

The Girl Scout Cookie Program Teaching Essential Skills for a Lifetime

A well-known component of Girl Scouting is the Cookie Program, the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world. Each year, Girl Scouts around the country venture into the entrepreneurial world to learn business and financial skills and earn money to power new, unique and amazing experiences. Through “learning by earning,” Girl Scouts find the G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ within to do awesome things for herself and for her community through the development of the five essential skills: goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.

In 2016, the Girl Scout Research Institute worked to better measure the impact of the Girl Scout Cookie Program and understands the extent to which Girl Scouts develop these five essential skills. Survey responses from 40,000 Girl Scouts, representing all Girl Scout levels and various regions of the country show that:

A majority of Girl Scout “Cookie Entrepreneurs” are developing the five essential skills.*

- ❖ **Goal Setting:** 85% of girls learned how to set goals and meet deadlines, make a plan for how to achieve a goal, change actions when needed to keep on track with their goal, and work with others to achieve goals set together.
- ❖ **Decision Making:** 88% of girls learned how to think through different choices, explain the reasons why they made a decision, decide between multiple choices, and listen to everyone’s thoughts when making group decisions.
- ❖ **Money Management:** 88% of girls learned how to count money and make change, create a plan to save their money, track their money so they know how much they have, and distinguish the difference between wants and needs.
- ❖ **People Skills:** 85% of girls learned how to be comfortable talking to and being around new people, determine the best way to get their message across when talking with people, and tell people what they hope to achieve when working toward a goal.
- ❖ **Business Ethics:** 94% of girls learned how to be respectful of others, take responsibility for what they say and do, keep their promises, and not lie to get out of trouble.

Significantly, two out of three girls (66%) are developing all five skills.

Summary

Participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Sale Program helps girls experience amazing adventures, trips she’ll never forget, a service project that will change her community forever, or the opportunity to learn, grow, and build a lifetime of memories at camp that broaden her world. Girls also learn essential life skills, gaining opportunities to set goals, make decisions, manage money, understand customers, and work well with others, all while being prepared to practice a lifetime of leadership.

Collectively, this data shows the role the Girl Scout Cookie Program can play in developing financially empowered girl leaders. Learning valuable life skills via the Girl Scout Cookie Program helps girls become successful business leaders, now and in the future.

*Girls were considered to be developing a skill if the average score of the items that assess it was greater than a 3.0 (max score = 5.0).

