Leaning Out
Teen Girls and Leadership Biases

RICHARD WEISSBOURD AND THE MAKING CARING COMMON TEAM

MAKING CARING COMMON PROJECT

HARVARD

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

Are teen girls and young women poised to become our nation's leaders? The pathways to leadership for girls have never been clearer or brighter. Girls have made astounding progress in school and work over the last decade and women now occupy more leadership positions in key private and public institutions—including Congress—than at any point in our nation's history.

Yet the gender gap persists: male leaders still far outnumber women leaders in many fields, including business and politics—only 2 of the top 20 presidential candidates in 2016, for example, are women.

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girls and many women leaders and teens perceive their peers as biased against female leaders. Further, our research suggests that some mothers prefer teen boys over teen girls as leaders.

Our mission at Making Caring Common is to help parents, educators, and communities raise children who are concerned about others and the common good, and who work to create a more just world. Perhaps nothing more commonly erodes children's capacity to care and to lead efforts to promote equality and justice than the biases they hold and confront in others.

We conducted several surveys, focus groups, and informal interviews over the last year to better understand students' and adults' biases related to gender and leadership. We asked students, for example, whether they viewed males or females as better leaders in specific professions including health care, business, politics, and child-care. Our largest survey—19,816 students from a diverse range of 59 middle and high schools[1]—included an implicit bias scenario designed to detect unconscious biases.[2] This scenario assessed whether students would be more or less in favor of giving more power to their student council depending on the gender, race and ethnicity of its leaders. Students were randomly presented with student councils headed by leaders with names commonly recognized as Black males, Black females, white males, white females, Latino males and Latina females.

1. Many Boys and Girls Expressed Bias Against Girls as Leaders in Powerful Professions:

- When asked who is more effective in specific professions, **almost a quarter of teen girls—23%—preferred male over female political leaders** while only 8% of girls preferred female political leaders, with 69% reporting no difference in preference.

- **Forty-percent of teen boys preferred male over female political leaders** while only 4% preferred female political leaders with 56% expressing no preference. A higher percentage of **boys preferred male business leaders (36%) to female leaders (6%)**. There was no significant difference between girls' preference for male versus female business leaders.

- Both boys and girls preferred females by large margins in traditionally female professions, e.g., as child care directors and arts program directors.

2. Students Were Least Likely to Support Granting More Power to White Girls as Council Leaders:

- In response to the scenario intended to detect implicit biases[3], **students were least likely to support giving more power to the student council when it was led by white girls and most likely to support giving more power when it was led by white boys**.[4]

Black and Latino boys and girls appear to face leadership biases as well based on our scenario. See footnote and finding #6 below for more information on racial biases.[5]

- We also looked at whether students in **each school** preferred giving more power to one type of council over another. In 59% of the schools we surveyed, students on average expressed more support for a council headed by white boys than for one headed by white girls.

3. White Girls Appear to be Biased Against Other White Girls as Leaders:

The gap between white boys and white girls appears to be largely explained by the fact that **white girls tended not to support giving power to white girls.** White girls presented with boy-led councils expressed higher average support for the council than white girls presented with girl-led councils. Further, when we looked at what types of councils students tended to support in each school, we found that in 61% of our schools, white girls' average level of support was higher for councils led by white males than those led by white females. These findings mirror studies of women in the workplace. A 2013 Gallup poll found, for example, that 35% of all respondents would prefer to have a male boss while only 23% of respondents would prefer to have a female boss, with 41% reporting no preference. The preference for male bosses was even stronger among female respondents (Newport & Wilke, 2013).

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3. Students and parents who responded to the implicit bias scenario did not choose between different councils. Instead, they were presented with one scenario/council type and asked to indicate how likely they were to support the principal giving power to that council. About one-sixth (n=3300) of respondents were presented with each council type (i.e.: 1/6 were asked whether they wanted to give more power to a council led by white boys, 1/6 were asked if they wanted to give more power to a council led by white girls, etc.). We then compared the average level of support for each type of council.

4. The overall difference in the entire sample in the percent of students who showed support for white boys versus white girls was small but statistically significant.

5. Some of our reported findings are specific to white girls and boys, because that is where we saw the most statistically significant findings. However, responses to our implicit bias scenario suggest that students and parents do not view students' capacity for leadership through one simple gender or race lens. It was hard for us to clearly assess students' views about race because most differences in students' responses to student council leaders on the implicit bias scenario were not statistically significant. Yet it does appear from our data that students have complex views about how race and gender mix. For example, students expressed roughly the same amount of support for Latina councils as for white male councils. These findings—and how students generally view different race/gender combinations—merit further investigation. See full report for more information on our racial bias findings.

4. Some Mothers Appear to be Biased Against Girls as Leaders

On average, mothers presented with councils led by boys expressed stronger support than mothers presented with councils led by girls. We were not able to determine whether fathers had biases against girls because our sample of fathers was too small.[6]

5. Biases Against Girls have Many Causes:

Our focus groups and interviews suggested a variety of reasons for students' biases against girls and for white girls' biases against each other, including highly competitive feelings among girls, girls lacking confidence and self-esteem and projecting that lack of confidence onto other girls, and girls being viewed as too emotionally "dramatic." These findings are consistent with other research on girls ((Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999; Marwick & Boyd, 2014).

6. Awareness of Bias Appears to Matter:

Our data suggest that **awareness of gender discrimination may be related to less implicit, unconscious bias against girls as leaders.** Although white girls tended to support councils led by white boys over white girls, white girls who perceive high levels of gender discrimination at their school show greater preference for female-led student councils. While our study was mainly focused on gender bias, our data also suggests that students of color face racial biases and that awareness of racial discrimination may be related to less racial bias.[7]

While much of our data is encouraging (e.g. high percentages of both males and females express no preference between male and female political leaders), the percentage of teens who do express bias against female political leaders combined with our other data on implicit and explicit biases is cause for concern.

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6. See methodology section in report for more information on parent respondent population, which included approximately 1200 parents.

7. Finding is marginally statistically significant.

40%
of teen boys and 23% of teen girls preferred male over female political leaders.

4%
of boys and 8% of girls preferred female political leaders.

36%
of boys preferred male business leaders; 6% preferred female leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for parents, educators, and other adults are based on the beliefs that good intentions are not enough to prevent leadership or other types of biases and that biases can't easily or simply be eliminated. Reducing and preventing biases is a practice that we as adults need to model as well as cultivate in children and teens.

1. Check your own Biases

●Preventing gender biases in teens and children means first understanding and managing our own biases. Parents' and teachers' biases can deeply influence what they model for children and how they facilitate children's daily lives. Do we inadvertently reinforce traditional gender roles, assigning girls caretaking tasks more than boys, for instance, or criticizing girls more than boys if they are arrogant or "bossy?" Are we as active in promoting and recognizing assertiveness in girls as we are in boys? Are we modeling nontraditional gender roles? At times it's also important for us to seek feedback from those we trust and respect about whether we are expressing biases.

2. Cultivate Family Practices that Prevent and Reduce Bias

Biases often take root early in childhood. Parents and other adults can help prevent leadership and other biases from forming in children by developing reflexes and practices in both ourselves and our children that stem gender biases. We can, for example, provide children with gender-neutral toys, games, and clothes and orchestrate tasks and activities in ways that don't reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. A chore wheel, for example, which boys and girls spin to see who does what family chores, can prevent boys and girls from falling into familiar gender-based family roles. We can ask girls to imagine themselves as senators, sports team managers, and business leaders, and we can ask boys to imagine themselves as child care directors or school arts program directors. We can work to expose girls and boys to culturally diverse women who model constructive leadership. As parents, we can periodically ask teens whether they think their school—or our family—is modeling gender equality and brainstorm with them what they or others might do about perceived inequities and biases.

