



GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

CANADIAN VERSION
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**girls
inc.**

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

We are pleased to release the 2024 edition of the Girls Inc. Fact Book. As you know, Girls Inc. is committed to providing accurate and timely information related to the state of girls, and we believe that you will find this book to be a useful reference as you engage in the work of promoting the well-being and success of girls and young women.

Girls Inc. is unsurpassed in its expertise when it comes to girls and young women, and is the nation's longest-running girls' leadership organization. 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 the National office of Girls Inc. is to provide technical assistance to our network of Affiliates so they can focus on delivering quality services to girls. We ensure that they have access to essential resources that assist in offering evidence-based programming that is proven to help girls grow up to be healthy, educated, and independent young adults. It is also our role to provide thought leadership and ongoing training, to equip staff to meet girls' evolving needs.

We are reintroducing the Fact Book in order to provide you with the latest statistics and data, along with guidance on how to use this information effectively and accurately.

I would like to thank the Research and Evaluation team and all those involved in producing this important document. And I thank you, too, for your dedication to 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 and demonstrate how the intersections of race and gender impact the lives of girls.

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 is building a more equitable society. While a single program is mentioned in alignment with each topic, the comprehensive nature of Girls Inc. programming is such that many programs work to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes for any given topic.

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 fourth 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) 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.

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GIRLS IN CANADA TODAY

Girls Inc. is proud to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold members of their communities. In 2023, Girls Inc. provided over 110,000 girls across the U.S. and Canada with intensive 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 2022 Population Estimates](#), girls under the age of 19 make up approximately one fifth of the total female population. This translates to nearly four million girls in communities across Canada. They represent not only a sizeable population but also a population characterized by increasing racial and ethnic diversity. Girls Inc. girls reflect this growing diversity with 69% of Girls Inc. service provided to girls from minority backgrounds (including Black, Indigenous, Middle Eastern/North African, Asian American/Pacific Islander, or Multiracial) and 27% of Girls Inc. girls identifying as Hispanic or Latina (according to 2023 Annual Affiliate Survey data).

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 diverse capabilities of girls today.

STRONG

GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

STRONG

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

About 26% of girls ages 5-17 met the recommended physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise per day.

Importance:

The [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#) recommends that young people get at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity per day for greater health benefits. Low-income youth 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 low-income and under-resourced communities may not be experiencing the benefits of physical activity as frequently as their more affluent peers.

National Comparisons:

- 52% of boys aged 5-17 met the recommended guidelines
- 39% of all kids ages 5-17 met the recommended guidelines

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?

High school girls are much less likely than their male peers to participate in 60 minutes of physical activity five or more days per week.

Statistic Source:

The main physical activity statistic was taken from the 2016-17 Canadian Health Measures Survey. The survey is conducted every two years, and updated fact sheets are released periodically. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

STRONG

SPORTS PARTICIPATION

77% of Canadian children and youth between the ages of 5 and 19 participate in an organized physical activity and/or sport.

Importance:

Sports participation provides many benefits for youth and adolescents. For instance, girls who participate in sports are also more likely to exhibit skills critical to success in school and in the workplace, such as leadership, teamwork, and goal-setting ([Women's Sports Foundation, 2016](#)). While there are many benefits for girls who participate in sports, not all girls have the same access to sports and other physical activity opportunities. Girls from minority backgrounds especially experience unequal access to both sports teams in their schools, as well as opportunities to be physically active in their communities ([National Women's Law Center & The Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 2015](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 78% of Ontario children and youth ages 5-19
- 76% of Alberta children and youth ages 5-19
- Around 62% of Canadian teen girls ages 15-19
- Around 65% of Canadian teen boys ages 15-19

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?

Boys are slightly more likely to participate in an organized sport or activity compared to girls.

Sports team participation among Canadian children is inversely related to age, meaning youth are less likely to participate in an organized sport or activity as they grow older.

Statistic Source:

The main physical activity statistic was taken from the 2014-16 Kids CANPLAY (Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth) survey, which relies on data reported from parents or guardians. Future iterations of this survey have yet to be announced. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

STRONG

BODY IMAGE

88% of Canadian females ages 12-14 report feeling satisfied with their bodies.

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 ([Carter et al., 2017](#)). 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.

Mentorship has shown to be one of the best ways to help girls develop confidence, as research shows that around 60% of Canadians who say they are “very confident” had a positive mentor in their youth ([Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2013](#)). 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:

- 79% of females ages 15-17 feel satisfied with their bodies
- 79% of females ages 18-19 feel satisfied with their bodies
- 66% of females ages 12-29 who use the internet > 20 hours per week report feeling satisfied with their bodies

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?

