Kids, Allowance and Gender

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

Topic Summary

There was a recent survey that showed in U.S. families, boys are paid twice as much allowance as girls for doing weekly chores. The “average” boy earns a $13.80 weekly allowance and the “average” girl gets about half as much: $6.71. According to the research, boys averaged more allowance than girls because they were more often assigned chores that are more physically hard, including cutting the grass and the bushes. Girls were more often paid for jobs such as cleaning the toilet, loading the dishwasher or sweeping floors. Boys also earned more money because they were paid for jobs girls were not paid for at all, including showering, and brushing and flossing their teeth. A survey in 2014 showed that parents are more
likely to give their sons an allowance than their daughters: 67% of boys received allowance whereas 59% of girls got allowance.

The “gender wage gap” refers to the difference between men’s and women’s salaries. In general, women make less money than men. In fact, women earn 80% of what men make which means that for every $1.00 men earn, women earn 80 cents. And Black, Latina and Native American women make even less than what white women make on average.

Note: If you need to explain what “average” means, say that the average is a number that helps us describe specific things about large groups of people. Also, explain what a “research study” is—when a person or company asks many people the same questions in order to get information to understand and describe specific things about people.

Age
7 and up

Questions to Start the Conversation
- What surprises you about the difference in allowance for girls and boys?
- Why do you think boys earn more than girls for allowance?
- Why do you think that girls and boys have different chores?
- In our house, do boys/men and girls/women have different chores? Why do you think that is?
- How do you feel about the difference between what boys and girls earn for allowance?

Questions to Dig Deeper
(See the Additional Resources section for articles and information that address these questions.)
Ideas for Taking Action

Ask: What can we do to help? What individual and group actions can help make a difference?

- Talk with others about the allowance pay gap to see if there are differences in allowances/chores among your friends, classmates and peers. Conduct a classroom or school-wide survey to see if there are differences.
- Have a classroom or school discussion about gender stereotypes and what can be done about them on a personal level and within institutions (school, workplace, etc.).
- Write a letter to family members, the school newspaper or elected officials about the allowance pay gap and share what impact it has on you and others and what you think should be done about it.

Additional Resources

- The Gender Allowance Gap (ADL Lesson Plan)
- Allowance gap: Parents pay boys twice as much as girls, study finds (Newsela)
- Mo'Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes (ADL Lesson Plan)
- How Can I Prevent Gender Bias in Young Children?
- Toward Communication Free of Gender Bias