3. Teach Teens to Spot and Effectively Confront Stereotypes and Discrimination

Girls are bombarded with constricting, demeaning images and stereotypes of females both in their daily interactions and in the media and culture that can erode their confidence in their leadership and negatively affect every corner of their lives (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008; Sax, 2010). These images also cultivate and reinforce boys' biases. Adults need to mobilize girls and boys to both identify and actively combat these biases. We can, for example, ask girls and boys to identify denigrating images and messages in television and games—we might ask teens to count the number of male versus female leaders they see on television. We can brainstorm with children strategies for dealing with their peers' gender biases, and recognize children who stand up to gender bias.

4. Don't Just Let "Boys be Boys."

Girls' confidence in their leadership and self-worth can be eroded by the degradations they experience in their daily interactions with boys, including sexual harassment and other forms of misogyny. Ironically, at the same time that more teen girls and young women outpace males in school and work, high percentages of young women face degradation in their romantic and sexual relationships (Khazan, 2015; Kimmel, 2009; Hill & Kearl, 2011). Yet too many adults are passive even when these denigrations are in their midst. Adults should be alert to and challenge these affronts by, for example, pointing out to boys the false bravado in degrading girls and the real strength and honor in defying one's peers when they devalue girls in general or divide girls into "good girls" and "bad girls."

5. Challenge Teens' Biased Assumptions and Beliefs

Teens' biases are often explicit and inherent in their basic beliefs. For example, many teens believe that males are better political leaders and females are better child care directors. It's imperative that adults constructively challenge these beliefs, but this is delicate work, because it's important not to shame teens who hold these beliefs. Instead, we can, ask teens to consider on what basis these judgments are made and to question the "evidence" supporting these beliefs.

6. Use Programs and Strategies that Build Girls' Leadership Skills

While a wide variety of programs and interventions directly or indirectly foster leadership skills in young girls—and some programs seek to prepare girls specifically for political roles and civic leadership—high percentages of girls don't participate in these programs or don't have access to high quality programs. For a list of promising programs and resources, please see Appendix E For a list of the key ingredients of effective programs and strategies, see Appendix A.

7. Use this Report to Spur Discussion

Ask teens how they understand the data reported here and facilitate discussions with teens about how to achieve greater gender equity at school and/or in the larger society. Have teens interview each other across gender and racial groups about their aspirations for leadership of various kinds: If you could be a leader, what would you want to be a leader of? Why? For a guide to discussing this report with teenagers, see Appendix B.

Women's leadership potential has been massively untapped—an epic economic and social failure.

PHOTO CREDIT: LORI FOXWORTH

Leaning Out:
Teen Girls and Leadership Biases

This country needs more women leaders. It's not only a fundamental matter of equality and justice, it's that women's leadership potential has been massively untapped—an epic economic and social failure. A Pew survey indicates that Americans view women, in fact, as more likely than men to possess characteristics they define as core to leadership, including honesty and organizational skills (Parker, Menasce Horowitz, & Rohal, 2015). A whopping 65% of the public thinks that women are more compassionate leaders than men while only 2% of the public holds the opposite view (Parker et al., 2015).

But are girls and women in this country motivated and prepared to become leaders? Happily, girls are exposed to more women in leadership roles than ever before, including the front-running Democratic presidential candidate. Women in this country now outnumber men in colleges and many graduate schools and have obtained unprecedented power in numerous fields.

Yet it's no secret that women still face various forms of workplace bias. Equally qualified women are getting the short end of the stick from both male and female managers in hiring, pay, performance evaluations, and promotions (Parker et al., 2015; Steinpreis, Anders, & Ritzke, 1999). Women remain a distressingly small fraction of leaders in certain fields, including business and politics. Less than 20% of members of Congress are women, and only 5% of Fortune 500 companies are led by women (Covert, 2015; Parker et al., 2015). The New York Times noted that there are fewer female heads of S&P 500 companies than male heads named "John" (Wolfers, 2015).

And it's clear that girls from a young age still face barriers and biases that muddy their paths to leadership and trouble their relationships with both males and other females. Girls, for example, appear to face stereotypes about their math abilities starting at young ages, which may make them less likely to pursue leadership in science and math fields (Cvencek, Meltzoff, & Greenwald, 2011).

Our project, Making Caring Common (MCC), is focused on developing empathy and caring in children—especially on developing their ability to appreciate and care for those different from them—and biases are commonly a major obstacle to caring for those of different genders, races and cultures. MCC also works to create equitable and just communities in schools and to develop in teens the skills they need to be ethical leaders who create these communities. Gender biases clearly impair teens' capacity both to create and fully participate in these communities.

To better understand students' gender biases, we conducted a series of surveys, focus groups, and informal interviews. (For more information about this research, see the methodology section).

What we found is that not only teen boys, but many teen girls prefer male leaders in powerful professions, such as politics. Further, when it comes to leadership in general, many white teen girls appear to have biases against other white teen girls and some mothers appear to have biases against teen girls as well.[8] The good news is that our data suggests that awareness of gender discrimination at school may be tied to less bias against girls.

What can we do about these biases? Perhaps most importantly, we can't let the gains women have made lull us into complacency and mask the very real biases that girls and women still confront. This is not the time to rest. A great deal of research now shows that we are all subject to unconscious biases of many kinds and that as much as we may cling to a belief in our rationality, our biases continually intrude on our decisions and actions (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Kristof, 2014; Stanley, Sokol-Hessner, Banaji, & Phelps, 2011). Becoming aware of biases won't automatically and magically destroy them, but it's a critical first step to counteracting them (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012).

This report proceeds as follows. We first describe our methodology. We then examine various forms of gender bias. Next, we briefly take up a few findings related to racial bias. Finally, we suggest solutions: What can be done to prevent and mitigate gender biases in children, teens, parents, and teachers? How might we increase girls' preparation and desire for leadership? How can we work together to create true gender equality in schools and communities?

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8. Please see Footnote 12 for more information on racial biases and why some of our findings focus specifically on white girls.

METHODOLOGY

Our project, Making Caring Common, is mainly focused on developing empathy and caring in children— especially on developing students' ability to appreciate and care for those who are different from them. Biases are commonly a major obstacle to appreciation and caring for those of different genders, races, and cultures. In part to better understand the kinds of biases affecting students' capacity to care for one another, we conducted a survey of approximately 19,800 middle and high schools students.

REPORT

Approximately 17,000 of those students, representing 50 schools, were from the United States. Our sample also included approximately 2,800 students from seven international schools, most of which were Canadian. All basic results remained the same when including international schools.

Our sample was predominantly white (62%, 12,374 students), though it also contained large numbers of Latino (22%, 4,175 students), Asian-American (13%, 2,631 students) and Black (12%, 2,341 students) students. A little over 53% of students identified themselves as female (10,182) and the split was similar in each racial group. Students were allowed to identify as multiple races and some students opted not to share their race/ethnicity. Our United States sample included a variety of school types: 9 rural, 26 suburban, and 15 urban. 19 schools were private and secular, 5 were private and religious-based, and 26 schools were public.

We also conducted two smaller follow-up surveys in a subset of these schools. About 1,300 students responded to each of these smaller surveys. On these surveys we asked students a range of questions related to gender bias, including questions about their preferences for males and females in different professions. The two surveys had several overlapping questions and some unique questions. At least 1,100 students responded to all questions. Respondents in all surveys were racially and ethnically diverse. In addition, we conducted six focus groups with students from a diverse range of schools in the Boston area and talked to numerous educators and other adults who work with teens.

These surveys and focus groups sought to elicit students' values, their perceptions of school culture, their explicit views about their own and others' biases as well as their implicit biases—biases they may not be aware of.[9] We were interested especially in whether students had explicit and implicit biases based on gender.

Our large survey of 19,800 students contained an implicit bias experiment. Students were presented with a scenario in which the principal is considering giving the student council more authority to establish rules for the school and to create a disciplinary policy (the full text of the scenario is available in Appendix D). Students were then asked to what extent they agree with the principal's decision.

