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STEM: not just for boys.



A Verizon commercial, which debuted this past June, explains that 66 percent of fourth grade girls like math and science, though only 18 percent of college engineering majors are female, according to the National Science Foundation.

The ad goes on to explain the reasons why many girls stray from their original interest in the sciences. Growing up, girls will hear phrases like, “*Who’s my pretty girl,*” “*don’t get your dress dirty,*” “*be careful,*” and “*why don’t you hand that to your brother?*” In the commercial, these phrases are uttered as she’s trying new things and exploring, but society tells her to be careful, let the boys do the heavy lifting, and not to make a mess. These words can discourage girls from pursuing their interests in STEM fields.

These phrases focus more on the appearance of young girls rather than on what they can do. When girls grow up, they are peppered with comments and compliments that tell them how pretty, sweet, and cute they are. But, what about their minds? Are young girls not supposed to be smart too?

By the end of the commercial, she walks down the school hallway and looks at a flyer for the science fair. She seems very interested, but then, she starts applying her pink, sparkly lipgloss and walks away.

Young girls actually like, and are good at, science and math. However, society’s norms have made such girls think they can’t do it, that they aren’t strong or smart enough to be successful in STEM careers. Because of that, we need to work extra hard to make sure girls know that they *can* do anything they want to, including a career in math and science.

The name of the Verizon ad is “Inspire Her Mind,” and at the end of the commercial it reads, “*inspired minds can change the world.*” So, let’s inspire the young generations of girls and show that they can make a difference.

The commercial ends with, “Isn’t it time we told her she’s pretty *brilliant*, too?”

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*Photo courtesy of flickr.com*