On average, 1 in 6 girls ages 12-17 are dissatisfied with their bodies.

Females ages 12-29 who use the internet more hours per week report lower levels of body satisfaction.

Statistic Source:

The main Body Image statistic was taken from a research article published in 2017 and utilizes participant data from the 2011/12 Canadian Community Health Survey. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

STRONG

MENTAL HEALTH

22% of Canadian girls ages 12-17 report high levels of daily stress.

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 ([Statistics Canada, 2016](#)). Risk factors for suicide-related behaviors include a history of depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems ([CDC, 2017](#)).

Early interventions for mental health are vital, as most people living with a mental illness see their symptoms begin before age 18 ([MHCC, 2017](#)). Risk factors for suicide-related behaviors include a history of depression or anxiety, chronic physical pain or illness, trauma, and substance misuse ([Health Canada, 2023](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 11% of Canadian boys ages 12-17 report high levels of daily stress
- 7.4% of 12 to 17 year old girls reported having a diagnosed anxiety disorder compared to 5.3% of boys of the same age
- Girls ages 15-17 are 2x more likely to be hospitalized for mental health disorders compared to their male peers
- Girls ages 5-24 are 2x more likely to be prescribed medication for mental health disorders compared to their male peers

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?

1 in 5 girls ages 12-17 experience high levels of daily stress.

Females are more likely to report experiencing symptoms of anxiety and other mental health disorders compared to their male peers.

Statistic Source:

The main Mental Health statistic was taken from the [2021/2022](#) Canadian Community Health Survey, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted every two years. Some comparison data comes from a [2017 article](#) using 2013/2014 CCHS data. More information about the CCHS can be found [here](#).

STRONG

SUBSTANCE USE: CIGARETTES

22 % of girls in grades 10-12 have ever tried smoking cigarettes.

Importance:

Every day, 100 Canadians die of smoking related illness ([Health Canada](#)). Cigarette smoking is associated with numerous negative health outcomes including increased rates of cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and stroke ([Health Canada, 2023](#)). Additionally, female smokers face an increased risk of cervical cancer, menstrual issues, and fertility issues ([Health Canada](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 20.9% of male students grades 10-12 have ever tried smoking a cigarette
- 29.4% of transgender, gender diverse, and/or questioning students grades 10-12 have ever tried smoking a cigarette
- 25.7% of girl students grades 10-12 have ever tried a tobacco product

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 4 girls in grades 10-12 has tried a tobacco product.

Girls in grades 10 to 12 are slightly more likely than boys of the same age to have ever tried a tobacco product.

Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Cigarettes statistic was taken from the 2018/19 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 at [this website](#).

STRONG

SUBSTANCE USE: ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES/VAPES

44% of girls in grades 10-12 have ever tried smoking an e-cigarette.

Importance:

Use of tobacco in any form by young people is unsafe, including the use of vapes and smokeless tobacco products ([CDC, 2018](#)). 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 ([Government of Canada, 2023](#)). 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 ([Government of Canada, 2023](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 37.2% of male students grades 10-12 have ever tried smoking an e-cigarette
- 38.2% of transgender, gender diverse, and questioning students grades 10-12 have ever tried smoking an e-cigarette

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 half of girls in grades 10-12 have tried electronic cigarettes.

Girls in grades 10-12 are more likely than their male peers to try e-cigarettes.

Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Electronic Cigarettes statistic was taken from the 2021/22 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 at [this website](#).

STRONG

SUBSTANCE USE: ALCOHOL

42% of Canadian girls in grades 7-12 have used alcohol in the past 12 months.

Importance:

Short-term risks of alcohol include increased risk of injury, alcohol poisoning, and motor vehicle crashes ([Drug Free Kids Canada, 2019](#)). 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, 2019](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 35.7% of male students grades 7-12 have consumed alcohol in the past 12 months
- Of those, 22.2% of girls grades 7-12 have engaged in “high risk drinking” in the past 12 months
- 19.1% of boys grades 7-12 have engaged in “high risk drinking” in the past 12 months

Girls Inc. Approach:

The Girls Inc. **FRIENDLY PEER**suation program supports the physical health of girls by strengthening skills needed to resist pressure to use harmful substances.

How can I say this?

