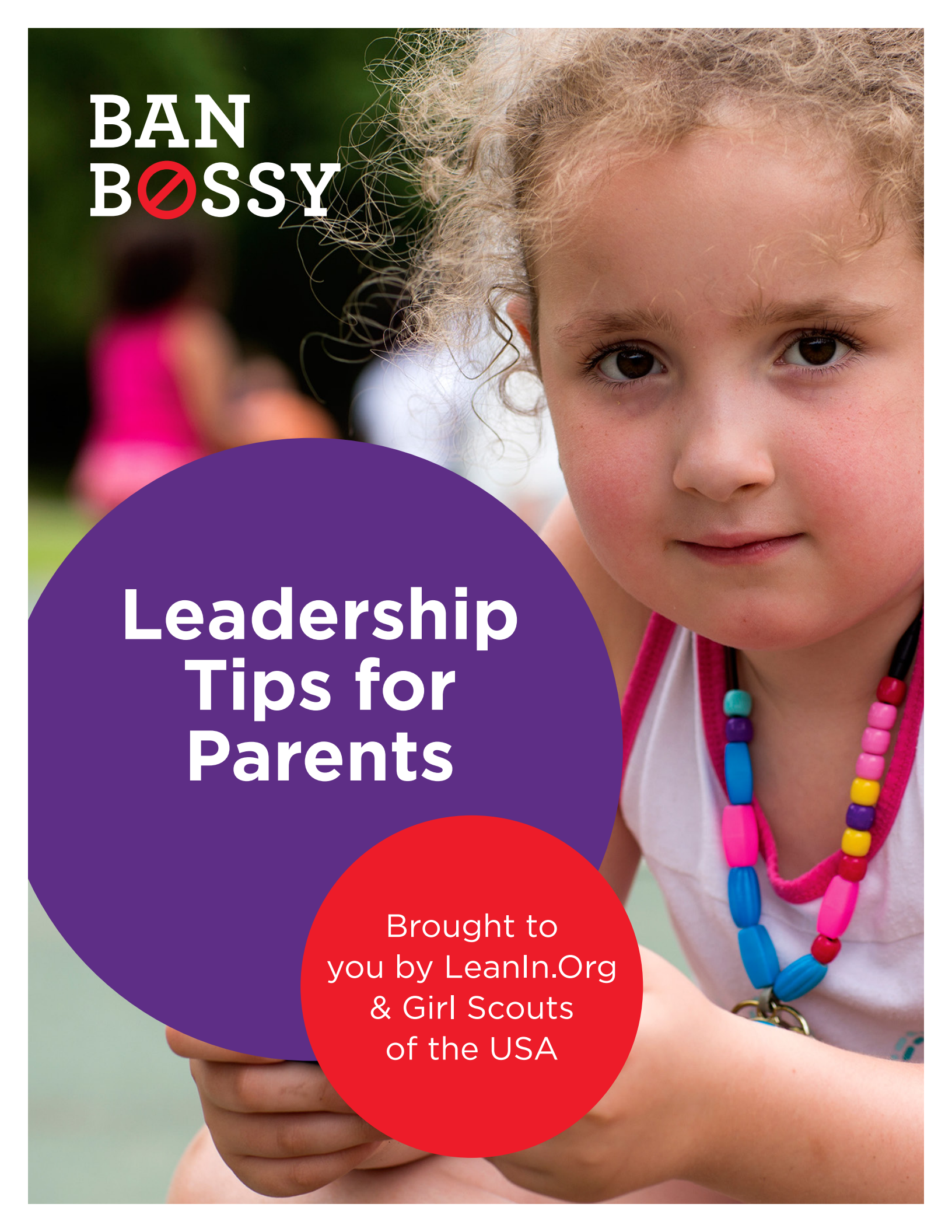




**BAN
BOSSY**

**Leadership
Tips for
Parents**

Brought to
you by LeanIn.Org
& Girl Scouts
of the USA

JOIN US TO BAN BOSSY

Post **“I will #banbossy”** to your social media channels and visit **banbossy.com** to take the pledge and learn more.

When it comes to girls and ambition, the pattern is clear: girls are discouraged from leading. When a little boy asserts himself, he’s called a “leader.” Yet when a little girl does the same, she risks being branded “bossy”—a precursor to words like “aggressive,” “angry,” and “too ambitious” that plague strong female leaders. Calling girls bossy is one of many things we do to discourage them from leading. It’s no wonder that by middle school, girls are less interested in leadership roles than boys, a trend that continues into adulthood.

LeanIn.Org and Girl Scouts of the USA are kicking off Ban Bossy, a public service campaign to encourage leadership and achievement in girls. With the help of Girls Leadership Institute co-founder Rachel Simmons and the Girl Scout Research Institute, we’ve developed practical tips to help all young women flex their leadership muscles, in ways big and small.

The girl with the courage to raise her hand in class becomes the woman with the confidence to assert herself at work. As parents, grandparents, and caretakers, there are small changes each of us can make that have a big impact on girls’ confidence and ambitions.

The time to start building female leaders is now. We hope you’ll join us to Ban Bossy—and to encourage girls to lead.