But our primary focus was on whether students would be more or less in favor of giving more power to the student council depending on the gender, race, and ethnicity of the heads of the student council. Students were randomly presented with student councils headed by leaders with names commonly recognized as Black males, Black females, white males, white females, Latino males and Latina females (common names were selected based on the common names on babycenter.com for children of each racial, ethnic, and gender group). Specifically, we wanted to know whether students would be more or less in favor of empowering the student council if it was headed by 1) 3 white males 2) 3 white females 3) 3 Black males 4) 3 Black females 5) 3 Latino males 6) 3 Latina females.

Each respondent was presented with one scenario/council type and asked to indicate how likely they were to support the principal giving power to that council. About one-sixth of respondents were presented with each council type (i.e.: 1/6 were asked whether they wanted to give more power to a council led by white boys, 1/6 were asked if they wanted to give more power to a council led by white girls, etc.). We then compared the average level of support for each type of council.

We also wanted to know how students responded to this survey based on their own gender, race, and ethnicity. For example, would Latina girls be more in favor of white girls or Black girls as council leaders? Would white boys be more in favor of white girls or Black girls?

We conducted a survey of approximately 1,200 parents from a subset of the same schools. Among many questions, we provided parents with the same implicit bias scenario involving the principal and the student council.

Schools that participated in our survey elected to participate in a partnership with MCC. They were not selected randomly. That said, our survey respondent population was racially and ethnically diverse. Additional information on our methodology is available in Appendix C.

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9. Throughout this report we refer to "implicit" and "explicit" biases. For the purposes of this work, we define explicit biases as those people are consciously aware of, which are often rooted in their basic beliefs. We define implicit biases as unconscious beliefs or attitudes that also affect our actions and understandings.

ARE TEEN GIRLS LEANING OUT?

Our results suggest that teen girls both hold biases and suffer from biases that may corrode their relationships and sense of justice, sap their confidence in their leadership potential, and dampen their desire to seek leadership positions, especially in high-power fields.

EXPLICIT BIAS: POWERFUL BOYS AND NURTURING GIRLS

Many teen girls have explicit biases toward other girls when it comes to powerful, high status professions. Explicit and implicit biases are very different beasts. Implicit biases are unconscious and typically automatic and people are generally motivated to eradicate them. A teen girl who wholeheartedly believes that women are just as capable business leaders as men will be distressed to discover that she holds an implicit bias against women business leaders and will be motivated to learn how to handle this bias. Explicit biases, on the other hand, reflect what people overtly believe to be true. Some teen girls and boys, for example, simply believe that males are better political leaders than females.[10]

Many girls in our survey expressed explicit biases toward females as political leaders. Girls didn't express explicit biases toward other girls when it comes to leadership in general. When asked directly on our survey whether boys or girls are better leaders, girls are, in fact, more likely to report that girls are better leaders. Girls are also just as likely as boys to report that they anticipate that they will "be effective leaders as adults." Girls reported, too, that they are just as smart as boys and can handle pressure as well as boys.

Yet when asked explicitly who they prefer as political leaders, 23% of girls preferred males while only 8% of girls preferred females, with 69% of girls reporting no preference. Girls expressed no significant preference for males or females as business leaders.

10. This data is based on 2 of our surveys combined (about 2,600 students).

WHO MAKES BETTER POLITICAL LEADERS
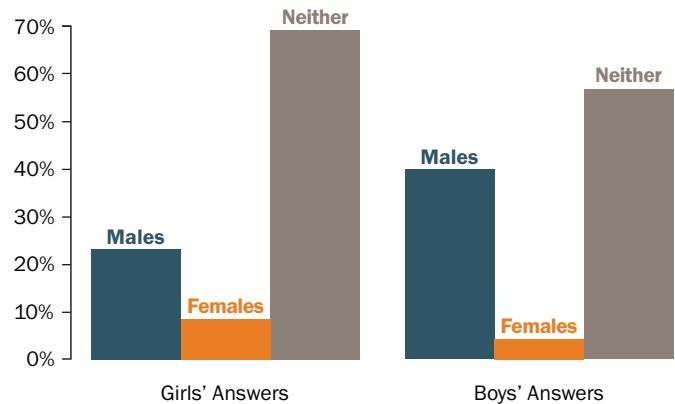
WHO MAKES BETTER CHILDCARE LEADERS
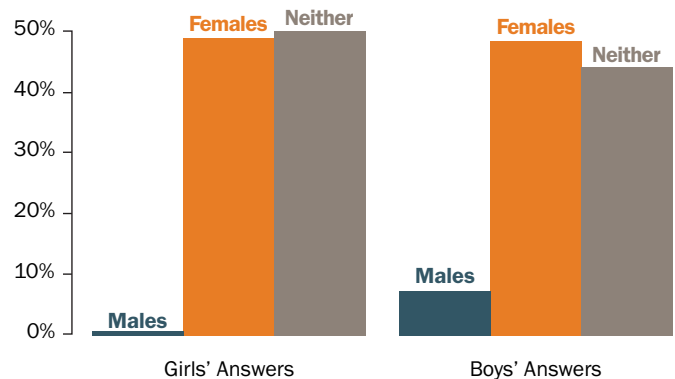
Girls were more likely to view females as better leaders than males in traditionally female professions, such as child care directors, health care directors and art directors. Fully 49% of girls saw girls as more capable child care directors while only three girls (which rounds to 0%) reported that males were better child care directors.

Boys were more likely to report both that males were better leaders overall and in powerful professions. Forty percent of boys preferred male to female political leaders and only 4% preferred female political leaders with 56% expressing no preference. That a significantly higher percentage of both boys and girls prefer male political leaders can clearly matter a great deal in political elections at every level, which are often won by small margins.

Boys also were much more likely than girls to view men as more effective business leaders—33% preferred male business leaders while only 6% preferred females, with 61% expressing no preference. Many boys thus still think males are better equipped than females to make the major policy and economic decisions that affect the basic health and direction of our country.

On the other hand, boys, like girls, were more likely to favor females in certain traditional female professions such as child care directors, health care directors, and art directors. Forty-five percent of boys saw females as better child care directors while only 6% preferred males.

We also asked students to consider whether other students at their school had gender biases. Because people tend to underreport their own biases, people's perceptions of other people's biases are often more accurate than their assessment of their own. While the vast majority of students did not report biases against girls when asked directly whether males are better leaders in general than females, 36% of all students (combining all racial/ethnic groups) reported that most of their peers viewed males as better leaders than females while 17% reported that most of their peers viewed females as better leaders than males.

IMPLICIT BIAS: AN INVISIBLE BARRIER TO LEADERSHIP

Based on our implicit bias scenario, white girls appear to face the strongest implicit, unconscious biases. Students were most likely to be in favor of giving power to the student council when it was led by white boys and least likely to be in favor of giving power when the council was led by white girls.[11] We also looked at whether students on average in each school preferred giving more power to one type of council over another. Just as in a national election it's important to attend not just to the overall popular vote but to how each state votes, it was important

for our purposes to attend to whether each school tended to support one type of council over another, in part to shed light on whether bias exists across different school environments. In 60% of the schools we surveyed, students' average level of support was higher for student councils led by white boys than by white girls.

When it comes to leadership, white teen girls also appear to have biases against each other. The gap between white boys and white girls appears to be largely explained by the fact that white girls tended not to support giving more power to councils lead by white girls. White girls' average level of support was higher for councils led by white boys than by white girls.[12] We also found that in 61% of our schools, white girls preferred giving support to white male versus white female student council leaders.

That girls are reluctant to give more power to other girls was also suggested by another survey finding. Many students view girls as threatened by other girls' successes in school. Students (both boys and girls) are substantially more likely to view girls as bothered by other girls' successes in school than they are to view girls as bothered by boys' successes, boys as bothered by girls' successes, or boys as bothered by boys' successes.

