

The Mini Page

Next Week:
Our states:
Colorado

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Founded by Betty Debnam

Girls in Science



photo courtesy UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Have you ever watched a baby or toddler move around a room? As they play, babies are constantly doing experiments. They are tiny scientists!

Science is all about ...

- asking a question: "Why do my blocks fall down?"
- testing an idea: "If I put the bigger blocks on the bottom, will my stack stay standing?"
- and finding an answer: "I must need the bigger blocks on the bottom!"

It doesn't even matter if an idea about how to answer a question is the right one. What matters is the process of **inquiry**, or questioning.

This week, The Mini Page finds out more about keeping science fun and interesting for kids as we explore Expanding Girls' Horizons in Science and Engineering Month in March.

The Expanding Your Horizons Network organizes more than 100 conferences throughout the year all over the U.S. Volunteer scientists meet with middle and high school girls to answer questions and help with activities.

At the conferences, girls can meet adult female scientists, or mentors, and do hands-on science activities. (A **mentor** is someone who advises or counsels another person.)

A natural process

Babies may be the youngest scientists, but experts say children remain naturally curious about how things work. However, when kids

get to be 11 or 12 years old, things can change, especially for girls.

Traditionally, boys have been encouraged in science, engineering and math. Girls have been steered toward other subjects, such as English or history. But one expert says that if kids can maintain an interest in science through the eighth grade, they have a better chance of choosing a career in a science-related field.

A different age

When your great-grandparents were young, there were many jobs for adults in **manufacturing**, or making things. We called this the industrial age.

Today, our economy is more based on information and creative services. Many scientific fields are also now related to other areas. For example, a geologist may have to know a lot about chemistry and biology.

With modern challenges such as climate change and protecting our environment, we need more and more good minds asking questions and testing answers to solve our problems.



Girls at an Expanding Your Horizons conference in Illinois.

photo courtesy University of Illinois Springfield

Mini Fact:

Experts say many adults in scientific jobs liked science as children and stayed interested through the eighth grade.

Why girls are important

You might not think it would matter who our scientists are. But girls and boys are different, just like kids from one part of the country can be different from kids from another part. One example:

An educator at Saint Louis Science Center challenged students to come up with a new source of fuel that was:

- renewable
- cost-free
- able to heat a box oven to a temperature high enough to cook something.

The students were all inner-city kids, many of whom didn't have a washer and dryer at home. Many of the girls were used to taking their family's clothes to a laundromat to wash and dry them.

The girls thought about the large trash cans full of dryer lint at laundromats. They wondered if the lint could be used as a fuel source.

They made **briquettes**, or small, dense bricks, out of clothes dryer lint. They used the briquettes as fuel to heat their box oven — and it worked!

Experts pointed out that using dryer lint might not have occurred to the boys in the class, since they might not do as much laundry. And a student who lives in a home with a washer and dryer might not have thought about the huge amounts of lint that are available as a free, renewable source of fuel.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/4q8y1yb

At the library:

- "The Scientist Who Changed the World" by Sarah Michaels

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of girls in science are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ANSWER, BIOLOGY, BRIQUETTE, CHEMISTRY, CREATIVE, CURIOUS, ENGINEERING, FUEL, GIRLS, IDEA, INFORMATION, JOBS, MENTOR, PROCESS, QUESTION, SCIENCE, SUBJECT, TEST.

G I R L S G C R E A T I V E A
P G N I R E E N I G N E C M N
P Y R T S I M E H C L N E Q S
R B I O L O G Y I E E N T U W
O U T P T Q H D U I T P C E E
C F S P K K E F C O W V E S R
E E E O S A W S R W K O J T S
S E T T E U Q I R B F J B I B
S A A S U O I R U C W X U O O
B I N F O R M A T I O N S N J

Cook's Corner

Zesty Bow-Tie Salad

You'll need:

- 1 (14.5-ounce) box bow-tie pasta (about 9 cups cooked)
- 1 (12-ounce) bag frozen broccoli florets (about 4 cups)
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved

- 1 cup sliced black olives
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup Italian dressing
- 3/4 cup grated parmesan cheese



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Cook pasta in large pot as directed on the package. While pasta is cooking, microwave frozen broccoli as directed.
2. Drain pasta and place in large bowl. Add broccoli, tomatoes, olives, salt, pepper and dressing. Mix well. Stir in cheese.
3. Cover bowl and refrigerate for several hours or until chilled. Serves 8.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. Luigi's video game brother (5) _____
2. place to store a car (6) _____
3. they open locks (4) _____
4. very smart (11) _____
5. rings and bracelets (7) _____
6. fruit that grows on a vine (5) _____
7. moving stairway (9) _____

INT	JEWEL	IO	YS
PE	ELLI	ALA	GRA
MAR	KE	GENT	GAR
LR	AGE	ESC	TOR

Answers: Mario, garage, keys, intelligent, jewelry, grape, escalator.

Mini Jokes



- Sam:** What do you get when you cross a shark and a parrot?
Sienna: A creature that talks your ear off!
- Sarah:** What is a shark's favorite game?
Santana: Swallow the leader!

Eco Note



Rwanda's mountain gorillas, once rescued from the brink of extinction, are now facing a new crisis — overcrowding that fuels deadly battles between silverbacks and leaves many infants dead. Rangers described heartbreaking scenes of infant gorillas being slammed to death and mothers retreating in grief.

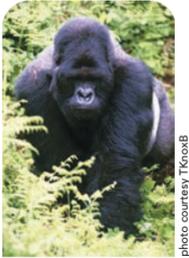


photo courtesy KNOX

To relieve overcrowding, the government has pledged to expand Volcanoes National Park by nearly a quarter.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Look in your local newspaper for articles about women making advances in science.

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