By middle school,
girls are 25% less
likely than boys to
say they like taking
the lead.¹

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“ My mother never hesitated to tell anyone what she needed. Food too cold at a restaurant? She sent it back. Kid late to carpool? She told him to set his clock five minutes earlier. When I was a girl, nothing embarrassed me more. I sank into the backseat of our car, cheeks burning, wishing I could disappear. And yet years later, when I sent back my own cold food to be reheated, I realized my mother had passed down something crucial: a script to help me lean in and ask for what I wanted.

When a parent or grandparent speaks up or says no, it can be embarrassing for children—especially girls, who are often focused on fitting in. But these acts also set an important example. In the routine of everyday life, parents, grandparents, and caretakers have countless opportunities to model how to be authentic, assertive, and self-aware. It’s when you politely tell a telemarketer that you can’t talk because they’ve called in the middle of a meal. It’s when you knock on your neighbors’ door and ask them to turn down the music. In each of these moments, you build your daughter’s confidence reserves—ones she’ll draw on when she’s ready.

The most effective caretakers don’t just model speaking up, they actively encourage it. Perhaps it’s role-playing a tough conversation she needs to have with a friend, nudging her to raise her voice in a big room, or setting goals with her to lean in at school or on a team. Caregivers who celebrate their girls’ assertiveness can buffer them against the culture’s mixed, sometimes toxic messages about girls’ personal authority and power. What we say matters as much as what we do.

Here are some things that can make a big difference toward shaping your daughter’s or granddaughter’s emerging ability to lead. ”

—Rachel Simmons
Co-founder of the Girls Leadership Institute



In the routine of everyday life, parents, grandparents, and caretakers have countless opportunities to model how to be authentic, assertive, and self-aware.

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For more ideas for supporting the girls in your life, we recommend you read our Leadership Tips for Girls at banbossy.com/girls-tips.



DID YOU KNOW?

92% Ninety-two percent of girls believe they can learn the skills required to lead—yet only twenty-one percent believe they already possess them.² **21%**

1. Encourage Girls and Boys Equally to Lead

THE SITUATION >

Parents and grandparents are crucial architects of a girl's leadership potential. Yet as early as middle school, parents place a higher value on leadership for boys than for girls.³

THE SOLUTION >

Reflect on the different messages you may be giving a daughter or son about ambition, future success, and leadership. Parents can legitimize a girl's most ambitious dreams with acknowledgment and encouragement. Ask your daughter how she would change the world. Invite her to tell you what leadership means to her. Does she see herself as a leader? What are the ways she leads now, and in what ways would she like to lead more in the future?



DID YOU KNOW?

In a comprehensive study of adolescents and their families, parents of seventh graders placed greater importance on leadership for boys than for girls.⁴

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2. Be Conscious of the Way You and She Talk

THE SITUATION >

Girls learn early that too much confidence can get them ostracized, and you can often hear the proof in how they communicate. Many girls start sentences with apologies (“I’m not sure this is right, but...”) or turn factual sentences into questions (“Martin Luther King was a civil rights leader?”). Some cock their heads, play with their hair, or cover their mouths while speaking, using phrases like “kind of” and “sort of” to weaken their convictions. These phrases can become habits and hinder a girl’s ability to speak in a direct manner later on.

THE SOLUTION >

Notice how you communicate in front of your daughter or granddaughter and avoid hedging or softening your opinions with disclaimers or apologies. Be conscious of how your daughter or granddaughter speaks as well. Reach out to her teachers and coaches for feedback on how she communicates. Girls are vulnerable to perfectionism, so it can be helpful to acknowledge your own hedging words along with hers.

DID YOU KNOW?

The confidence gap starts young: Between elementary school and high school, girls’ self-esteem drops 3.5 times more than boys’.⁵

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3. Make Your Home an Equal Household

THE SITUATION >

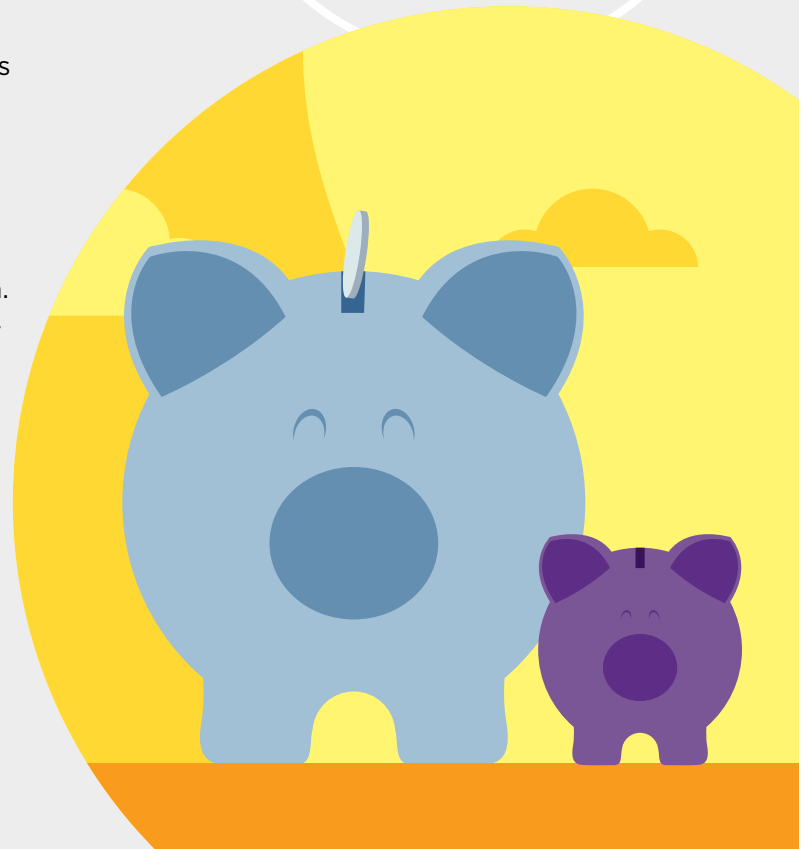
The wage gap, along with the belief that women should oversee household work, starts earlier than you think. Research shows that boys spend less time on household chores but make more money than girls. Parents often place greater value on the chores boys typically perform, like mowing the lawn, than on chores that girls usually do, like folding laundry or dishwashing.⁶

