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Is an All-Girls School the Right Fit for Your Daughter?



Judy Koutsky
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Here are some pros and cons to consider in making your decision.



Maybe you went to an all-girls school and want the same experience for your daughter -- or maybe you want an entirely different experience for her. How do you know what type of



school would be a good fit?

Here are some of the pros and cons of a single-gender school:

Pros

"From my experience in the schools and students I've encountered, an all-girls school gives the best all-around educational experience for most students," says Alexis Browsh, who teaches at and graduated from a private girls' school outside of Philadelphia and owns the tutoring company [Ready Tutors](#). "I have experience teaching in public and private schools. At all-girls schools, the girls are very motivated in both academics and extracurricular activities. They push each other in a positive way to do well and get involved." She notes that almost every girl is in a club or sport, which is not necessarily the case at a co-ed school.

Taking boys out the equation may make girls feel less self-conscious and more likely to raise their hands and step forward with their thoughts -- even if they differ from others in the class -- and to make suggestions. Plus, younger boys can sometimes be disruptive in school. When teachers have to stop the class to talk to them, it interrupts the overall learning environment.

"Many girls struggle with self-esteem, self-image, level of confidence, social media, peer relationships with boys, backbiting, jealousy and a whole host of other issues that all seem to centralize around boys and fitting in. If there are no boys in a school, girls are more likely to take a more positive approach to their social environment," says [Tamara Hill](#), a child and adolescent mental health therapist who attended an all-girls college.

She maintains that sending your daughter to an all-girls school is one way to keep her focused on education and developing positive social relationships. "All-girls schools also contribute a great deal to female self-esteem and independence," adds Hill. "It really helps when teen girls

can see that they don't need boys to make them strong and powerful and that girls can excel in math and science."

Cons

As with anything, it's good to consider both sides before you decide what schooling will work best for your daughter. In terms of the cons to sending your child to an all-girls school, Hill notes, "some girls may struggle with self-identity and compare themselves to other girls who seem more popular in their program." This may lead to eating disorders or struggling to fit in.

Additionally, some experts feel that a co-education better prepares girls for their future working with both genders. "Co-educational schools represent the real world, in which males and females work alongside each other in all aspects of jobs and professions. We should teach our children how to develop these relationships whenever possible, and co-educational schools provide that experience," says [Kathryn Starke](#), an elementary school literacy coach.

"In a co-educational school environment, children learn to work and collaborate not only with classmates of different learning styles, ages, cultures and behaviors, but also of different genders. As we know, male and female brains differ, even at early ages." The experience of working with both genders may help your daughter work well with the opposite gender later in life, especially if she enters a male-dominated field.

Making the Decision

"Having SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) goals is an important first step in choosing the right school," says Hill. Bringing your daughter into the discussion is an important part of making sure the whole family is onboard with the decision. Whether to send your daughter to a single-gender school should be a family conversation.

Visiting some all-girls schools will give a good impression of what daily student life will be like. Take your daughter on a tour of schools and see what she thinks. Talk to other girls who have gone to single-gender schools. Gather all the information you can before making your final, informed decision.

And read [Is an All-Boys School the Right Fit for Your Son?](#)

Judy Koutsky is the former editorial director of "KIWI magazine," a green parenting publication. She was also executive editor of [Parenting.com](#), AOL Parent and [BabyTalk.com](#). Follow her on [Twitter](#).

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