

From the book
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Girls Need Not Be Afraid of Mice *Tips for Teachers and Parents*



When buying computer games take into account girls' interests – the more time girls spend at the computer the more confidence they gain. Also, take time to find out whether the game does not depict women as passive and weak.



In your home, place the computer for instance in the living or dining room so that all family members could have access to it.



If you don't have a computer at home, encourage your children to use it either at school or in the library.



Do not force you daughter to work with the computer. Do not overuse computer slang, let her pick it up gradually.



Pay attention to gender stereotypes in your behavior – if the father is the only person who buys software and the mother seems to be helpless in front of the computer then girls, although unconsciously, get a signal about the “women's role”.



If your daughter works well with various applications do let her “lecture” you about their features: not only will you encourage her, but you will also learn something new.



Leave her some space to make mistakes, do not rush to quickly solve all problems. Give her time to learn to trust her judgment and to think independently. If she finds out that in spite of many trials and errors the computer is still working she will want to use it more often.



Help her broaden her knowledge and skills. Enroll her (together with her best friend, if possible) in a summer course of programming or a computer camp.



Make leaning about technologies fun.



If with the onset of adolescence she loses her interest in computers try to find out the reason why. Do not let her automatically identify computers as the “boys matter”.



Girls need role models, they need to see women who use computers competently and with confidence. Pay attention to and seek out information about women and computer technologies.



Try to give girls your deliberate support. Even if they do not show initiative, call on them more often. Ask them more difficult questions requiring longer and more concentrated thinking. Try to find some time just for girls alone when there are no boys around computers (so that girls cannot ask “experts” for help). Pick a girl to install new software or hardware. Encourage girls to take part in a programming competition.



Inform girls truthfully about career possibilities in the information and communication technologies. They may be under the impression that working with computers means to sit behind a computer all day doing some boring work.



When girls ask for advice, do not answer them automatically. Encourage them not to be afraid and find the answer themselves – success will increase their self-confidence.



In the classroom, cooperate rather than compete. Encourage cooperation but make sure that boys do not overrule the group.

Links

Websites (Mainly) for Girls:

www.girltech.com

www.teenwire.com

www.gURL.com

For Girls Who Play:

www.womengamers.com

www.gamegal.com

www.childrensoftware.com

Resources about Role Models:

Christa McHugh – web designer, 21 years

In: Karnes, Frances A. – Bean, Suzanne M.: *Girls and Young Women Entrepreneurs*. Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis 1995.

Meghan Renee Hatfield – inventor of drivers’ license numbers scanner, 10 years

In: Ibid.

Kellyan Coors – the inventor of various devices, 10 years

In: Ibid.

Sarita M. James – inventor of computer software to identify human voice, 18 years

In: Ibid.

<http://www.womenswork.org>

Dana, computer analyst

Carol, software engineer and analyst of Dupont company

Marianne, computer consultant

Heather, software engineer

Michele, program analyst

Pat Gillenwater, Illustra Information Technologies

Ly-Huong Pham, Apple Computer

Heidi Roizen, T/Maker Co.

Erika Williams, System Integrators Inc.