THE SOLUTION >

Your home is a powerful classroom for your children. Do your girls do “typical girl” chores like cleaning or laundry, while boys take out the trash and mow the lawn? Switch up the assignments. If certain chores receive more allowance, distribute those chores equally. If you end up doing chores in an attempt to avoid another round of nagging, take care to ensure you’re not doing one child’s work more than another’s.

DID YOU KNOW?

The wage gap starts at home: Girls get paid less than boys for household chores.⁷



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ACTIVITY

Talk About the Word “Bossy”

Calling a girl “bossy” when she asserts her voice—a word we rarely use for little boys—sends the message that girls should not speak up. Explain to the girls in your life that “bossy” is a word often used to make girls feel bad about speaking up. Brainstorm examples of moments when being “bossy” is a good idea. Talk about what you stand for as a family when it comes to speaking up and take steps to make sure the members of your extended community support your daughter when she speaks her mind.

4. Teach Her to Respect Her Feelings

THE SITUATION >

Girls learn early on that being liked and avoiding conflict—even when they’re upset—can win social status and rewards. Many girls are told to “get over” their feelings or to stop being “so sensitive.” A girl’s ability to recognize and respect her feelings, and to speak up about them, is a vital ingredient to developing healthy personal authority and confidence.

THE SOLUTION >

Teach your daughter to respect herself by letting her know it’s okay to feel whatever it is she feels and to talk about it. She may not like all her feelings, but they’re an important part of who she is; just as we have to take care of our bodies, we also have to take care of our feelings. Show her by example: avoid denying, second-guessing, or questioning her feelings with phrases like “It’s not a big deal” or “Don’t overreact.” When she’s ready to share with others, be realistic with her about the challenges of speaking up in a world that still expects girls to be nice above all. Sometimes we have to speak up just to show we believe we should be heard, even if the result isn’t what we hoped for.

DID YOU KNOW?

Both boys and girls think it’s easier for men to become leaders.⁹

DID YOU KNOW?

Girls are twice as likely as boys to worry that leadership roles will make them seem “bossy.”⁸

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5. Moms and Grandmoms: Model Assertive Behavior

THE SITUATION >

Girls often learn to please others at the expense of themselves. They sometimes agree to requests even though they may not want to. Later, they feel resentful. Your daughter needs you to show her how to set boundaries in relationships and that doing so won't end them.

THE SOLUTION >

Try turning down a request to volunteer when you're overloaded—and explain why to your daughter. If you do say yes and wish you hadn't, avoid dropping hints about how you really feel by passively communicating or getting quiet or sullen. Don't expect others to guess how you feel; speak up and say it. Let your daughter watch you move constructively through a conflict with a close friend, family member, or colleague and emerge successfully on the other side.



6. Dads and Granddads: Know Your Influence

THE SITUATION >

Research has shown that father figures can have a significant impact on a girl's ability to trust, enjoy, and relate well to the boys and men in her life.¹⁰ Girls whose fathers are positively involved in their lives also tend to have higher self-esteem and be more willing to try new things.¹¹

THE SOLUTION >

Dads and granddads, be aware of the power of your words and actions! They matter. Show respect for the girls and women in your life and in hers to help her develop high expectations of other men. Speak out against cultural messages that tell her to value her physical appearance above all else. Let her know you value her for who she is inside.

ACTIVITY

Help Her Commit Small Acts of Assertiveness

You've heard of committing small acts of kindness. Now help your daughter commit small acts of assertiveness. Encourage her to order her own food at a restaurant or shake hands and make eye contact with a new acquaintance. Work together to help her set small weekly goals, like raising her hand regularly in class. Generate a list together of small ways she can use her voice and flex her speaking muscles. Remind her that just as we have to practice a sport to get better at it, we have to practice being assertive to develop confidence!