2 in 5 girls in grades 7-12 have consumed alcohol in the last year.

Female students are more likely than their male peers to have consumed alcohol and to have engaged in “high risk drinking” in the past 12 months.

Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Alcohol statistic was taken from the 2021/22 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 at [this website](#).

STRONG

SUBSTANCE USE: MARIJUANA

20% of Canadian girls in grades 7-12 have consumed 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 around age 25 ([Health Canada, 2018](#)). Using cannabis regularly as a teen can impair cognition and negatively affect academic performance. For instance, young adults who start using cannabis early have more difficulty studying and are more likely to drop out of high school or university ([Health Canada, 2018](#)). Long term, regular cannabis use is also associated with an increased risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and psychosis ([Health Canada, 2018](#)). Furthermore, cannabis smoke contains some of the same harmful substances as tobacco smoke, and can cause permanent damage the lungs over time ([Health Canada, 2018](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 16.2% of male students grades 7-12 have consumed cannabis in the past 12 months
- 20.9% of transgender, gender diverse, and/or questioning students grades 10-12 have consumed cannabis in the past 12 months
- 14.1 was the mean age at first use of cannabis

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 5 girls in grades 7-12 has used cannabis in the last year.

Female students are more likely than their male peers to have consumed cannabis in the past 12 months.

Statistic Source:

The main Substance Use: Marijuana statistic was taken from the 2021/22 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 at [this website](#).

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. Deciding when and how to engage in sexual activity is a personal decision each girl should be able to make for herself free from stigma and misinformation. 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:

- 19.6% of all male ages 15-17 have had sexual intercourse
- 52.4% of Canadian teens ages 18-19 reported having 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, be inclusive and supportive of sexual diversity and rights, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.

How can I say this?

1 in 5 girls ages 15-17 has had sexual intercourse.

Females and males ages 15-17 report having had sexual intercourse at similar rates.

Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Sexuality: Sexual Intercourse statistic was taken 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 [this website](#).

STRONG

HEALTHY SEXUALITY: CONTRACEPTIVE USE

80% of 15 to 17 year olds reported using a condom the last time they had intercourse.

Importance:

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](#)). 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 of 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:

- 54.9% of females ages 15 to 24 reported using a condom the last time they had intercourse
- 65% of males ages 15 to 24 reported using a condom the last time they had intercourse
- 10% of females ages 15 to 24 reported using emergency contraception in the past 12 months

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, be inclusive and supportive of sexual diversity and rights, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.

How can I say this?

8 out of 10 youth ages 15-17 report using a condom the last time they had intercourse.

Females ages 15 to 24 are less likely to report using a condom compared to their male peers.

Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Sexuality: Contraceptive Use statistic was taken 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 [this website](#).

STRONG

HEALTHY SEXUALITY: TEEN PREGNANCY RATE

In 2022, the birth rate for Canadian girls ages 15-19 was 4.4 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](#)). While teen pregnancy rates in Canada are declining, discrimination against teen girls who raise children often prevents these girls and young women from reaching their academic and career goals ([NWLC, 2017e](#)). Due to lower educational attainment rates coupled with the costs of raising children, teen mothers may experience economic hardships and are more likely to live in poverty ([U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019](#)).

National Comparisons:

The birth rate among teen girls age 15-19 in 2022 was:

- 3 births per 1,000 among Ontario teens
- 5.2 births per 1,000 among Alberta teens

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, be inclusive and supportive of sexual diversity and rights, explore values, and think about their futures and the world around them.

How can I say this?

In Canada, the average birth rate for girls ages 15 to 19 was 4.4 births per 1,000. The recorded birth rate was higher than the average for girls living in Alberta and lower than the average for girls living in Ontario.

Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Sexuality: Teen Pregnancy Rate 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 at [this website](#).

STRONG

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: SEXUAL ASSAULT

30% of all Canadian women age 15 or older report experiencing sexual assault at least once.

Importance:

Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence rooted in gender inequality and injustice ([CWF, 2022](#)). In Canada, sexual assault is the only violent crime not on a decline ([Samuel Perreault, Statistics Canada, 2014](#)). Young women are at especially high risk for sexual assault and forced intercourse. Sexual violence can result in immediate and lifelong consequences, including chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder ([CDC, 2018](#)). Survivors may also struggle with social challenges, including strained relationships with friends and family and isolation or ostracism from their family and community. Moreover, women with additional social barriers face a higher risk of sexual violence, including women with disabilities, indigenous women, and women who are unhoused or homeless ([CWF, 2022](#)).

