

5 Essential Skills Guide



What Girl Scouts Learn.
Why It Matters.
How Volunteers Can Help.



girl scouts 
of northern illinois

Girl Scouts are building a future, cookie by cookie.

Introduction

This **5 Essential Skills Guide to the Girl Scout Cookie Program** has been created to assist volunteers and parents understand how the Girl Scout Cookie Program enhances the Girl Scout experience! First, the guide provides facts to support how the Girl Scout Cookie Program benefits Girl Scout participants. Next, it provides resources to assist volunteers in guiding Girl Scouts to their fullest potential.



If you are receiving this in a printed version, use the QR code to the right to view the electronic version and access all the links imbedded into the text.

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Girl Scout Cookie History

What started with Girl Scouts selling home-baked cookies to raise money grew into enlisting professional bakers in 1936 to handle the growing demand—and the rest, as they say, is history! Explore [Girl Scout Cookie History](#) to find out how cookies have helped build generations of female entrepreneurs and leaders who make the world a better place. Enjoy watching this [vintage television commercial](#).

Today cookies, tomorrow the world.

Why Creating Entrepreneurial-Minded and Financially Empowered Leaders Matters

All Girl Scouts have access to progressive experiences that build innovative and entrepreneurial-minded leaders, giving them the courage to fail and keep trying, the tools to create an independent future, and the power to do good in the world.

Financial literacy skills matter now more than ever. However, there’s a gap when it comes to teaching young people, especially girls, the skills they need. Many parents are uncomfortable talking about money with their children. Many schools don’t effectively address financial literacy. And even the financial literacy programs that are available don’t start early enough.

Source: [Financial Empowerment and Entrepreneurship](#)

Who knew life skills could taste so good?

What Girl Scouts Learn

Encouraging an interest in entrepreneurship builds curiosity, confidence, and problem-solving skills—qualities that will prepare Girl Scouts for academic and career success. As Girl Scouts run their own cookie business, they'll gain five skills along the way that they'll use the rest of their lives. Here's what Girl Scouts learn and why it matters.

Through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, Girl Scouts learn...	This matters because...
Goal Setting as they set a troop goal based on what they want to do with their troop proceeds. Then a Girl Scout sets an individual goal with help from their family.	Girl Scouts develop a strong sense of self and cooperation and team-building skills as they learn to set and reach goals to succeed in school, on the job, and in life.
Decision Making by deciding where and when to sell cookies, how to market their cookie business, and what to do with their troop proceeds.	Girl Scouts develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that will help them make big and small decisions in their life; practice helps them make good ones.
Money Management as they develop a budget, take cookie orders, handling and managing money.	Girl Scouts gain practical life skills by knowing how to confidently handle, manage, and leverage money to do great things.
People Skills as they safely talk to their customers in person and virtually to work as a team with others.	Knowing how to work with others will help Girl Scouts do better in school and, later at work. These experiences will also help them develop healthy relationships and conflict-resolution skills for the future.
Business Ethics as they learn to run their businesses using the Girl Scout Law as a guide, being honest and responsible every step of the way.	Girl Scouts practice putting positive values into action to become ethical leaders. Employers want to hire ethical employees, and the world needs ethical leaders in every field at every age.

Source: [Cookie Family Connection Guide](#) and [Financial Empowerment and Entrepreneurship](#)

Confidence courtesy of the Girl Scout Cookie Program.



Treats inside, business skills outside.

Teaching Essential Skills for a Lifetime

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 power within to do amazing 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 Understand the extent to which Girl Scouts develop these five essential skills. Survey responses from 40,000 Girl Scouts, representing all Girl Scout levels from 82 different Girl Scout councils show that:

Overall, a majority of Girl Scout “Cookie Entrepreneurs” are developing the Five Essential Skills.

- **Goal Setting:** 85% of Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts (66%) are developing all five skills.

Source: [Cookie Skills Fact Sheet](#)

Girl Scouts see cookies differently.

Defining “Entrepreneurial Mindset”

Girl Scouts with an entrepreneurial mindset have a set of skills or qualities—like curiosity and confidence—that we know are linked to entrepreneurial success. They are:

- Confident in their abilities
- Social conscious problem-solvers
- Curious learners
- Innovative and flexible thinkers
- Challenge-seekers and risk-takers who learn from setbacks
- Collaborative teamsters

