



## Unleash Her Potential: Helpful tips for raising empowered girls

### See it, be it: How women role models can help your daughter thrive

Role models can make all the difference for your daughter. Does the gender of a role model really matter? When your daughter sees more women in leadership positions, she sees living examples of what success can look like for her in the future. A dream future becomes a reality when she's exposed to diverse role models she can easily identify with – as well as those who are different from her and expand her worldview.

Unfortunately, women are still underrepresented in important leadership roles and in certain career fields – gaps which are even wider for women of colour, LGBTQ2S+ women, and women with disabilities. This leadership gap has ripple effects on the next generation: we know that a quarter of teen girls in Canada say they don't know any women role models in their dream job.<sup>1</sup> And it's hard to be it if you can't see it.

#### By the numbers

**1/4**

One in four teen girls (25%) report that they don't know any women role models who have their dream job.<sup>2</sup>

**29%**

Only 29% of Members of Parliament in Canada are women and only 6% are racialized or Indigenous women.<sup>3</sup>

**8.5%**

Only 8.5% of the highest-paid positions in Canada's top 100 listed companies are held by women.<sup>4</sup>

While there's still a long way to go to lift women's representation, girls today can benefit from the many awesome women there are to look up to. In fact, watching leading women in action can make a big difference to your daughter claiming her own leadership potential and boosting her confidence as a leader.<sup>5</sup>

1. Girl Guides of Canada. (2018). *Women in the Workforce: Impact on Girls*. Retrieved from [https://www.girlguides.ca/web/GGC/Parents/Girl\\_Driven\\_Research/Women\\_in\\_the\\_Workforce/GGC/Media/Thought\\_Leadership/Women\\_in\\_the\\_Workforce\\_Impact\\_on\\_Girls.aspx?hkey=d868b38f-1ce3-4f0b-927b-1f4380a1b4c4](https://www.girlguides.ca/web/GGC/Parents/Girl_Driven_Research/Women_in_the_Workforce/GGC/Media/Thought_Leadership/Women_in_the_Workforce_Impact_on_Girls.aspx?hkey=d868b38f-1ce3-4f0b-927b-1f4380a1b4c4)

2. Ibid.

3. Jolsom Lim and Victoria Gibson. (2019). "Gender, minorities, parenthood: Here's how the next Parliament compares to Canada today." *iPolitics*. Retrieved from <https://ipolitics.ca/2019/10/24/gender-minorities-parenthood-heres-how-the-next-parliament-compares-to-canada-today/>

4. CBC. (2015). Women now hold 8.5% of Canada's top jobs. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/women-now-hold-8-5-of-canada-s-top-jobs-1.3001744>

5. Girl Guides of Canada. (2018). *Girls Empowering Girls: A girl-driven approach to gender equity*. Retrieved from [https://www.girlguides.ca/web/GGC/Parents/Girl\\_Driven\\_Research/Girls\\_Empowering\\_Girls/GGC/Parents/Girl\\_Driven\\_Research/Girls\\_Empowering\\_Girls/Girls\\_Empowering\\_Girls.aspx](https://www.girlguides.ca/web/GGC/Parents/Girl_Driven_Research/Girls_Empowering_Girls/GGC/Parents/Girl_Driven_Research/Girls_Empowering_Girls/Girls_Empowering_Girls.aspx)

# What can you do to bring more awesome women leaders into your daughter's life? Here are some ideas, for girls at any age:

## 1. Get critical about media

Look for positive examples of women and girls who take leading roles and are complex characters. Check out books like *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* or *Noisemakers* that share the stories of real women who made positive change in the world. Watch movies and TV shows with strong girl characters. For recommendations of books by age, check out lists like [this one](#) from CBC Parents.

Of course, you can't always control the media your daughter views – but having critical conversations about what she's seeing and hearing can address negative stereotypes.

These conversations can happen at any age. Here are some questions to consider asking her:

- Are there characters in what you're watching/reading who are girls or women? What do they look and act like, and what do they like to do?
- What types of people or kinds of bodies are missing? Do characters have different skin colours, ethnicities, body types, and different abilities?
- How are the girls or women different from the other characters? Do they like to do different things, or does everyone like to do the same things?

For more inspiration for having these conversations, check out Girl Guide activities like [Curious Cara](#) or [Feminist Fairy Tales](#). Probing questions like these can help your daughter start to think critically about the media she encounters – a valuable life skill.

## 2. Show her real-life examples

Fictional characters are one thing, but real-world examples can make women's leadership even more real for your daughter.

What sorts of things is your daughter interested in? Does she have a favourite hobby, activity, or a dream job? Seek out real examples of diverse women who



are leaders in this field. Find time for her to see real women leaders in action and ask them questions about what they do.

Not sure where to start? Look for activities that are led by women with a positive, collaborative attitude that your daughter can learn from – whether it's a coach, instructor, or a Girl Guide leader. Keep an eye out for local business owners or women leaders in your community – perhaps at the library, arena, or in public office.

## 3. Find inspiration

Sometimes we need to look beyond our immediate circle for a little extra inspiration. There are lots of amazing women around the world who are blazing trails in their own ways. With your daughter, check out online lists like [Informed Opinions](#), [The Female Lead](#), or [Canada's Great Women](#) to find examples of role models your daughter might admire. Can you find stories about them? Research them online? Follow them on social media? Look for ways to showcase that women can lead with regular doses of inspiration.



## 4. Validate her own leadership style

Closing the leadership gap is about equipping the leaders of tomorrow – and your daughter is one of them! Encourage her own leadership style and let her know that we all lead in our own way. The leader is not always out in front – sometimes leaders are more like fans, supporting and encouraging others, or like coaches, using communication to guide the group. And growing as a leader involves failing and making mistakes, and then learning from them. Help her to build her confidence through games where you take turn being the leader, such as Girl Guides' [Who's the Leader?](#) activity.

### About Girl Guides of Canada

Girl Guides of Canada—Guides du Canada (GGC) empowers every girl in Guiding to discover herself and be everything she wants to be. In Guiding, girls from 5-17 meet with girls their own age in a safe, supportive and inclusive space to explore what matters to them.

Guiding is where girls take the lead, put their ideas into action and jump into a range of empowering activities – all with the support of women mentors committed to positively impacting girls' lives. As a girl develops the kind of leadership skills that will help her soar, as other girls and women cheer her on every step of the way. Visit [girlguides.ca/empower](http://girlguides.ca/empower) to stay connected and learn more about how you can get involved in Girl Guides.

