

TIPS FOR ENCOURAGING GIRLS IN STEM

- 1.** Assume she is interested in science, technology, engineering, and math. Ask her what classes she is taking and what topics interest her.
- 2.** Find out how she feels about the science she is learning in school. Find out if there are any teachers or counselors who are particularly supportive. Encourage her to seek them out and go to them for advice or help with school work. Try to connect with them yourself to find out about what kind of support they are offering and if there is more they could do for her.
- 3.** Ask her about how she views scientists and what she sees as “science.” Partner with her to discover how STEM is a part of everyday life, that STEM really is everywhere. Visit a museum, business, or factory together to see real-world uses for math and science.
- 4.** If a girl expresses concern about getting messy or dirty, help her get past this “eek and yuck” response. Encourage her to think “interesting” and “fascinating” rather than - or along with - “ew, gross.” Help her take small steps to become more comfortable with STEM content and materials. Reflect with her about how some of the biggest messes or mistakes can lead to great discoveries.
- 5.** Ask her about her plans for the future. Encourage her to explore field of work that are not traditionally associated with women.
- 6.** Introduce her to a variety of role models - especially women - so that she does not limit her dreams. Help her connect with local female STEM professionals to broaden her view of scientists and help her learn more about the various fields that can provide exciting opportunities for her future.
- 7.** Ask questions about how things work, and then join her in brainstorming ideas and researching answers.
- 8.** Consider your own feelings about math and science and encourage her pursuit of these subjects even if they were difficult for you as a student.
- 9.** Teach her to replace “I can’t” with “I’ll try” or “I don’t know how. Who can help me learn?”
- 10.** Encourage persistence. Help her understand that making mistakes is a vital part of STEM, and that making mistakes does not mean that someone is not “good at science”.
- 11.** Help her join with other girls at school, an afterschool club or program, or a Girls Inc. affiliate that values and nurtures girls’ interest in STEM.