Throughout Barbie’s 60-year history, Barbie has been committed to showing girls careers underrepresented to women. As we celebrate 50 years since men went to the moon – but still no women – Barbie shares Top tips for parents to highlight STEM for girls, created with Dr Elizabeth Kilbey, Consultant Clinical Psychologist working with young children and families, supporting them with childhood development.

Top Tips for Parents to Encourage Girls Into STEM

- **Show girls positive female role models from an early age.** By introducing them to stories and journeys of women from all walks of life, including those in STEM, they begin to see more opportunities for themselves. You can find examples of strong females on the Barbie website.

- **If you have any female friends who work in STEM, ask if they will go into your child’s school to talk about their job and workplace.** It is important to have relatable STEM heroes and role models as much as well-known ones.

- **Get your child excited about STEM by helping them understand how it has already enriched their lives with examples such as the internet, computers and cars.** Make the examples they choose relate to their lives and hero women, such as Marie Curie, who worked in these areas. In recent years, amazing women have been highlighted through media, helping parents and kids to learn about these women. Some of the ways you can work together with your child, watching films, researching online, taking trips to museums or landmarks, or playing with toys to learn more about women who have changed the world.

- **Be mindful of how your child, and the people around her may fall into stereotypes about girls or gender roles that reflect the full range of things she is capable of or can aspire to.** It can be helpful to encourage your daughter to notice the language that she uses about herself and other girls, or the assumptions that she is making. Stereotypes are every bit as dangerous as the ‘silent oppressor’ – they operate at an unconscious level so we begin to accept their messages without challenging them. Be the voice that helps your daughter be aware of the roles that she might be falling into and to break free from their limiting forces.

- **Make sure play with your daughter reflects aspirations.** When role playing, encourage children to include STEM themes or activities to make them more relatable. These aspirations are part of their mental development from a young age. Because if we can dream it, we can achieve it.

- **Helping girls be successful in STEM subjects at a young age helps to build a foundation that they are not only for boys.** Children will have these subjects and they feel they will be successful in, just as much as the ones they will enjoy. We tend to enjoy what we are good at, so early investment in STEM skills and knowledge is a win-win.

- **Take an interest in your daughter’s learning.** Ask her what she did at school that day and if she doesn’t mention STEM subjects ask about them so you can begin to show a specific interest in these subjects. Make this a focus of any discussions with your daughter’s teacher and begin to show the school that you really value these subjects for your daughter.

- **In the school holidays you could arrange for your daughter to visit different workplaces to see STEM careers in action, such as a science lab, robot engineers or engineering companies.** Many companies also offer career days and job shadowing so you can see what a day is like in a particular career and this can help make the STEM careers real for girls – or the assumptions that they can see it as you can be it – and this is a way for girls to imagine themselves in STEM roles.

- **If you have skills within STEM arrange to tutor not just your own chil- dren but others in the community to help spread the message to other girls.** You can use your own experience and experiences to pass on your message of what STEM is and the positive impact it had on you.

- **Expose your daughter to STEM related vocabulary at an early age.** What does one do is in, or where is the toy in the water? If you’re playing with blocks, for example, use “cube” instead of “square.” These words will begin to resonate early on and will make their progress in STEM subjects that much easier as they get older.

- **One of the most important ways to learn is through doing – the process of figuring out and answering the questions thing work in the real world.** Think about ways of getting your daughter involved in figuring things out and teaching her to see her work as a science experiment. For instance, if your daughter breaks, work with her to solve the problem and fix it together. This can sow the seeds of an interest in engineering and mechanics which are careers very commonly underrepresented by women.

- **Science is a broad subject which is brilliant because it means there is something that will interest everyone.** If you are travelling on a plane, you could have a discussion about the pilots who fly the plane or the engineers who make the plane safe for people. This also makes learning more fun and relatable to the real world.

- **Help your daughter to understand the value of this transferable skill and knowledge is a win-win.** Helping girls be successful in STEM subjects at a young age helps to build a foundation that they are not only for boys. Children will have these subjects and they feel they will be successful in, just as much as the ones they will enjoy. We tend to enjoy what we are good at, so early investment in STEM skills and knowledge is a win-win.

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- **Encourage your daughter to be involved in team sports.** Most STEM careers involve some kind of collaboration and teamwork is an important skill. Help your daughter understand the value of this transferrable skill and how it can be used in a future STEM career.

- **Breaking the myth that they are only for boys.** Children will pursue subjects they feel they will be successful in, just as much as the ones they will enjoy. We tend to enjoy what we are good at, so early investment in STEM skills and knowledge is a win-win.

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- **STEM subjects are built on the skills of critical thinking, and critical thinking skills can be taught and nurtured in even very young girls.** Start by demonstrating how to observe, for example with what is going on when you go outside, be it the changing of the seasons, the way things move in the world, or many other things that are marked on the street, and then encoura- ge your daughter to ask questions, create hypothesis and test hypothesis. The label STEM come from an interest in how something works and asking “why”.

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