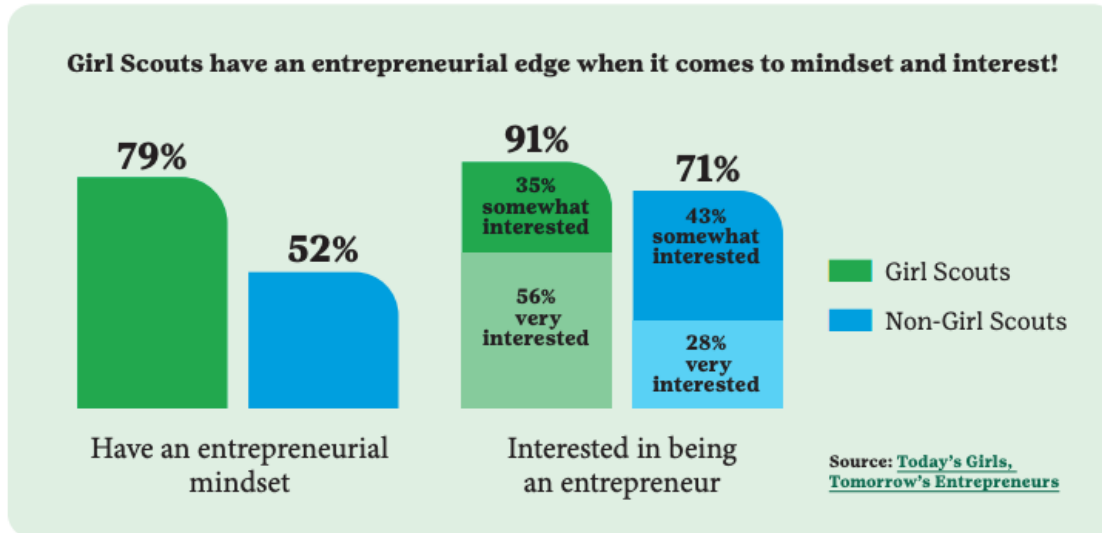
Source: [GSUSA Today's Girls Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs](#)



This is what a package of cookies can do.

The Girl Scout Difference.

Why should Girl Scouts participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program? Girl Scouts are more likely than other girls to have an entrepreneurial mindset and are more likely to want to be an entrepreneur in the future.



- Girl Scouts particularly shine when it comes to community problem solving, innovation (e.g., ideas about how products, services, or processes could be improved), social capital (e.g., knowing how to link with others who can help them achieve their goals), and using failure as an opportunity to learn.
- Girl Scouts have had more opportunities to do the types of activities that support entrepreneurship. On average, Girl Scouts were two times as likely to have done entrepreneurial activities than other girls.

Through Girl Scout experiences, girls develop the attitudes, skills, and behaviors they need to succeed in life, giving them the courage to fail and keep trying, the tools to create an independent future, and the power to do good in the world.

Source: [GSUSA Today's Girls Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs](#)

Mint-flavored and girl-powered.

How Does the GSNI Cookie Crumble?

For every package of cookies, approximately 28% covers the cost of operating the Cookie Program including cookie production, credit card fees, software support, transportation, storage, marketing, and personnel, while 22% is spent on troop proceeds, Girl Scout rewards, Cookie/S'more Dough, and service unit bonuses. In MY25, the remaining 50% will provide Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois with approximately 70% of its annual operating budget to invest in programs, activities, camps, properties, and support of troops and service units.



Girl Scouts pair their cookies with changing the world.

How volunteers can facilitate Girl Scouts developing and learning the 5 Essential Skills

Goal Setting

1. How many cookies do you want to sell and why?
 - a. Troop goal
 - i. Troop proceeds
 - ii. Troop project or experience
 - b. Individual Goal
 - i. Earn a reward
 - ii. Go to Camp
 - c. Daily or weekly goal
 - i. How many cookies need to be sold per day or week to reach overall goals?
 - d. Cookie Booth Goal
2. Who can help you reach your goal? What role do they play?
 - a. Friends and family
 - b. Neighbors
 - i. Door-to-Door
 - ii. Walkabout with cookies in-hand
 - iii. Cookie Stand (Cookie Booth like a Lemonade Stand)
 - c. Local Businesses
 - i. Cookie Business Challenge
 - ii. Cookie Booth locations



Decision Making

1. Where and when are you going to sell Cookies?
 - a. Digital Cookie
 - b. Neighborhood
 - c. Businesses/Cookie Business Challenge
 - d. Cookie Booths
2. How are you going to market the cookies?
 - a. Cookie Booth signs
 - b. Create a video
 - c. [Girl Scout Cookie Giphy channel](#)
 - d. Little Brownie Bakers—[Digital Marketing](#) resources
 - e. [Digital Cookie Marketing Tips](#)



Money Management

1. How are you going to keep track of the money and store it?
 - a. Keeping money safe.
 - b. Totaling packages on order card and money collected.
2. How do you make change?
 - a. How much does 1 package, 2 packages, 5 packages, etc. cost?
 - b. Practice making change
3. How does the Cookie Program help support you, your troop and the Council?
 - a. Troop proceeds
 - b. What can a cookie buy?
 - c. How does the cookie crumble? (see page 4)
 - d. Working as a council to exceed 2024 cookies sales of 1.25 million cookies for everyone to receive additional troop proceeds.