White girls' biases against each other are consistent with other research demonstrating both that girls frequently "do the work" of enforcing traditional gender roles and norms and with research on gender biases in the workplace (Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Olsen, 2014; Newport & Wilke, 2013). In a 2013 Gallup poll, 35% of respondents would prefer to have a male boss while only 23% of respondents would prefer to have a female boss, with 41% reporting no preference. The preference for male bosses was even stronger among female respondents (Newport & Wilke, 2013). In another poll, both men and women report preferring men as senior executives of Fortune 500 companies (Pershing, 2014).

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11. This difference was small but statistically significant.

12. Students and parents who responded to the implicit bias scenario did not choose between different councils. Instead, they were presented with one scenario/council type and asked to indicate how likely they were to support the principal giving power to that council. About one-sixth of

respondents were presented with each council type (i.e.: 1/6 were asked whether they wanted to give more power to a council led by white boys, 1/6 were asked if they wanted to give more power to a council led by white girls, etc.). We then compared the average level of support for each type of council.

What about parents? Do they have biases against girls as leaders? Mothers' average level of support was higher for councils led by boys than by girls. These findings may reflect the degree to which females of all ages in this country have been affected by stereotypes about their capacities. Given that mothers are typically role models for girls and that girls tend to be highly responsive to their mothers' aspirations and expectations of them, these findings are concerning.

We could not determine whether fathers had biases against girls because our sample of fathers was small. However, a good deal of research, including research cited here, suggests males' biases female leaders.

GENDER BIASES HAVE MANY CAUSES

Our focus groups and interviews suggested a variety of reasons for students' biases toward white girls and for girls' biases against each other. A few students, for example, indicated that because many girls have low self-esteem, they may assume that other girls have little self-esteem and thus wouldn't be good leaders. As one student put it: "Girls wouldn't vote for themselves, so why would they vote for another girl?"

Other students mentioned highly competitive feelings among girls. As one student stated flat-out, "I'm determined to beat other girls." Some students suggested that many girls are viewed as too "dramatic" to be good leaders. Finally, a smaller number of students shared other reasons for girls not picking other girls: "girls don't trust each other" or girls "aren't nice." These findings are consistent with other research, including research indicating that girls caught up in social hierarchies undercut each other in struggles for leadership and research documenting girls' competitive feelings and tendency for "drama" (Brown, 2003; Marwick & Boyd, 2014).

Teen girls' explicit and implicit, unconscious biases toward other girls are likely the result of many additional factors interacting differently for girls at different developmental stages. These factors include denigrating media and cultural images of girls, parents own histories of gender bias and how those histories shape their expectations of both boys and girls, girls' particular peer dynamics, gender biases and stereotypes that students confront at school, and the failure of many educators and parents to respond to sexism and misogyny in their interactions with each other and with teens.

THE GOOD NEWS: AWARENESS MAY MAKE A DIFFERENCE

While these biases have many complex roots, the good news is that our findings suggest that awareness of gender bias and discrimination is linked to less reported bias. One hopes that as people become aware of biases, they are better able to bring them under conscious control and counteract them. That may be true of white girls in our study in terms of leadership biases. We asked students whether students at their school were discriminated against or excluded based on their gender. White girls who perceived no gender discrimination at their school were, on average, biases against girl-led councils, unlike white girls who perceived high levels of discrimination. The more discrimination white girls perceived, the lower their bias.[13]

"Girls wouldn't vote for themselves, so why would they vote for another girl?"

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13. Our data did not indicate that boys' awareness of gender discrimination was associated with less gender bias. But that may be because boys interpreted gender discrimination differently than girls. It's possible that many boys who reported awareness of gender discrimination at their school thought that "gender discrimination" referred to discrimination not against girls but against boys. It seems far less likely that girls interpreted "gender discrimination" as discrimination against boys.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC BIAS

Numerous studies reveal that racial bias is still prevalent in schools, policing, employment, health care and other domains of American life (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Kristof, 2014; Matthews, 2013; Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003; US Department of Ed, 2014; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Our study was not mainly focused on racial bias but a few of our findings may shed light on it.[14]

We asked students whether they perceived racial discrimination at their school. White girls who reported high levels of discrimination at their school expressed higher average levels of support for Black and Latino-led councils than for white-led councils. Some students who are aware of racial bias may be combating it by expressing greater support for Black and Latino student leaders. White boys who reported racial discrimination at their school showed slightly higher levels of support for Black and Latino student leaders but the difference in their support for these council leaders versus white leaders was not statistically significant.

Some students who are aware of racial bias may be combating it by expressing greater support for Black and Latino student leaders.

On the other hand, white girls who reported that racial discrimination was not a problem at their school—students who were unaware of racial discrimination—appear to express implicit bias; they were slightly less likely to support Black and Latino councils than white councils. Their difference in support was marginally statistically significant. This difference in support was true

for white boys as well but again for boys the difference was not statistically significant. Similar to awareness of gender bias, this data suggest that building awareness of discrimination may be a means of deflating bias. For Black and Latino students, awareness of racial discrimination at school was not linked to racial bias.

In addition, our data suggest that attending a more diverse school might help to alleviate this leadership bias. According to our scenario data, white students in more diverse schools appear to show slightly stronger preference for Latino and Black student councils than white students in schools comprised entirely or almost entirely of white students. Other research also indicates that more diverse school settings may reduce bias[15] (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998; Keener, Mehta, & Strough, 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

It's important to note, though, that attending a diverse school does not guarantee a reduction in bias. Whether diversity increases or decreases bias depends on many factors, including whether schools are inclusive and caring communities, whether and how diversity is discussed, whether classrooms activities promote constructive collaboration and whether rich images of diverse cultures are brought into the school community (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997; Paluck, 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

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14. Responses to our implicit bias scenario suggest that students and parents do not view students' capacity for leadership through one simple gender or race lens. It was hard for us to clearly assess students' views about race because most differences in students' responses to student council leaders on the implicit bias scenario were not statistically significant. Yet it does appear from our data that students have complex views about how race and gender mix. For example, students expressed roughly the same amount of support for female Latina councils as for white male councils. These findings—and how students generally view different race/gender combinations-- merit further investigation.

15. Encouragingly, a large majority of students in our study appear to prefer diverse schools, which may lead to less bias. 87% of students responding to our large survey indicated that they would prefer to attend a racially diverse school—85% of white students, 88% of black students and 88% of Latino student, and 91% of Asian students expressed this preference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is, of course, no magic elixir for solving the problems that we identify here. But there is a great deal that we as adults can do to prevent biases and reduce their damage. Because only a few of our findings are related to racial bias, we only emphasize here that our findings, along with many other studies, underscore the importance of elevating children's awareness of racism and of helping children of color navigate and effectively resist racism. This will mean challenging many children's and adults' belief that they are color-blind, that they don't "see" race. As a good deal of research now shows, we are all subject to racial and ethnic related images and stereotypes from early ages that can mutate into biases and prejudices of many kinds.

The following recommendations for parents, educators and other key adults focus on several key strategies, drawn from research and the wisdom of practitioners, that can prevent and alleviate gender biases, especially related to leadership, as well as strengthen teen girls' confidence in their own leadership. Importantly, these recommendations are not just focused on developing strengths in girls but on the key role of adults in stemming bias and helping girls contend with negative social and cultural forces.

1. Check Your Own Biases

At the heart of preventing gender biases in children is understanding and managing our own gender biases. Parents' and teachers' leadership biases can deeply influence what they model for children and how they facilitate children's daily lives.

We as parents and teachers can take a hard look at whether we ourselves are expressing leadership biases. Are we as active about promoting and recognizing assertiveness and leadership in girls as we are in boys? Do we inadvertently reinforce traditional gender roles, assigning girls caretaking roles, for instance, more than boys, or criticizing girls more than boys if they are arrogant or "bossy?" Might we at times unintentionally fall into traditional, unhealthy gender roles ourselves?