National Comparisons:

- The rate of sexual assault against indigenous women is 3 times higher than non-indigenous women
- The rate of sexual assault against women with disabilities is 2 times higher than those without

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?

Almost a third (30%) of women ages 15 and older in Canada report experiencing sexual assault at some point in their lives.

Indigenous women and women with disabilities experience a higher rate of sexual assault in comparison to their peers.

Statistic Source:

The main Healthy Relationships: Sexual Assault statistic was taken from the Canadian Women's Foundation, which updates statistics frequently. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

SMART

GIRLS INC. FACT BOOK

SMART

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: ON-TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

87% of Canadian girls graduate 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 ([Moyser, 2017](#)). Equally important, girls who graduate from high school are more likely to have healthier lifestyles and are less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system ([Child Trends, 2015](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 77% for Canadian high school boys
- 86% for Ontario high school girls
- 83% for Alberta high school girls

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?

Around 9 out of 10 girls in Canada graduate high school on time.

High school girls across Canada graduate on time at a higher rate than their male peers.

Statistic Source:

The main Educational Aspirations: On-Time High School Graduation statistic was published in 2022 by Statistics Canada and uses data from a cohort of students whose progress was tracked from grade 10, in 2019, through graduation. Further information about these cohorts can be found [here](#).

SMART

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES

In 2016, 5% of Canadian women ages 25 to 34 had not finished high school.

Importance:

High school graduation is an important milestone for young girls, as it prepares them for postsecondary education, along with providing broader social and economic benefits ([Statistique Canada, 2020](#)). Additionally, high-school graduation is largely considered the minimum requirement for successful entry into the labor market ([Statistique 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:

- 9% of all young men ages 25 to 34
- 5% of young women in Ontario ages 25 to 34
- 6% of young women in Alberta ages 25 to 34
- 16% of Indigenous women in Canada ages 25 to 34
- 20% of Indigenous men in Canada ages 25 to 34

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?

In Canada, 1 in 20 women ages 25-34 has not finished high school.

Young women in Canada are more likely to finish high school than their male peers.

Statistic Source:

The main Educational Aspirations: High School Dropout Rates statistic was taken from the 2019/20 Labor Force Survey, which relies on self-reported data and is collected annually. Further information can be found [here](#).

SMART

WOMEN IN STEM:

UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT IN STEM FIELDS OF STUDY

16% of female university students were enrolled in STEM degree programs in 2021.

Importance:

Numerous studies have shown that women continue to earn less than men, despite having achieved higher levels of educational attainment ([Pelletier, Patterson and Moyser, 2019](#)). However, degree selection is key as STEM bachelor's degree graduates earn an average of \$15,000 more than their non-STEM peers ([Statistique Canada, 2021](#)). But, female university students are less likely than their male peers to pursue STEM degrees. While women represent the majority of university students, they are largely underrepresented in rapidly growing, high paying STEM fields ([Statistique Canada, 2021](#)).

National Comparisons:

- 37% of male university students were enrolled in STEM degree programs
- In 2016, women made up 34% of STEM bachelor's degree holders and 23% of science and technology workers among Canadians aged 25 to 64.
- Female students comprised 37% of all students enrolled in STEM programs

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?

In Canada, only a third of university students enrolled in STEM programs are females.

Canadian male university students are much more likely to pursue a degree and career in STEM compared to their female counterparts.

Statistic Source:

The main main Women in STEM: University Enrollment statistic was taken from the 2021/22 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 at [this website](#).

BOLD

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VOLUNTEERING

In 2018, 55% of females ages 15-22 volunteered at some point during the year.

Importance:

Volunteering and civic engagement affords girls the opportunities to be change agents and take on leadership in their communities. Through volunteering and community engagement, girls can gain skills, establish healthy relationships with peers, and feel a sense of belonging within their communities.

National Comparisons:

- 48% of males ages 15-22 volunteered
- 45% of females ages 23-37 volunteered

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?

More than half of young women ages 15-22 have volunteered in the past year.

Young women are more likely than their male peers to have volunteered in the past year.

Statistic Source:

The main Volunteering statistic was taken from the 2018 General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating, which relies on self-reported data and is conducted every 5 years. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

BOLD

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

As of December 2023, 103 women (30.5% of the total membership) served as Members of Parliament.

Importance:

In an international ranking of countries by the percentage of female legislators, Canada ranks 63rd out of 185. The representation of women in the Canadian Parliament (30.5%) falls just below the regional average for the Americas of 34.8% ([Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023](#)).