7. Seize the Power of Organized Sports and Activities

THE SITUATION >

Extracurricular activities offer some of the most formative leadership training available to girls. Diverse girls come together to accomplish a common goal: they have to learn to collaborate, speak up, compromise, and even screw up, often under stress. Sports can be particularly positive for girls. A survey found that more than 80 percent of senior women executives played sports growing up.¹²

THE SOLUTION >

Get her on a team! Developing her athletic ability is only one part of what she's there to learn. Embrace the sports field as a classroom where your daughter will learn an invaluable set of social and psychological skills. If she is not interested in sports, help her seek out another activity where she can be part of a team. Whether it's debate, band, or chess, there is a group out there for everyone.

DID YOU KNOW?

When they participate in extracurricular activities, girls gain leadership skills that stay with them for life. Encourage girls to try something new and work to develop those skills!¹³



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8. Get Media Literate—Together

THE SITUATION >

On average, kids consume technology and media for almost eight hours each day.¹⁴ That's an education in and of itself. But what are girls learning? Research shows that males outnumber females by almost three to one in family films. Even more discouraging, female characters are almost four times as likely to be shown in sexy attire.¹⁵



DID YOU KNOW?

Of the top one hundred U.S. films in 2011, women accounted for only 33% of all characters and only 11% of the protagonists.¹⁶

THE SOLUTION >

Take the time to ask your daughter what she's watching and reading and why she likes it. Pick a movie or television show and ask: What kinds of messages about girls and women does it send? How are girls and women portrayed and what do they do and talk about? How are girls' and women's relationships portrayed? Are the relationships built on trust and caring? What do you think about what you're seeing? Have a discussion, not a lecture. Weigh in on your concerns, but remember that she'll take you more seriously when you can both enjoy and criticize her favorite media.

ACTIVITY

Become Movie Critics!

Help your daughter learn to think critically about gender roles in movies by running her favorites through three simple questions:

1. Does the movie have at least two named female characters?
2. Do the female characters talk to each other?
3. Do they talk to each other about something other than a boy or man?

This is called the Bechdel Test, and you'll be surprised by how few movies pass it!

Then use the attached activity to turn your next family movie night into an open discussion of how male and female characters are portrayed. With your help, kids 6 and up can participate.



ACTIVITY

1. Practice Problem Solving with G.I.R.L.

Help your daughter cultivate the skills she needs for effective problem solving. Use the attached tool—called G.I.R.L.—to teach her how to organize her thoughts, weigh her options, and choose a path.

2. Talk About Mistakes

Help your daughter get comfortable with mistakes by asking her to evaluate her performance. After a soccer game, musical recital, or test, ask her what she's proud of and what she would like to do differently next time. If she's too hard on herself ("I played the worst game of my life!"), encourage her to focus on specifics rather than labeling the whole experience. Listen and don't judge—remember, you want to get her in the habit of calmly dealing with her mistakes and trying again.



DID YOU KNOW?

It pays to be gritty:
One of the most common
attributes in successful
women is resilience.¹⁷

9. Let Her Solve Problems on Her Own

THE SITUATION >

Resilience, the ability to overcome obstacles, is a cornerstone of confidence. When parents step in to solve problems, girls don't develop the coping skills they need to handle difficult situations on their own.

THE SOLUTION >

When your daughter has a problem, pause and ask, "What do you want to do about it?" If she says, "I don't know," push her gently to consider strategies she might use to deal with the situation and then ask her about the possible outcomes. Let her decide what she wants to do (within reason). Even if you disagree with her, give her the chance to own her decision and learn a lesson if it doesn't work out the way she wants. Your confidence in her ability to solve problems on her own will build hers!

DID YOU KNOW?

Opportunities for leadership are everywhere. Girls learn crucial skills through everyday activities like taking care of a pet, raising money for a cause, or babysitting.¹⁸

10. Encourage Her to Step Outside Her Comfort Zone

THE SITUATION >

We feel braver when we prove to ourselves that we can leave our comfort zones, overcome barriers, and master challenging tasks. Many girls struggle to take risks because they worry about failing or disappointing others.

THE SOLUTION >

Encourage your daughter to try new things, whether it's going to an event where she doesn't know a lot of people or asking her to check out with a cashier at the grocery store. If she always lets her friends decide what to do on weekends, encourage her to say what she wants (you can even role-play with her first). Being brave is rarely about dramatic moments: it's a skill acquired, little by little, over time. Let her know she doesn't have to be perfect the first time she does something. She just has to try.

ACTIVITY

Cultivate Her Passion

Finding a passion in life—whether it's playing the bassoon, fund-raising for a cause, or perfecting her foul shot—can fuel a girl's drive and help her see her potential. Ask your daughter to rate her five favorite activities and classes on a scale from one to ten. If you don't see anything above a six, consider introducing her to a new experience or revisiting something she once loved to do. Participating in things she loves teaches commitment and helps her aspire to leadership roles. Finding something she's extra passionate about can help give your daughter a greater sense of purpose and leadership experiences she will use throughout her life.