Because we all are blind to some of our biases, parents might also ask respected loved ones such as romantic partners, close friends, or their own parents or siblings to point out to them if they are unknowingly expressing bias or enabling it in their children. Parents can also ask their teens to hold them accountable, to give them feedback if they are modeling stereotypes or expressing bias.

Modeling this kind of openness and being willing to admit bias sends a highly valuable message to teens about the nature of biases and how they are counteracted. It can be, of course, very hard to receive this kind of feedback from teens or other loved ones, yet it's a key part of responsible, moral parenting.

2. Cultivate Family Practices that Prevent and Reduce Gender Bias

In far too many settings, adults ignore children's gender and other biases at a cost to both perpetrators and victims. Attention to these biases need not be onerous or oppressive; we don't need to point out these biases to children every minute of every day. But we should be alert to children's gender biases and cultivate family practices that prevent and reduce them.

What does this "practice" look like in terms of leadership biases? There are many ways parents and educators can make children more aware of gender bias related to leadership and motivate boys and girls to combat leadership biases in themselves and others. From early ages, parents can, for example, encourage girls to take on a variety of leadership roles, expose girls and boys to stories in which females are effective leaders, share personal experiences of leadership and provide toys, games and clothes and orchestrate activities and tasks that don't reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. A chore wheel, for example, that boys and girls spin to see who does what family chores, can prevent boys and girls from falling into familiar gender-based family roles. Because girls often closely identify with their mothers, mothers may play a more powerful role than fathers in modeling various forms of leadership for their daughters. But fathers clearly have a crucial role as well in both modeling leadership and encouraging their daughters to pursue it. Adults can also push teens to reflect on biases that may be influencing them and provide feedback to them when they unknowingly express a stereotype or prejudice. For 5 tips for parents for discussing biases with children, see Appendix D.

3. Teach Teens to Spot and Effectively Challenge Stereotypes and Discrimination

Efforts to end gender bias should be combined with more intentional efforts to combat many forms of devaluing and denigration that girls experience. Girls' biases toward other girls and their competitive feelings often stem in part from these larger patterns of degradation. It's not just that many teen girls still suffer from stereotypes about their math ability. Many girls from young ages, treated as sexual objects or portrayed in traditional, constricting gender roles in the media and our culture, feel pressured to think, act and shape their bodies in ways that conform to male expectations, diminishing their self-confidence and corroding their relationships (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008; Sax, 2010).

We as adults need to mobilize girls and boys to both identify and actively combat these cultural and media messages as well as biases they confront in their daily lives. We can, for example, point out denigrating images and messages in television, songs on the radio, games and clothing stores, give children tools for dealing with gender biases and stereotypes among their peers and recognize children who stand up to gender bias. Some promising programs are also mobilizing teen girls to combat degrading cultural and media images. The organization Hardy Girls Healthy Women, for example, facilitated a diverse group of teen girls' successful writing campaign focused on Teen Magazine. The campaign protested the magazine's narrow depictions of female bodies. Girls' biases and negative self-images can naturally break down as they experience real efficacy–and observe other girls experiencing efficacy–in combating these degradations.

4. Don't Just Let "Boys Be Boys"

Adults should not only help boys to identify, understand and appreciate girls' perspectives and feelings from young ages but also more actively confront boys who stereotype and degrade girls. This stereotyping and degradation can clearly harm girls in many ways, including eroding girls' confidence in their leadership, as well as impair boys themselves, fueling selfishness and entitlement.

Adults need to find meaningful ways to challenge teen boys' powerful tendency to bond and prop each other up by sexualizing and in other ways demeaning teen girls. The evidence suggests that misogyny and sexual harassment among teens is pervasive—over half of girls in grades 7-12 report at least one episode of sexual harassment at school during 2010-2011 (Hill & Kearl, 2011). Walk through the hallways of many high schools in this country and it's not uncommon to hear boys referring to girls as "bitches", "ho's" and "sluts" (depressingly, many girls are parroting these phrases). Paradoxically, at the same time that more females outpace and often outnumber males at school and at work—the more dominant they are in relation to males in these respects—teen girls and young women appear to continue to face degradation and subordination in their romantic and sexual relationship dynamics with males (Khazan, 2015; Kimmel, 2009; Hill & Kearl, 2011).

These boy tendencies clearly have deep cultural and developmental roots, and changing them is, of course, no small task. But our conversations with parents and educators, and another survey we conducted with high school and college students, indicates that many parents and educators are too passive in the face of this challenge, ignoring teen boys' denigrating comments about girls even when these comments are in their midst, and that students themselves are often passive bystanders in the face of this denigration. Often adults and teens report that they don't know how to intervene effectively. But adult inaction in these circumstances can be construed by teens as validation of their behavior.

Minimally, adults need to push teen boys to consider why girls are outside their circle of concern and are fair game for degradation. Adults can, too, talk to boys about the false bravado and toughness in degrading girls and the real toughness and honor in defying one's peers when they devalue girls in general or divide girls into "good girls" and "bad girls." Adults can talk to teens, too, about the courage and toughness in learning to constructively manage fears and vulnerabilities in romantic and sexual relationships. These fears and vulnerabilities commonly undercut boys' capacity to empathize with and care for girls. In some cases, trusted, older peers and adults can talk to boys about their particular romantic and sexual anxieties.

5. Challenge Teens' Biased Assumptions and Beliefs

Peoples' biases are often not hidden from them: biases are part of their basic, overt beliefs. Many teens, for example, explicitly state on our survey that males are better political and business leaders than females. Combating these biases often means prompting teens to look critically at their basic beliefs. Adults might challenge, for example, teens who view males as more capable business and political leaders and females as more effective child care and health care directors. Teens might be prompted to consider the historical roots of these judgments and on what basis these judgments are made. It's important not to embarrass or shame teens who hold these beliefs, but they should be asked to consider the "evidence" supporting them. Teens might be asked to consider the paradox that while the majority of both men and women view males and females as equally effective political leaders, both men and women tend to identify women as more likely than men to possess the key attributes needed for leadership, such as honesty, organizational skills and compassion (Parker et al., 2015).

It's important, too, for teens to explore the possible motives and vulnerabilities fueling their explicit biases. Teen boys often devalue girls, for example, because of underlying vulnerabilities and anxieties about their own sexuality and relationship capacity. An investment in

maintaining social power can motivate children's gender, racial, and class biases. Awareness of these motives can prompt teens to question their beliefs.

6. Utilize Effective Programs that Build Girls' Leadership Skills

While a wide variety of programs and interventions directly or indirectly foster leadership skills in young girls–and some programs seek to prepare girls specifically for political roles and civic leadership–high percentages of girls don't participate in these programs and don't have access to high quality programs especially. A high quality program checklist is available in Appendix A and resource and program list for educators is in Appendix E.

7. Use this Report to Spur Discussion

Ask teens how they understand the data reported here and facilitate discussions with teens about how to achieve greater gender equity at school and/or in the larger society. Have teens interview each other across gender and racial groups about their aspirations for leadership of various kinds. If you could be a leader, what would you want to be a leader of? Why? What obstacles might you confront and how might you overcome those obstacles? A guide to facilitating discussions about this report can be found in Appendix B.

CONCLUSION

This report has argued that stubborn gender biases continue to impede teen girls' leadership potential and has offered recommendations for developing dispositions and behaviors in parents, teachers and teens that will prevent and reduce gender bias. We recognize, though, that fully preventing gender and other biases and clearing pathways to leadership for girls and women will require changes in many sectors of our society. It will require, for example, rooting out workplace practices that favor men and curbing media and marketing practices that diminish females. In one way or another, we all have a role to play in assuring that girls and women maintain and accelerate the gains that women have made in the last 30 years. We hope that this report supports the many important ongoing efforts—and sparks various additional conversations and actions—that move us closer toward this vital goal.

