

Benefits of the Girl Scout Program for Girls in Grades K-12

Girl Scouts is such an amazing community that helps empower other girls. It helps teach leadership and important life-long skills. It has taught me so many valuable life lessons that has helped me become more confident and empathetic towards others. Girl Scouts helps me believe I can make a difference in the world if I am determined enough to change the issues in it.

- Senior Girl Scout

Social and Emotional Well-Being:

The confidence gap for girls starts at age 6¹, and by middle school, it accelerates². Girl Scouts provides a safe space for girls to take risks and gain confidence.

Studies by the Girl Scout Research Institute³ and others show that girls value girls-only “safe spaces” where they can confide in trusting adults and in other girls. In girl-only settings, girls feel free to talk about issues they wouldn’t necessarily talk about with boys, try out new activities without a fear of failure, and experience less pressure to look or act a certain way.

Leadership Identity:

Girl Scouts encourages girls to take risks, try, fail, find the lessons in failure, and reflect and carry these experiences forward into their identity. According to researchers⁴, this supports the development of a leadership identity in girls and young women. We hear from the girls in our program, that when they are in girl-only settings, they feel more comfortable trying new things.

Girl Scouts develops girls who have been, and continue to be, the leaders of our communities, our government, and our nation.

- 50% of female business leaders were Girl Scouts
- 76% of female U.S. senators were Girl Scouts
- 100% of female U.S. Secretaries of State were Girl Scouts

Academic Achievement and Active Learning:

Studies have pointed to the positive benefits of an all-girl environment on girls’ proclivity to pursue and explore STEM subjects⁵. Girl Scouting also helps girls develop important leadership skills that in turn bolster their success in school, including for Girl Scouts vs. non-Girl Scouts:⁶

- Work collaboratively with others on group projects (86% vs. 61%)
- Engage in hands-on activities and reflect on what worked/didn’t work (81% vs. 59%)
- Take an active role in decision making (80% vs. 51%)

¹ *Gender stereotypes about intellectual ability emerge early and influence children’s interests*, Brian et al., *Science* 355, 389-391 (2017) 22 January 2017

² *Dreaming Big: What’s Gender Got to Do with It? The impact of Gender Stereotypes on Career Aspirations of Middle Schoolers*, Center for Gender in Organizations, 2012; *Leaning Out: Teen Girls and Leadership Biases*, Weissbourd et al., *Making Caring Common Project*, Harvard Graduate School of Education

³ *GSRI: Exploring Girls Leadership (2007)*

⁴ *Harvard Business Review*, Sept 2013 issue article “Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers”

⁵ *A compilation of research from the National Coalition of Girls’ Schools*: <http://www.ncgs.org/Resources/researchReportsV3.aspx>

⁶ *Girl Scouts Research Institute, Linking Leadership to Academic Success: The Girl Scout Difference (2012)*; and *Girl Scout Impact Study (2017)*