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LeanIn.Org

LeanIn.Org is the nonprofit organization founded by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg to empower all women to achieve their ambitions. LeanIn.Org offers inspiration and support through an online community, free expert lectures, and Lean In Circles, small peer groups who meet regularly to share and learn together.

leanin.org

Rachel Simmons

Rachel is co-founder of the Girls Leadership Institute, a national nonprofit that teaches girls the skills to know who they are, what they believe, and how to express it, empowering them to make change in their world. She is the author of two best-selling books, *Odd Girl Out* and *The Curse of the Good Girl*, and develops leadership programs for students at Smith College.

rachelsimmons.com

Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts of the USA gives every girl access to life-changing experiences that inspire and motivate her to do something big for herself, her community, and the world. Visit them online to learn more about how the Girl Scouts are building girls of courage, confidence, and character.

girlscouts.org and
girlscouts.org/banbossy

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Endnotes

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⁸ Girl Scout Research Institute, *Change It Up*.

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¹³ Girl Scout Research Institute, *Change It Up*.

¹⁴ The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, *Generation M2* (2010), <http://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/8010.pdf>.

¹⁵ Geena Davis Institute, “Research Facts,” <http://www.seejane.org/research/index.php>.

¹⁶ Martha M. Lauzen, “It’s a Man’s (Celluloid) World: On-Screen Representations of Female Characters in the Top 100 Films of 2011” (2012), <http://www.wif.org/images/repository/pdf/other/2011-its-a-mans-world-exec-summ.pdf>.

¹⁷ Joanna Barsh and Lareina Yee, *Special Report: Unlocking the Full Potential of Women at Work*, McKinsey & Company (2012), <http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/womenreportnew.pdf>.

¹⁸ Girl Scout Research Institute, *Change It Up*.

Movie Night: You Be the Critic!

Inspired by the popular TED Talk by Colin Stokes, “How Movies Teach Manhood,” this activity helps turn any family movie night into an open discussion on gender roles in media and beyond.

In part 1 of this activity, you’ll watch a movie with your family then discuss how it portrays male and female characters. In part 2, we recommend you keep a running list of characters you like—and why—on the family fridge.

GOALS FOR THE FAMILY

- Learn to think critically about how gender is portrayed in media
- Use media to shape ongoing discussions on the roles of women and men

MATERIALS

- Step-by-step instructions
- Sample talking points (but feel free to use your own words!)
- Two activity handouts

ESTIMATED TIME

- 5–10 minutes to pick the movie
- 20–25 minutes for post-movie discussion

Visit banbossy.com to download our leadership tips and activities for girls, parents, teachers, and troop leaders.



PART 1: MOVIE NIGHT

Introduction

Most kids watch hours of movies and TV a day, yet we know the media doesn't always send the right messages to our children. Female characters are often underrepresented and stereotyped. According to the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, male characters outnumber female characters by almost three to one in family films—a ratio that hasn't changed since the end of World War II!—and female characters are more likely to be objectified for their looks and less likely to have jobs. As Colin Stokes explores in his TED Talk, "How Movies Teach Manhood," the depiction of male characters is no less problematic. According to Colin, many movies tell boys "that a male hero's job is to defeat the villain with violence and then collect the reward."

If we teach our kids to think carefully about what they watch, they'll learn how to enjoy movies and TV shows while recognizing the stereotypes they depict—and to seek out stories that break the mold.

QUICK TIP:

Watch Colin's TED Talk on gender in media at banbossy.com/colin-stokes-ted-talk before movie night. It's a great thought starter for parents and older kids!

Step 1: Pick a movie

ESTIMATED TIME: 5–10 minutes

Most movies will work for this activity: animated or live action, comedy or drama, silly or sophisticated. Just remember, your family’s discussion will be shaped by the movie you select, so think carefully about the conversation you want to have.

You can also repeat the activity with different movies—or even try TV shows and other media.

Only a third
of the top 50
movies released
in 2013 pass
the Bechdel test.

QUICK TIP:

If you choose a movie
you’ve already seen, it will
be easier to get everyone
to focus on the activity.

WE RECOMMEND TWO LISTS OF MOVIES TO GET YOU STARTED:

- At bechdeltest.com, you’ll find a publicly curated list of movies run through what’s called the Bechdel test. Movies that pass the Bechdel test depict (1) at least two named women (2) who talk to each other (3) about something besides a man. Using simple iconography, you can quickly see how popular movies stack up.
- Common Sense Media curates a list of “Ban Bossy” movies that highlight strong female characters. Visit commonsensemedia.org/ban-bossy for their movie—and book—recommendations with reviews, target ages, and more.

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Step 2: Watch the movie together & keep track of what you observe

ESTIMATED TIME: Depends on the movie

Before you get started:

Print out the attached “Movie Night” handout for your family. You’ll each need a copy and a pen.

Gather your family on the couch and hit play (popcorn optional). While you watch, use the handout to keep track of how often male and female characters do the following:

- Speak (even a single word!)
- Speak to a character of the same gender
- Talk about love or relationships
- Take the lead in a group
- Dress in fancy or revealing clothing
- Act aggressively or violently

You can also choose your own actions to track.

QUICK TIP:

If you have little ones, make sure to team up with them. Just give them space to reach their own conclusions. They’ll learn a lot and so will you!

Step 3: Talk about the movie as a family

ESTIMATED TIME: 20–25 minutes

Once you’ve finished, use the “character grid” on the handout to analyze the three main male and female characters in the movie, then talk about the different characters and the story as a family.