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Appendix

Appendix A

HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Although girls and women have made tremendous gains in school and work over the last few decades, females still continue to face challenges and barriers to leadership, including gender biases. As adults, there is much we can do to prevent and reduce gender biases, including checking our own biases and being aware of the messages we are sending to both boys and girls day-to-day. There is also much we can to do to prepare girls to become leaders.

A wide variety of programs and interventions directly or indirectly foster leadership skills in girls, varying extensively in activities, length, and research base. These programs range from classic girls-only activity based programs such as the Girl Scouts and Girls Inc. to more targeted programs and curricula specifically developed to build leadership. Opportunities span a multitude of interests, many representing increasing efforts to engage girls in fields in which women continue to be underrepresented (e.g. STEM, public office).

Given the wide variety of programs and interventions that foster leadership skills in girls and the limited research on efficacy, it can often be challenging to select a program. Based on our research and the wisdom of practitioners, and based in part on recommendations from the Girl Scout Research Institute , we have created the following easy-to-use guide to help parents and educators identify high quality girls' leaderships programs.

Programs should include the following key components:

EXPOSURE

Leadership programs should expose girls to a wide range of professions. Even when girls are provided leadership opportunities, they commonly lack exposure to leadership in certain fields, such as business and politics. Research also suggests that educational and cultural practices tend to depict men in a larger variety of occupations and as agents of change while women are more frequently portrayed as observers or victims. Look for programs or activities that include the following:

☐ Career exploration

☐ Opportunities to hear from and/or meet inspiring female leaders in a wide range of fields

☐ Resources and support for finding internships and volunteer or shadowing opportunities

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Leadership programs should focus on concrete skill development. Girls' lack of confidence appears to be one of the strongest factors deterring them from pursuing leadership, and skill development can boost girls' confidence. Leadership programs should take on common, specific obstacles that deter girls from pursuing leadership, including fears of public speaking, appearing bossy, or being disliked. Look for programs that include instruction and practice on the following:

☐ Public speaking

☐ Conflict resolution

☐ Effective or assertive communication

☐ Problem solving

☐ Networking and self-advocacy

☐ Goal setting

> *"Our view is that there's nothing that reduces stereotypes better than activist work that requires a diversity of girls to rely on one another as allies and demands coalition building for success."*
>
> — LYN MIKEL BROWN, Professor of Education, Colby College and Founder of Hardy Girls Healthy Women

COLLABORATION

Leadership programs and strategies should promote collaboration and a sense of solidarity among girls. Collaboration and teamwork are not only essential skills for today's workplace, these experiences can help girls develop perspective-taking, social awareness, and respect. Working in diverse groups can be especially valuable—breaking down stereotypes and enabling girls to draw on rich wisdom about leadership in various cultures. Through collaborative experiences and relationship building, girls can also work to override competitive feelings. Look for programs that include the following:

☐ Team or group-based projects/activities

☐ Relationship building experiences or skill-building

☐ Opportunities to work with diverse groups (i.e. ages, cultures, etc.)

MENTORSHIP

Leadership programs should connect girls with older, respected girls and women who can model and inspire them to seek out leadership and guide them in navigating barriers they face to pursuing leadership. Mentors can be formal or informal, including volunteers who interact with girls on a regular basis. Mentors not only act as role models who can inspire and foster leadership, they can also be important models of ethical values. Women of all ages should join girls as allies and mentors in collective efforts. Look for programs that include:

☐ Counselor in-training, big sisters, or other program elements that connect girls with older girls and women

☐ Peer leadership programs

☐ Trained staff and volunteers

HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES

Leadership programs should hold girls to high expectations and provide them with real, meaningful opportunities to take responsibility for others. Girls will develop confidence and the desire to pursue leadership when they take on problems that are meaningful to them. Look for programs that include:

☐ Youth-led projects or initiatives and programs that give girls opportunities to choose causes that matter to them.

☐ Opportunities for girls to teach and lead others

☐ Programs that incorporate chores, tasks, and expectations

Appendix B

REPORT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Questions and Activities about Gender Bias for Educators and Parents to use with Middle and High School Students

Congratulations on taking an important step in confronting gender discrimination and bias. Discussing gender can be challenging. For some youth, this is an immensely personal or even heated topic that brings up questions of equality and privilege. Others may question whether gender biases even exist. Finally, the idea that biases can be implicit—and discrimination unconscious—may itself be a novel, challenging concept to some teenagers. Fortunately, the payoff in broaching these topics is huge. By allowing children to explore this topic, share ideas for improvement, and participate in community-building and empathy-promoting activities, you are taking steps towards ensuring that your classroom or home is a place where everyone is respected, supported, and empowered.

Discussion Questions

1. What in the report most surprised you? Least surprised you? Why?

2. This report reveals that many boys and girls tend to prefer male political leaders over female political leaders. Why do you think this is? Why is it problematic? How are female political leaders frequently portrayed? Is this the same or different than male political leaders? If it is different, how is it different?

3. This report notes that many boy and girl students prefer men as leaders in fields like business, while they prefer women as leaders in roles like child care directors and art program directors. What do you think of this finding? Is there any truth to the idea that men and women are better suited for particular fields?

4. Students in the report were most likely to support giving more power to the student council when it was led by white boys and least likely when it was led by white girls. The difference in support was small. Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

5. Why might girls and women prefer men as student council leaders? Why wouldn't they want to pick themselves as leaders?

6. Do you think most people in your school would prefer boy leaders over girl leaders? Why or why not?

7. What types of bias or discrimination—if any—do you see in your school? Home? In the community? In the news?

8. What can you do when you see gender-based discrimination? What should you not do?

9. What can be done in this school (or home) to better promote gender equity? What can teenagers do? Adults?

10. What can be done outside of school (or home) to better promote gender equity—in places such as the community and greater society?

Activities:
Try the following activities with your students/children to expand their discussion and learning around gender bias and to move out of their comfort zones.

In school:
Have teens interview each other across gender and racial groups about their aspirations for leadership of various kinds. Have students write a report or present what they find. Have them consider the following questions:

1. If you could be a leader, what would you want to be a leader of? Why?

2. What obstacles might you confront and how might you overcome those obstacles?

In school or home:
1. Ask youth to participate in a series of quiet reflective writing exercises about what is it like (or, for boys, what they think it must be like) to be a girl. Have they ever felt discriminated against? Felt different than men? Allow youth to share their writing, if they feel comfortable doing so. Try the same activity asking students to reflect on what it is like to be a boy.

2. Challenge youth to think about how gender roles have continued to evolve over time. Invite youth to interview a person of a different generation. How were women treated when they were growing up? Has society changed its expectations of women? What challenges or discrimination do women still face today?

Appendix C

Full text of scenario question:

SCENARIO: Isabella, Valentina, and Camila are the leaders of your student council. Your school principal decides that she wants to give more power to the student council. The council, guided by adults, will determine rules for what's allowed in different places in the school such as the cafeteria, on the bus, and in the hallways and will determine consequences for students breaking the rules.

Do you think the school principal should give this responsibility to the student council?

Yes-Probably-Not Sure-Probably Not-No

NAMES:

Santiago, Mateo, and Nicolás

Isabella, Valentina, and Camila

Aliyah, Tiana, and Jada

Darius, Tyrone, and Jamal

Molly, Madeline, and Claire

Jake, Cody, and Benjamin

Note on analytical methods:

We analyzed the experiment by regressing the outcome on treatment indicators. We fit several different models, including linear regressions, linear regressions with robust standard errors, and ordinal regressions. All models included school-level fixed effects. We also considered models controlling for student race and gender. All models showed similar patterns of findings. We report estimates from uncontrolled OLS linear regressions. Findings reported only for subpopulations (e.g., white girls) were obtained by fitting the model to that subset of the data. Findings contrasting treatment effects (e.g. stronger support for female councils by mothers than fathers) were obtained by including interaction terms. Findings regarding school-level characteristics and treatment effects were obtained using multi-level models with random school-level intercepts.

