

## International Day of the Girl

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In December 2011, the members of the United Nations recognized that it was necessary to designate a day to raise awareness of the rights and value of girls across the globe. It was decided that October 11, 2012, would be the first International Day of the Girl. Across Canada, and across the world, many people took time both to celebrate the strides we have made, and also to discuss what can be done further.

Technology has allowed us to connect with others across the world in a blink of the eye, and many Canadian girls are already aware of the issues that girls around the world face. If your daughter is interested in getting involved, there are lots of ways in which she can contribute. Here are some ideas for you to celebrate and raise awareness for girls' rights on the International Day of the Girl, or any day of the year.

- Host a movie night, and pick a film that highlights women's rights, body image, or the way the media portrays women. Spend time discussing these issues afterwards and see if you can brainstorm any small changes that you can make.
- Follow blogs that champion the rights of women and girls, and discuss them with your family in an age-appropriate way. If you have boys, talk to them about respect and equality, and demonstrate respect for the women in your life through your words and actions.
- Point out media sources that portray women or girls in demeaning, sexualized, stereotyped or unrealistic ways, and make an effort to stop bringing these images into your home. This might mean changing the magazines you buy, shopping in new stores, or just changing the channel.
- Volunteer at a local organization that helps women or girls, such as a literacy project, or a girls sports program.
- Your children might want to host a bake sale, lemonade stand, or other fundraising event to raise money for an organization that promotes the rights of girls. Make sure you provide age-appropriate guidance and supervision to ensure safety, but let the kids take the lead on the project and allow their skills to shine!
- And of course, support your daughters and the girls in your life in exploring and pursuing educational and career opportunities, especially if their interests are in fields that are considered less traditionally female. This might mean enrolling them in science summer camp or carpentry classes, depending on their interests. One of the most helpful things you can do is to show interest in the things that interest them.

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Regardless of what you and your family do to celebrate the International Day of the Girl, whether as a family or in the community, have fun and challenge yourself to get involved. If you or your children are interested in learning more about the International Day of the Girl and the rights of girls around the world, be sure to check out the links below.

[United Nations: International Day of the Girl Child](#) – The United Nations offers detailed background information, ideas for activities, and even fun videos featuring celebrities who are active in the fight for the rights of girls around the world.

[Status of Women Canada: International Day of the Girl](#) – Status of Women Canada's website has lots of information about the rights of girls and women both in Canada, and around the world. Check out their website to learn more, and don't forget to send an electronic postcard while you're there.

[Manitoba Status of Women: International Day of the Girl](#) – Check here for information and ways in which Manitobans can make a global difference through local action and awareness.

[Plan Canada: Because I am a Girl](#) – This non-profit organization was instrumental in creating Canada's recognition of the International Day of the Girl. On their site, you can find lots of kid and teen-friendly information and links about the International Day of the Girl, and ways in which Canadians can increase awareness and take part.