Take a few minutes and go through everyone’s answers on the grid. In addition, you can use these questions, or your own, to drive the discussion:

- “
- Who was your favorite character in the movie? Why did you like him/her? What did you learn from him/her?
 - Who is the hero of the story? What makes him/her a hero?
 - How are the male and female characters portrayed differently?
 - Do you think the movie’s portrayal of men and women (boy and girls) is accurate? Why or why not?
 - Did this movie make you proud to be a boy/girl? Why or why not?
 - (If this is everyone’s second time watching the movie) Do you feel differently about the movie now than you did the first time you watched it? In what way(s)? ”

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PART 2: KEEP TRACK OF YOUR FAMILY'S FAVORITE CHARACTERS

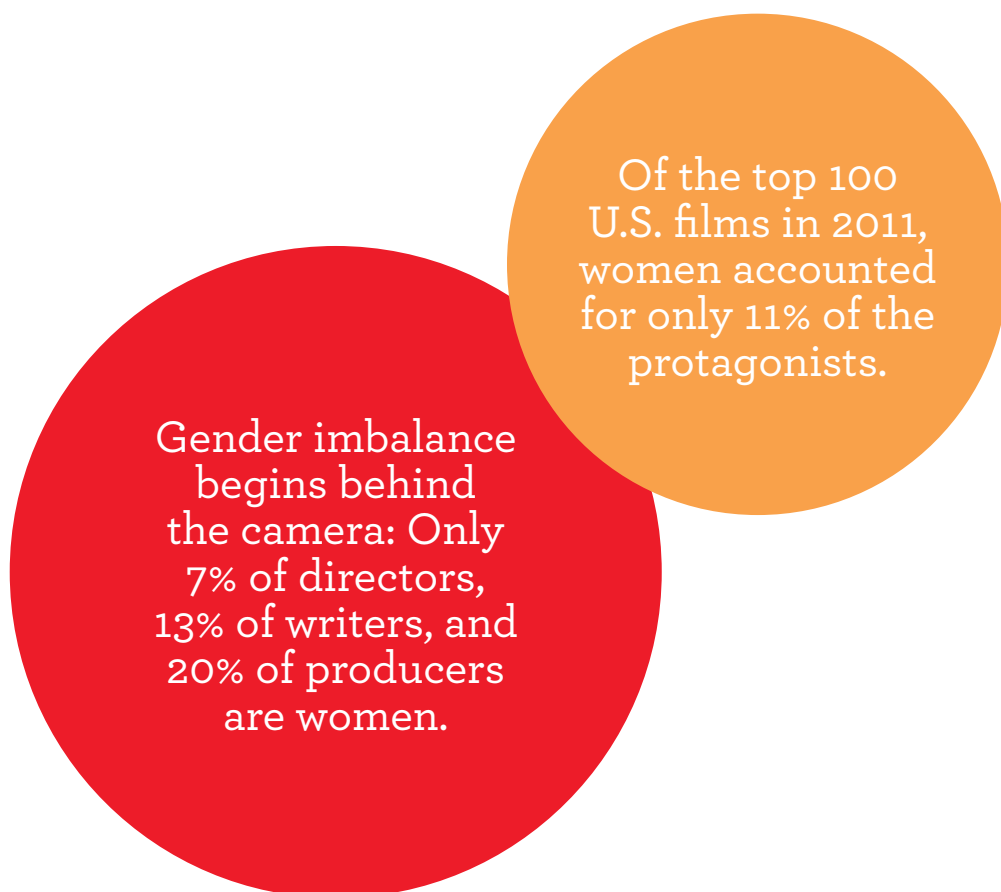
ESTIMATED TIME: Ongoing

Put copies of the attached “Characters I Love” chart on the fridge so each member of your family can keep a running list of their favorite characters—and why they like them.

Then find time to discuss everyone’s list. You can use these questions as a starting point or ask your own:

- “
- *Do the characters you like share common traits?*
 - *Do the males and females in your house like different characters?*
 - *Are most of the popular characters male or female? Any reasons why?*
 - *What are you learning about media? Is it changing the way you watch movies and TV?*
- ”

There’s an almost endless array of conversations you can have...



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Colin Stokes

Colin Stokes divides his time between parenting his two young children and building Citizen Schools, a nonprofit that reimagines the school day for middle school students in low-income communities. Before starting a family, Colin was an actor in New York City, where he starred in the long-running off-Broadway musical *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. In addition to the TED Talk that inspired this activity, Colin shares his reflections on media in his blog.

colinstokes.blogspot.com

Ban Bossy

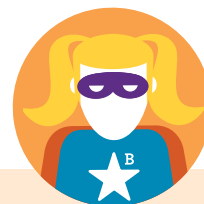
LeanIn.Org is proud to partner with Girl Scouts of the USA to bring you Ban Bossy, a public service campaign to encourage leadership and achievement in girls. We've developed practical tips and activities to help girls flex their leadership muscles and to offer parents, teachers, troop leaders, and managers hands-on strategies for supporting female leadership.

banbossy.com



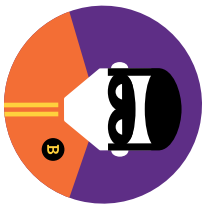
Movie Night: You Be the Critic!

