



## Abstract: Female Interest in Mathematics



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Interest in mathematics is noticeably lower among females than males. This lack of interest, as measured by attitudes toward math, the motivation to study math, and the ability to engage with math-related content, has been identified as a factor that leads to fewer females pursuing degrees in fields that require a strong math background (Linver, Davis-Kean, & Eccles, 2002; Spelke, 2005; Watt, 2006). Attitudes held by females about (1) who possesses mathematical ability, (2) sociocultural factors, and (3) previous experiences with mathematics are elements that directly influence female interest in mathematics. The literature identifies teachers and parents as especially influential in this regard. Behaviors and comments made by teachers and parents can influence whether females see math as an interesting subject to study and whether they see themselves pursuing careers that require intense mathematical preparation.

The literature overview and information sheet provide a review of research on intrinsic and extrinsic factors that affect female interest in math and recommend how practitioners can use a variety of tools to improve math interest among females and boost interest among males as well (Hiebert & Grouws, 2007; Tobias, 1989).

### References

- Hiebert, J., & Grouws, D. A. (2007). *Effective teaching for the development of skill and conceptual understanding of number: What is most effective?* (Effective Instruction Brief). Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Retrieved from [http://www.nctm.org/uploadedFiles/Research\\_News\\_and\\_Advocacy/Research/Clips\\_and\\_Briefs/Research\\_brief\\_01\\_-\\_Effective\\_Teaching.pdf](http://www.nctm.org/uploadedFiles/Research_News_and_Advocacy/Research/Clips_and_Briefs/Research_brief_01_-_Effective_Teaching.pdf)
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- Watt, H. M. G. (2006). The role of motivation in gendered educational and occupational trajectories related to maths. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 12(4), 305–322.

### Brief list of recommended reading

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