



# Girls on the Job: Realities in Canada What We Can Do

Girl Guides of Canada partnered with Ipsos to ask teens, ages 12 to 18, about their summer work in 2018. While most girls say they have positive experiences in summer work, we're also hearing that they face gender inequalities. To read the full report visit: [girlguides.ca/girlsonthejob](http://girlguides.ca/girlsonthejob)

Let's all pledge to make 2019 a safer, fairer, and more meaningful year for girls at work.



GIRL-DRIVEN RESEARCH



# Employers

If you're hiring youth for summer work, commit to pay fairly, do your part to level the playing field, be a mentor, and provide a safe and meaningful work experience.

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## 1 Pay fairly

Make sure that girls are being paid fairly and assigned work of equal value, and that girls from marginalized communities are not treated differently when it comes to pay. Make it a point to discuss pay and provide clear job descriptions for youth employees; even if there isn't room for negotiation, this can be a valuable learning opportunity for them.

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## 2 Make work safe

Don't tolerate sexual harassment and assault against any employees. Consider how things like jokes or nicknames might feel particularly harmful or uncomfortable for someone who's young and in their first job. Be aware that girls from marginalized communities are often more susceptible to violence in the workplace and take steps to support them. For example, make sure you have policies in place so that your workplace is free from sexually harassing behaviours for all employees, including the most vulnerable. Monitor the environment regularly for toxic behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

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## 3 Do your part to level the playing field

First jobs can provide an amazing foundation for girls to access skills and economic opportunity. Consider how your hiring

practices (where or if you advertise, how you find employees) might unintentionally shut girls out – especially those who come from marginalized communities. Can you broaden your recruitment network? Or, if you don't already have girls or other groups in your workforce, can you provide things like mentorships or 'buddies' to help them feel welcomed? Are there some jobs that have 'always' been filled by boys that you could also hire girls for?

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## 4 Be a mentor

It's important for more girls to have mentors at work – and summer jobs are no different. Mentors can help girls grow and develop leadership skills. Look for opportunities to support, sponsor or mentor girls at work, especially if you're a woman employer or supervisor. Show girls that women *belong* and can *excel* in all sorts of jobs.<sup>2</sup> Providing mentorship for girls is especially impactful in sectors that are traditionally dominated by men.

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## 5 Provide a meaningful work experience

Take the opportunity to be intentional about providing a work experience for girls that is meaningful and offers opportunities for learning. Make an effort to be inclusive and integrate girls into the workplace culture. For example, include them in all-staff meetings, so that they feel that they're part of the team.

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# Parents

If your daughter is working this summer, make a plan to talk to her about money and pay, encourage her to advocate for herself, support her right to feel safe at work, and empower her to explore her interests.

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## 1 Talk to your daughter about money and pay

Summer jobs are an opportunity for your daughter to learn about the value of money and what her time and skills are worth. For example, before she starts a job, take time to discuss how pay rates are set, so she can understand rules around things like minimum wage, vacation pay and taxes.<sup>3</sup> Help her figure out what the going rate is for the kind of work she's doing – if you're not sure yourself, help her make connections with people who will know. Give your daughter a hand at practicing talking to a prospective employer about pay, so that she can be comfortable. If she's in Girl Guides, look for the Money Sense activities in our Girls First program for ideas on talking about money.

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## 2 Encourage her to speak up and advocate for herself with employers

If her job does allow for negotiation (e.g. providing child care to a neighbour), you can help her role play the conversation with a potential employer, asking what she would do in different situations.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of the position, encourage her to ask for a clear job description or outline of expectations, so she can see what her duties are and understand what exactly she's being compensated for –

and whether she's consistently being asked to do extra work without extra pay.<sup>5</sup>

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## 3 Support her right to feel safe at work

Help her understand that there's the possibility of harassment at work, presenting it as something that *might* happen, rather than something that *will* happen.<sup>6</sup> Let her know that she doesn't need to be "nice" or "polite" when faced with unacceptable behaviour, and that she can always talk to you, human resources, a supervisor or manager, or another trusted adult. Emphasize that she doesn't have to pretend nothing is wrong or ignore a situation – experiencing harassment, unwanted touching, or sexism is never her fault and not something to be embarrassed about.<sup>7</sup> Be ready to listen, believe, and stand with her if she does come to you for support.