While you watch the movie, tally how many times male and female characters do the following:



Speak (even a single word!)		
Speak to a character of the same gender		
Talk about love or relationships		
Take the lead in a group		
Dress in fancy or revealing clothing		
Act aggressively or violently		
Add your own:		
Add your own:		





After you finish the movie, reflect on the three main male characters and answer these questions individually or as a group:

Name of character	What does he talk about in the movie? What subjects are important to him?	What does he do in the movie? And/or what does he most want to accomplish?	How would you describe him (e.g., caring, smart, powerful, interesting)?

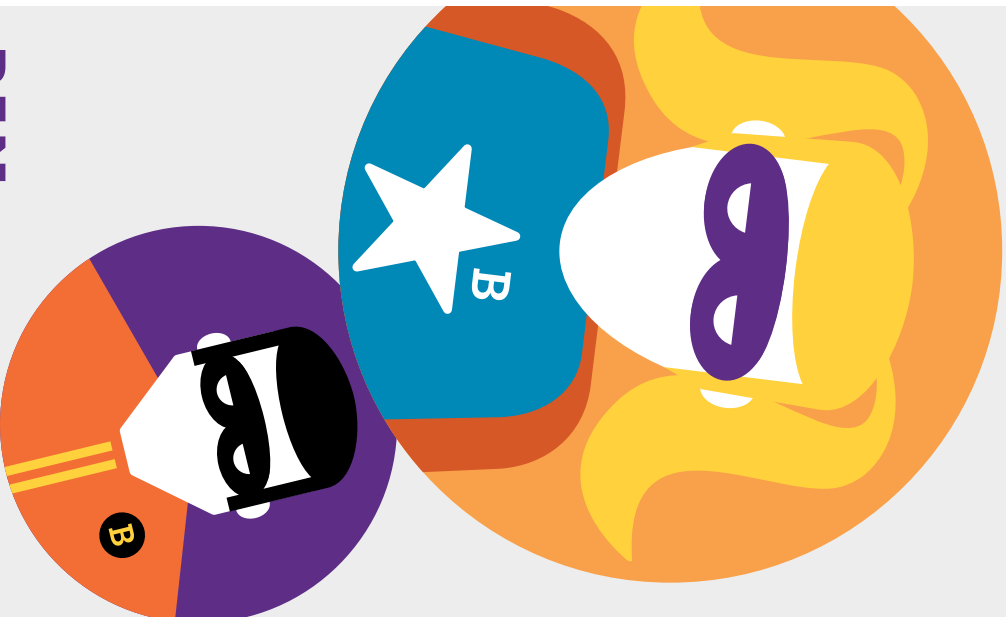


**Now reflect on the three main female characters
and answer these questions individually or as a group:**

Name of character	What does she talk about in the movie? What subjects are important to her?	What does she do in the movie? And/or what does she most want to accomplish?	How would you describe her (e.g., caring, smart, powerful, interesting)?

Characters I Love...

My name is: _____



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My favorite character is: _____

From the movie/show: _____

I like this character because: _____

My favorite character is: _____

From the movie/show: _____

I like this character because: _____

My favorite character is: _____

From the movie/show: _____

I like this character because: _____

Problem Solving with G.I.R.L.

Adapted from the Girls Leadership Institute's summer camp curriculum, this activity cultivates the skills girls need for effective problem solving; it's designed for parents, teachers, and other caretakers to use with individual or groups of girls seven years old and up.

Girls are introduced to a sequence called G.I.R.L. to help them organize their thoughts, weigh their options, and strategize effectively. Knowing how to navigate life's social, academic, and extracurricular challenges will help girls build resilience—a crucial leadership skill.

GOALS FOR GIRLS:

- Learn and practice a problem-solving sequence
- Reflect on what is gained from a failed problem-solving attempt

MATERIALS:

- Step-by-step instructions
- Sample talking points (but feel free to use your own words!)
- G.I.R.L. handout

ESTIMATED TIME: 20–25 minutes

Visit banbossy.com to download our leadership tips and activities for girls, parents, teachers, and troop leaders.



Introduction to G.I.R.L.

G.I.R.L. is a problem-solving sequence that helps girls generate multiple strategies to address a problem and feel more in control. It also pushes girls to think two moves ahead and be strategic about the outcome they want. When they explain why they're making a certain choice, girls become more accountable for their decisions. Best of all, when they imagine the end result of a strategy before choosing it, they get the chance to change their minds before doing something they regret.

We encourage you to use G.I.R.L. every time the girl in your life faces a challenge. Through repetition and practice, she will eventually learn to do the steps in her head—and even in the moment itself!