A 2013 study from the Women & Politics Institute in the United States found that young women are less likely than young men to receive encouragement to run for office, are less socialized by their parents to think about politics as a career path, and are exposed to less political information and discussion than young men are ([Lawless & Fox, 2013](#)).

Comparisons:

- 50% of Mexico's legislators are women
- 37.8% of France's legislators are women
- 34.6% of the United Kingdom's legislators are women
- 28.9% 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 December 2023, less than one third (30.5%) of Canada's Members of Parliament were women.

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

Statistic Source:

The main Civic Engagement: Women in Parliament statistic was taken from the Inter-Parliamentary Union's monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, which is updated monthly with information on women elected to parliaments in 185 countries across the globe. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

BOLD

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WOMEN ON THE SUPREME COURT

In 2023, five out of the nine sitting Supreme Court Justices (56%) are female.

Importance:

Having a diverse Supreme Court increases the chances for multiple understandings of the interpretations of existing laws and related precedents to be argued and to be considered in making decisions on the difficult and important cases that come before that court. Female Supreme Court Justices may be especially important in considering the effects of laws, and of interpretation of those laws, on girls and women ([National Women's Law Center, 2016](#)).

Comparisons:

- 44% of the current Supreme Court Justices are men.
- Four out of nine sitting US supreme court justices are women (44%)

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 Civic Engagement: Women on the Supreme Court statistic was taken from the website of the Supreme Court of Canada, which is continually updated as new judges are elected. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

BOLD

CAREER READINESS: FEMALE BUSINESS LEADERS IN CANADA

18% of companies in the Toronto Stock Exchange have women on their executive teams.

Importance:

Although every CEO brings her own individual strengths to the position, female corporate leaders often bring to the table skills and leadership skills that benefit the companies they work for. Research has shown that women often bring 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:

- 28% of companies on the TSX have women on their boards

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 one-fifth (18%) of companies on the TSX have women on their executive teams, and a little over a quarter (28%) have women on their boards.

Statistic Source:

The main Career Readiness: Female Business Leaders in Canada statistic is from a [2020 report by Catalyst](#), and uses data from 2015-2019. Plans for updated reports are unknown but more information about the author organization can be found [here](#).

BOLD

ECONOMIC LITERACY: GENDER-BASED WAGE DISPARITIES

Among paid Canadian workers ages 20-54, men earn an average of 12% more than women.

Importance:

Women are overrepresented in low wage occupations and are underrepresented in high paying sectors in the Canadian economy ([Moyser, 2017](#)). Many Canadian women are also the sole breadwinners for themselves or their families. Women's lower earnings put them and female-headed households at increased risk of living in poverty ([Canadian Women's Foundation, 2017](#)). The wage gap is even more pronounced for visible minority and Indigenous women ([Hudon, 2016, Arriagada, 2016](#)).

Comparisons:

- For indigenous women, the wage gap increases to 17%.
- For immigrant women who migrated to Canada as adults, the wage gap increases to 30%

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?

On average, women earn \$0.89 for every \$1.00 earned by men.

Statistic Source:

The main statistic was taken from the Canadian Income Survey, which is conducted annually. Income data is updated annually, and further information can be found at [this website](#).

BOLD

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: BULLYING

71% of Canadian youth ages 12 to 17 report experiencing at least one form of bullying over the past year.

Importance:

Bullying is a form of aggression where someone intentionally and repeatedly engages in behavior that makes the person being bullied feel afraid, alone or uncomfortable ([Statistique Canada, 2023](#)). Bullying can take on many forms, including verbal, physical, social, relational, and cyberbullying. Victims of bullying experience an increased risk of substance abuse, depression, anxiety, and suicidal behavior. Victims of bullying also tend to have lower GPAs and standardized test scores, and poorer attendance records compared to their peers ([Centers for Disease Control, 2014](#)).

Comparisons:

- 77% of sexually and gender diverse youth report being bullied over the past year compared to 69% of cisgender youth exclusively attracted to a different gender.
- Two in five (42%) youth reported experiencing bullying monthly or more frequently, while 58% reported experiencing bullying a few times a 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?

7 out of 10 Canadian youth ages 12-17 have been bullied in the past year.

Sexually and gender diverse youth experience a higher rate of bullying in comparison to their peers.

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 the newest iteration will follow the same cohort examined in 2019. Further information can be found at [this website](#).

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