towards opportunities to develop the skills they need to reach their goals

Encourage girls to work hard at math which offers essential skills for everyday life and numerous careers, including those that involve money management and leadership. Guide girls to pursue academic study that boosts their financial empowerment, like accounting, finance, and business. No matter the age, a girl can start her own business in the community, like selling lemonade, having a tag sale, dog-walking or babysitting. Help her to open her own savings account with her proceeds.



There is no better time than now to get girls involved in Girl Scouts where girls in kindergarten through grade 12 gain skills and a sense of empowerment through our Financial Literacy Badge Curriculum and participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, the largest girl-led business in the world!

If the girl in your life isn't already a Girl Scout, help her join today! [Girlscouts.org/join](https://www.girlscouts.org/join)



MetLife Foundation

To learn more about the foundation, please visit www.metlife.org