Step 1: Talk about the importance of problem-solving

ESTIMATED TIME: 3–5 minutes

When a girl is facing a challenge, take a moment to recognize her feelings by empathizing. For example, you can say:

- “ • *I know this must be really hard...*
• *I'm sorry you're hurting...*
• *You must feel so [insert emotion]...* ”

Find out how she wants to handle the problem by asking:

“ *What do you want to do about this?* ”

If she says, “I don't know,” explain why you're asking by saying something like:

“ *I know you're having a hard time right now, and I know you feel confused about what to do. In the long run, it won't help you if I just give you the answer or tell you what to do. The only way we learn to solve our own problems is through practice. That's why we're going to work together on this—you and me.* ”

We all face challenges, but with good problem-solving skills they don't seem as hard.

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Step 2: Practice the G.I.R.L. problem-solving protocol

ESTIMATED TIME: 15 minutes

Start by introducing G.I.R.L. You can use the attached handout or just list out the four parts of G.I.R.L. on a piece of paper.

Here's some language to help you describe G.I.R.L. and how it works:

“ *When you have a problem and don't know what to do, it helps to map out all your choices so you can come up with the best strategy. We're going to practice a special way of doing that right now.*

It starts with the word girl—G.I.R.L.

G (Gather Your Choices)

Write about all the possible choices you could make.

I (I Choose)

Pick one choice out of all the possibilities you just listed and decide what you want to do.

R (Reasons Are)

Write in the reasons why you made your choice.

L (List the Outcomes)

List all the things that could happen if you make this choice. **”**

Now, complete G.I.R.L. together. You can use a problem she is currently facing or try the sample in the sidebar.

SAMPLE PROBLEM:

Ask her to imagine this situation:
You keep hearing that one of your friends is talking about you behind your back.

Then walk her through the sample responses:

G (Gather Your Choices)

- Stop speaking to my friend
- Tell her to stop
- Ask her if she's mad at me
- Ask her why she's doing it
- Ask my friends if they know what's going on
- Talk to an adult
- Talk about her behind her back

I (I Choose)

Ask her why she's doing it

R (Reasons Are)

Because I want to give her a chance to tell me how she's feeling

L (List the Outcomes)

- She might apologize and stop
- She might deny it
- She might get mad at me
- She might apologize and keep doing it

QUICK TIP:

When she makes a decision about what to do, brainstorm together about a day, time, and place she can try it.

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Step 3: After she tries her strategy, talk about how it went

ESTIMATED TIME: 3-5 minutes

Start by giving her lots of praise for taking a risk and going for it! Then talk together about what happened. Avoid passing judgment about the end result. Instead, ask her to consider what worked well and what could have gone better—both with the approach she chose to take and the G.I.R.L. process as a whole.

If the outcome didn't turn out as well as she had hoped, acknowledge her disappointment, then ask her what she learned. For example, you might say:

“ I know you're disappointed, and I would be too. But even when things don't go your way, you still learn new things that will help you the next time you're in a jam. Let's think together about what you got out of this experience and how it might help you in the future. ”

It pays for
girls to be gritty:
One of the most
common attributes
of successful women
is resilience.

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Girls Leadership Institute

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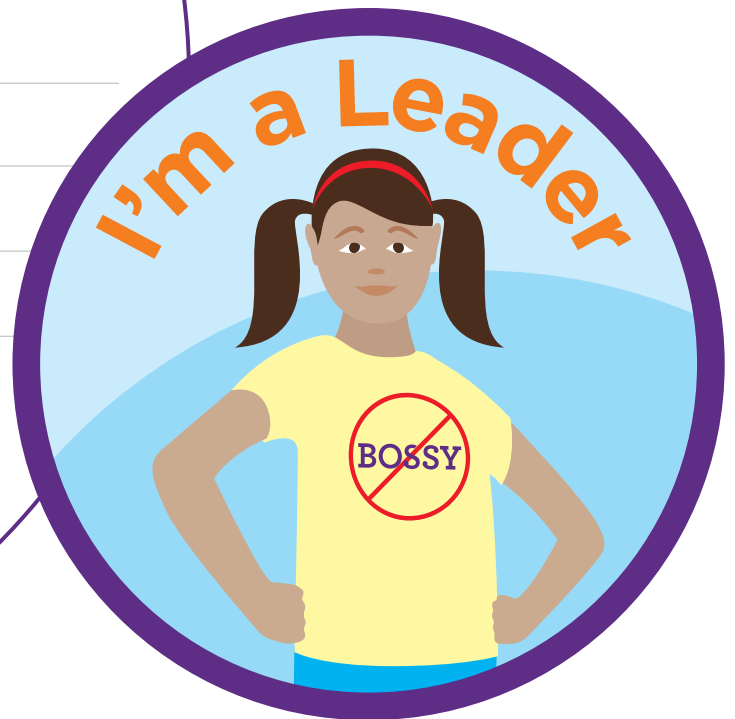
LeanIn.Org is proud to partner with Girl Scouts of the USA to bring you Ban Bossy, a public service campaign to encourage leadership and achievement in girls. We've developed practical tips and activities to help girls flex their leadership muscles and to offer parents, teachers, troop leaders, and managers hands-on strategies for supporting female leadership.

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G.I.R.L.: Your Secret Weapon for Solving Problems

Write down your problem:



Now use G.I.R.L. to help solve it:

G

Gather Your Choices

I

I Choose

L

List the Outcomes

R

Reasons Are