People Skills

1. Why are you selling cookies?
 - a. Learning by earning.
 - b. Reference back to goal setting and why the goals were determined.
 - c. Practice explaining to customers.
2. How are you going to approach customers?
 - a. Create scripts for phone calls.
 - b. Practice speaking to customers when going door-to-door or cookie booths.
 - c. Write message for a text and email.
 - d. Ask customer to donate their change towards a donation package of cookies.
 - e. Always say thank you even if nothing was purchased.
3. If you are selling cookies at a Cookie Booth, how are you going to work as a team and what roles will everyone play?
 - a. Is there a theme? What signs and/or decorations are needed?
 - b. What supplies are needed and who is bringing them?
 - i. Table, tablecloth, money box, cash for change, etc.
 - c. How many cookies are needed total and of each variety?

Business Ethics

1. How does the [Girl Scout Law](#) relate to cookies?
 - a. Review each step of the Girl Scout Law.
2. Is it important to follow the rules of the Cookie Sale?
 - a. Follow the dates of the program.
 - b. Selling within council boundaries.
 - c. Delivering cookies to customers as quickly as possible.
 - d. Attending what signed up for.
 - e. Volunteers be a role model.



Confidence. Chocolate. Coconut. Caramel. The whole package.

Describing the Girl Scout Cookie Program to parents and adults

When Girl Scouts sell Girl Scout Cookies...

1. **Goal Setting:** They learn to set goals and meet deadlines.
 - a. That means your Girl Scout won't tell you last minute that her science fair project is due tomorrow.
 - b. When the time comes, your Girl Scout will be ready to create a well-thought-out plan for researching colleges and applying for scholarships.
2. **Decision Making:** They learn to make decisions and work well with others.
 - a. Your Girl Scouts will be able to decide how to use her babysitting money—spend some, save some, give some to those in need.
 - b. As your Girl Scout grows up, she'll know when and how to give back to her community.
3. **People Skills:** They learn to talk and listen to all kinds of people.
 - a. That means your Girl Scout will be able to ask a teacher for help or navigate the school cafeteria more easily.
 - b. That means your Girl Scout will do better on school group projects or as a member of a sports team.
4. **Money Management:** They learn how to handle money and make decisions about how to use it.

- a. That means your daughter will learn about spending, saving and giving to those in need.
- b. Your Girl Scouts will be less likely to lose her lunch money or field trip fees.
- c. Your Girl Scout will be able to handle a checking account, help with the grocery shopping, and even stay on top of her cell phone bill!
5. **Business Ethics:** They learn to act honestly and fairly.
 - a. That means your Girl Scout's friends, classmates, and teachers will count on her and think of her as trustworthy.
 - b. Your Girl Scout will develop excellent references for when she looks for her first job or applies for college.
6. And More!
 - a. Girl Scouts learn the importance of earning money to support themselves.
 - b. Girl Scouts bring values of honesty and responsibility to their chosen career.
 - c. Girl Scouts have the skills to run their own business—and persuade an inventor to back them up.
 - d. Girl Scouts are able to influence others in their work and community.

Girl Scouts don't sugarcoat their dreams, just their cookies.

Additional Activities and Resources

[Entrepreneurship Badges and Pins chart](#)

[Cookie Business Badges](#)

[Cookie Entrepreneur Family Pin](#)

[Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy Activities](#)

[Ways to Participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program](#)

[Service Unit Cookie Rally Guide](#) – includes many activities

[5 Skills Matching Game](#)

[5 Skills Poster/Flyer \(1\)](#)

[5 Skills Poster/Flyer \(2\)](#)

[Little Brownie Bakers](#)

[Girl Scouts of USA](#)

Videos

[YouTube: Little Brownie Bakers Channel](#)

- [Chapter 1: Welcome](#)
- [Chapter 2: Girl Scout Cookies](#)
- [Chapter 3: Cookie Business](#)
- [Chapter 4: Your Cookie Customers](#)
- [LBB Bakery Team](#)
- [Welcome Girl Scout Entrepreneurs!](#)

Sources

[Financial Empowerment and Entrepreneurship](#)

[Cookie Family Connection Guide](#)

[Cookie Skills Fact Sheet](#)

[GSUSA Today's Girls Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs](#)

[Having it All: Girls and Financial Literacy](#)

