

GIRLS' INTEREST IN COMPUTER SCIENCE



Women represent 48% of the workforce, but only 25% of the computer science workforce.²

Women represent 21% of the computer science bachelor's degrees earned.³



INTEREST STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes that boys have more ability in computer science (CS) contribute to these gender gaps, but recent research shows interest stereotypes are another contributing factor. Interest stereotypes are girls' beliefs that they will not like CS. These beliefs prevent girls from giving CS a chance.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The stereotype that girls are less interested than boys creates a self-fulfilling prophecy where girls feel like they don't belong and won't succeed.¹

Girls are less motivated to take a CS class when they do not think they will be interested in it.¹



When girls know they will be underrepresented in a CS class they assume they will not be interested in the course and are less likely to enroll.¹

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Develop CS curricula and lessons that are meaningful and interesting for girls.¹

Encourage girls to give CS a chance by sharing messages about the growing numbers of girls taking AP CS classes.

Show girls a broader and more diverse image of people who enjoy CS.¹



Make sure all students feel like they are welcome in CS classrooms and programs.¹

References

- 1 - Master, A., Alexander, T., Thompson, J., Fan, W., Meltzoff, A. N., & Cheryan, S. (In press). Causes and consequences of stereotypes: Interest stereotypes reduce adolescent girls' motivation to enroll in computer science classes. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*.
- 2 - National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. (2023). Table I-1: Employment status of scientists and engineers, by age, sex, ethnicity, race, and disability status: 2021. *Diversity and STEM: Women, minorities, and persons with disabilities 2023*.
- 3 - National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. (2023). Table 2-2: Bachelor's degrees awarded, by field, sex, citizenship, race, and ethnicity: 2011-2020. *Diversity and STEM: Women, minorities, and persons with disabilities 2023*.