Appendix D

5 Tips for Parents on Preventing and Reducing Gender Bias

RICHARD WEISSBOURD AND LUBA FALK FEIGENBERG

1. Check Your Own Biases

Why: We all carry biases that are based on gender; throughout our lives we receive daily messages about what is expected of males and females. These biases become ingrained and it's often impossible to completely get rid of them. But, if we can be more aware of our biases, we have a better chance of counteracting them.

How: Take a hard look at how biases might be affecting your attitudes or actions. Be mindful that the relationships, language, and behaviors that come naturally to you may express bias. Think about what conclusions you jump to about what boys or girls should dress like, act like, think about and feel.

TRY THIS:

- **Practice counteracting stereotypes.**
  Exposing our brains to images that contradict stereotypes can actually decrease our implicit, unconscious biases. Find images that do not fit traditional gender stereotypes—women doing construction work or men in caretaking roles—and post them in places you view often at home or at work, e.g. save them to your phone or use them as your screensaver.

- **Watch your language.**
  Our language sends messages about our expectations based on gender. When we comment on how pretty girls look or how strong boys are, for example, we send messages about our expectations for kids based on their gender. Use gender-neutral words like "they" or say "she or he" when talking about people in the abstract. Say "firefighter" instead of "fireman" and "police officer" instead of "policeman." Be on the look-out for statements that start with "all girls" or "all boys."

- **Check in with a friend or family member.**
  Because we all are blind to some of our biases, we need feedback. Talk to close friends and family members about your own gender biases and ask them whether you are expressing gender biases that you might be unaware of. Ask kids to hold you accountable, to give you feedback if you are modeling stereotypes or expressing bias. Modeling this openness and being willing to admit bias sends a powerful message to kids about the nature of biases and how they are counteracted. It can be, of course, very hard to receive this kind of feedback from our kids or other loved ones, but it's a key part of responsible, moral parenting.

2. Engage Your Kids in Making Your Home a Bias-Free Zone

Why: Beginning at a very young age, kids notice differences between girls and boys that can develop into narrow understandings of gender. Parents and caregivers can shape healthier understandings about gender by cultivating family practices that widen kids' sense of gender roles and alert them to bias.

How: Develop routines and habits in your family, with input from your kids, that help to counteract and prevent biases and stereotypes. Build strong, trusting relationships with your children so it's easier for them to ask you uncomfortable questions related to gender. When kids ask questions about differences, let them know that you appreciate the question, and answer with straightforward, honest language.

TRY THIS:

- **Mix it up.**
  Proactively start conversations with your kids about how responsibilities get divvied up in your family. Talk about what is fair and balanced, rather than make assumptions about who does what based on gender. Create a chore wheel so that everyone gets a chance to participate in all the types of chores. Be willing to model behavior that doesn't fit gender stereotypes and show kids that you can step outside your own comfort zone.

- **Hold each other accountable.**
  Periodically ask kids whether they think your family practices are gender-biased in any way. Are there different expectations of females and males in the family? If so, why? When kids do identify biases or inequities at home, brainstorm solutions with them.

- **Tell your story.**
  Share with your kids examples of times when you've experienced bias because of your gender. Talk to them about times you've felt you've been treated unfairly or times that you've taken a stand against gender bias and injustice. Sharing your stories opens the door for them to share theirs.

- **Expand their horizons.**
  Provide your kids with books, games, TV shows, movies, art, etc. that show people from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds demonstrating non-traditional gender roles, images that they may not see in mainstream media. Expose both boys and girls to a variety of activities. Don't just assume, for example, that boys will like sports and girls will like ballet. Ask girls to imagine themselves as senators, sports team managers and business leaders and ask boys to imagine themselves as child care directors and dance choreographers. Facilitate children interacting with mixed gender groups and developing cross-gender friendships.

3. Help Kids Kick Stereotypes to the Curb

Why: Kids are often unaware of the gender biases and stereotypes they confront every day biases and stereotypes that can powerfully shape their views of gender. Kids need to learn from the adults in their lives how to recognize bias in themselves and others, how to talk constructively to others about biases, and how to avoid being influenced by stereotypes.

How: Be alert to and prepared to explain to kids why bias is harmful in ways that they can understand and appreciate and give kids strategies for responding to biases and stereotypes that are appropriate for their developmental stage.

TRY THIS:

- **Ask kids what they think.**
  Kids are excellent at finding unfair images of themselves and others, whether at school, in the neighborhood or in the media. Create a list together of gender stereotypes you both see or hear. Spot them when you're watching television, listening to a song, or shopping for clothes together. Talk to them about how these stereotypes make them feel. If you see a bias or stereotype that your kids don't see, point it out to them. Make the connection clear: "That commercial shows girls not caring about school as much as about how they look. That doesn't seem fair."

- **Help kids be a first responder.**
  Brainstorm with kids strategies for responding to stereotypes they encounter in their daily interactions. Talk together about the words they can use to speak up, and how those words might be different when talking to a friend or a stranger or a teacher, for example. Practice different responses and conduct role plays that help children find the right words. Help kids identify who their allies could be when they need more help in a difficult interaction.

- **Question their lingo.**
  When you hear kids use terms to describe boys or girls that reflect biases, ask them to consider what the words mean and what messages these words might send.

4. Don't Just Let "Boys Be Boys"

Why: Too often boys' demeaning stereotypes and remarks about girls go unchecked. Often both adults' and kids' peers don't know how to intervene when boys make demeaning remarks about girls and often they fear being written off or ridiculed. Yet excusing these behaviors as "boys being boys" sends them the message that those behaviors are okay.

How: Take time to consider how to intervene when boys are demeaning to girls, and step in immediately if you observe or hear these behaviors.

5. Build Girls' Leadership Skills and Self-Confidence

Why: Too many girls are dealing with biases about their leadership capacity specifically. Perhaps the best way for girls to counteract their negative images about their own and other girls' leadership capacity is for them to experience themselves as effective leaders.

How: Expose girls to various, appealing examples of leadership and help them develop the skills and confidence they need to become leaders in a wide variety of fields. Too often girls avoid leadership because they don't feel confident in skills such as public speaking or because they fear their peers will disapprove. Many girls fear appearing bossy.

TRY THIS (CONT'):

- **Help girls develop specific leadership skills.**
  Give girls chances to practice public speaking, to participate in decision-making processes, to work in teams, and to give and receive feedback. Invite them to practice these skills in decisions your family makes, for example, or encourage them to take action on problems they're concerned about in their schools and communities.

- **Talk to girls about their fears.**
  Start conversations with girls about the things they feel hold them back from leadership. Model for them that it's okay to feel nervous or worried about how they'll be perceived or the reactions they may get when in leadership roles. Explore with girls various strategies for dealing with disapproval and criticism. Consider with girls how they might engage peers as supporters and allies when they face disapproval.

- **Encourage girls to lead in collaboration with diverse groups of girls.**
  Collaboration and teamwork are essential skills for leadership in today's workplace, helping to develop social awareness, problem-solving abilities, perspective-taking and other key skills. And working in racial and economically diverse groups can enrich girls' understandings of different cultures, expose girls to a wide range of leadership styles and abilities, and enable girls to draw on various kinds of cultural wisdom about leadership.

FOR MORE ON HOW PARENTS CAN COUNTER-ACT GENDER BIAS, SEE ALSO:

- **Welcoming Schools:**
  http://www.welcomingschools.org/pages/be-prepared-for-questions-and-put-downs-about-gender

- **PBS:**
  http://www.pbs.org/kcts/preciouschildren/diversity/read_teaching.html

- **Anti-Defamation League:**
  http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education

Appendix E

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCE LIST

Resources and Programs that Promote Girls' and Women's Equity and Empowerment

The websites below offer useful programs, research, resources, and/or activities to promote girls' and women's equity and empowerment. Some of the descriptions listed below have been pulled from organizational websites.