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## 4 Empower her to jump in

You know your daughter well – so you'll know if she could be encouraged to push herself to try something new with her summer job. Perhaps she's curious about landscaping rather than babysitting? About being a soccer referee rather than a summer camp counsellor? If she's interested in a summer job in a sector that's traditionally dominated by boys, encourage her to jump in anyway. Be there for support if she needs it.

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# Girls

If you're planning to work this summer, pledge to value your time, think long-term, get comfortable talking about pay and expectations, grab hold of opportunities for mentorship, and know your right to feel safe at work.

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## 1 Value your time

Your time is a valuable resource that's worth a lot! Whether you'll be using it for work, for volunteering, or for leisure over the summer, think about what matters to you. Is it your family, friends, or your community impact? Building new skills? Your financial future? Think about the benefits (besides money) that you want to get from work, like new experiences, fun, and new friendships.

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## 2 Think long-term:

Sure, it might be a job that only lasts for the summer. But you can still think about how it can help you reach your long-term goals. Do you aspire to build your leadership skills? Maybe you can gain these skills by helping train newer staff members. Do you want to be a changemaker? Maybe you can intern at a non-profit in your community. Look for opportunities to make your summer job more than just a job – make it a learning experience and a springboard for something *more*.

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## 3 Get comfortable talking about pay and expectations

Even if the wages for a job are set, take the opportunity to ask about pay rates and how they are set in your workplace. Learn about

the employment conditions such as breaks and rules for getting time off. If there isn't a formal job description, get a clear sense of what you're expected to do on the job. It's helpful so you know what your employer expects of you and what you're specifically being paid to do.

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## 4 Grab hold of opportunities for mentorship

Your summer job might be a great place to meet role models and mentors. If there's a leader at your job you aspire to be like, ask for opportunities to learn from them.

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## 5 Know your right to feel safe at work

You should never be made to feel unsafe at work. If you experience harassment, unwanted touching, or sexist behaviour at work, you can inform someone about it and ask for help. Harassment can include anything from sexist jokes and innuendo, to unwanted comments on your appearance, to being repeatedly asked out for dates – and none of these are ever okay. Depending on what feels safe, talk to your boss, human resources, a parent, or another trusted adult. If you need help and aren't sure where to turn, you can reach a Kids Help Phone counsellor 24/7 at 1-800-668-6868.

## References

- 1 Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2019). *Sexual harassment in employment (fact sheet)*. <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/sexual-harassment-employment-fact-sheet>
- 2 Girl Guides of Canada. (2018). *Girls Empowering Girls: A girl-driven approach to gender equity*. [https://www.girlguides.ca/WEB/GGC/Media/Thought\\_Leadership/Girls\\_Empowering\\_Girls\\_Page.aspx](https://www.girlguides.ca/WEB/GGC/Media/Thought_Leadership/Girls_Empowering_Girls_Page.aspx)
- 3 Joanna Nesbit. (2018). "Teens face a gender pay gap, too. Here's how to help them navigate it." *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2018/06/12/how-to-help-teens-navigate-the-teen-gender-pay-gap/>
- 4 Kristene Quan. (2015). "Closing the gender gap: How we can prepare our daughters for the negotiation backlash." *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/parenting/negotiating-the-gender-gap/article25641359/>
- 5 Nesbit. (2018).
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Girls Scouts USA. "Don't Want to Talk to Your Kids About Sexual Harassment? Time's Up." <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/raising-girls/happy-and-healthy/happy-times-up-and-kids-sexual-harassment.html#>

## Girl Guides of Canada– Guides du Canada

**G**irl 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. With programming options ranging from exploring career options to financial literacy and discussions on feminism and gender inequality, girls in Guiding can equip themselves to thrive – now and in the future.