Have suggestions of other powerful programs or websites that we should add to our list? Please email us at: mcc@gse.harvard.edu

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT GIRLS AND WOMEN:

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media

The Geena Davis Institute is a research-based organization working within the media and entertainment industry to improve gender balance, reduce stereotypes, and create diverse female characters in entertainment. Website includes lesson plans for addressing images of gender equality in schools, a video learning series designed to help students challenge gender stereotypes, and research studies on gender in the media.

http://seejane.org

Girls, Inc.

Girls Inc. inspires girls to be strong, smart, and bold, providing more than 140,000 girls across the U.S. and Canada with experiences and solutions to the unique challenges girls face. Girls Inc. develops informal education programs, educates the media about critical issues facing girls, and teaches girls how to advocate for themselves and their communities. Website includes tips for parents as well as a section for girls.

http://www.girlsinc.org/

Girls Leadership

Girls Leadership teaches girls the skills to know who they are, what they believe, and how to express it, empowering them to create change in their world. Website offers information on Girls Leadership programming across the country, a blog, parent education videos, and research.

http://girlsleadership.org/

Girls Write Now

Girls Write Now provides programs designed to provide creative and engaging opportunities for women of all ages in the New York City area. Programs include mentoring that matches girls with professional women writers, assistance helping girls navigate the college admissions process, and a reading series to showcase the city's best teen writers.

http://www.girlswritenow.org/

Hardy Girls Healthy Women

A non-profit organization, primarily serving girls and women in the state of Maine, dedicated to supporting and improving the health and well-being of women. Hardy Girls Healthy Women offers a series of programs and supports to empower women, as well as curricula and resources for girls.

http://hghw.org

The Representation Project

The Representation Project inspires individuals and communities to challenge and overcome limiting stereotypes so that everyone, regardless of gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation or circumstance can fulfill their potential. Website includes links to films, campaigns, research, and strategies to promote awareness of and counter negative stereotypes.

http://therepresentationproject.org/

Girls for Gender Equity (GGE)

Girls for Gender Equity is committed to the physical, psychological, social, and economic development of girls and women. GGE provides programs, mostly serving young women in New York City, that develop strengths, skills, and self-sufficiency in girls and women. GGE also conducts organizing campaigns to achieve safety and equality in the communities in which girls and women live and work.

http://www.ggenyc.org/

SPARK Movement

The Spark Movement is a girl-fueled, intergenerational activist organization working online to ignite an anti-racist gender justice movement. Website features a blog about women's issues, a downloadable app about women in history, and a curriculum for educators.

http://www.sparksummit.com/

A Mighty Girl

A Mighty Girl offers recommendations and lists of books, toys, and movies aimed at raising smart, confident, and courageous girls. Website includes a section on parenting.

http://amightygirl.com

True Child

TrueChild helps connects race, class and gender through "gender transformative" approaches that challenge gender norms and inequities. Website features research briefs about gender-related topics and tools for parents and educators.

Truechild.org

Girl Scouts

In Girl Scouts, girls discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together through field trips, sports programs, community service projects, cultural exchanges, and environmental activities that allow girls to grow courageous and strong. Girl Scouts offers programs for 2.8 million members across the U.S. and world, and conducts research on girls' development.

https://www.girlscouts.org/

Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run is a physical activity based youth development program for girls in 3rd to 8th grade that teaches life skills through interactive lessons and running games. The goal of the program is to unleash confidence through accomplishment while establishing a lifetime appreciation of health and fitness. Website features information about their U.S. and Canadian-based programs.

http://www.girlsontherun.org/

Lean In

LeanIn.org, based on the book Lean In, and founded by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, encourages women to pursue their ambitions and to change the conversation from what they can't do to what they can do. Lean In supports women by building communities of support, offering library of lectures on topics like leadership and communication, and featuring a special section for men about promoting gender equality.

http://leanin.org/

PBS Parenting

PBS Parenting has many resources for parents raising girls, including tips and strategies for building confidence, resolving relationship conflicts, and challenging stereotypes.

http://www.pbs.org/parents/parenting/raising-girls/

Teach a Girl to Lead

Teach a Girl to Lead, a project of the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University, aims to inspire girls and young women to follow in the footsteps of women leaders. The website features a "teaching toolbox" with lesson plans, activities, and multimedia resources to help young women rethink leadership.

http://tag.rutgers.edu/

New Moon Media

New Moon Media is a girls' magazine and online community of girls, parents, and allies raising strong girls in an unequal world.

http://newmoon.com/

Amy Poehler's Smart Girls

Smart Girls is a "home base" where many young men and women are able to express their concerns. Through "Call to Action" campaigns, girls are encouraged to volunteer, be more involved in the world they live in, and expand their worldview beyond their backyards.

http://amysmartgirls.com

Ban Bossy

This site supports people to use social media to pledge to #banbossy. "Bossy" is word that often is used to describe strong women. The site features leadership tips for girls, parents, teachers, and other adults, and real stories of girls in leadership roles.

http://banbossy.com/

RESOURCES SPECIFICALLY FOR EDUCATORS OR PROGRAM LEADERS:

Teaching Resource Center (TRC)

TRC Provides information on common gender dynamics in the classroom and offers suggestions on how educators can better promote gender equity in their day-to-day teaching practices.

http://trc.virginia.edu

Wrestling with Manhood

Wrestling with Manhood is an educational program that pays attention to the popularity of professional wrestling among male youth, addressing its relationship to real-life violence. The film and accompanying curriculum encourages viewers to think about the enduring problems of men's violence against women and bullying in our schools.

http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/216/studyguide_216.pdf

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Their site offers resources and lesson plans on topics related to gender inequality including those on women's history, suffrage, policies and law, and women in leadership.

http://www.aauw.org/

Teaching Tolerance

Teaching Tolerance offers a wide range of classroom resources for educators. The "Gender Equity" section of their classroom resource page includes exercises on challenging stereotypes, female identity, gender expectations, and lessons about influential women throughout history.

http://www.tolerance.org/

Gender Equity Activity Booklet

This Gender Equity Activity Booklet, produced by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, provides detailed, easy-to-use activities related to a wide range of gender equity issues. The guide also includes evaluation tools related to the exercises and student quizzes.

https://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/CTE/docs/NTO/Gender_Equity.pdf

TeachingDegree.org

TeachingDegree.org offers a lesson planning guide to teaching gender equality to teens. The guide offers information about what teachers can do day-to-day to promote equality, a list of resources that teachers can share with students, and a list of resources for parents and educators.

http://www.teachingdegree.org/2012/12/07/teaching-gender-equality-to-teens/

The Myra Sadker Foundation

The Myra Sadker Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting equity in and beyond schools. The foundation offers awards to teachers interested in promoting gender equity in their classrooms. Website offers readings and a list of recommended websites.

http://www.sadker.org/

National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE)

NCWGE is a nonprofit organization of more than 50 groups dedicated to improving educational opportunities for girls and women. Website provides updates on relevant federal education legislation and shares useful resources and NCWGE publications.

http://www.ncwge.org/

Unicef

TeachUnicef offers lesson plans, videos, multimedia, and stories intended to raise student awareness of the importance of gender equality. Many materials have an international focus.

http://teachunicef.org/

Vision 20-20 Educator's Guide

This 95-page guide, provided as part of a gender equality initiative by Drexel University, is full of classroom activities including class starters, classroom activities, and projects and performance opportunities.

http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/Files/Documents/LessonPlans/Vision2020EducatorGuide.pdf

MAKING CARING COMMON PROJECT
HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
14 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138

617.384.9544
mcc@gse.harvard.edu