

# To Get Kids Into Science, Just Do It

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Developmental psychologists have long noted that very small children think a lot like scientists. Anybody who has spent time with a 2-year-old has witnessed their insatiable curiosity and constant experiments. Yet by the time most children are in middle school, they lose much of that innate interest and don't see science as part of their future, especially girls and minorities.

How can we counteract this phenomenon, given how important it is to encourage people to develop scientific skills and to know and care about science? What can we do to help children retain their natural scientific impulse?

A series of studies by Marjorie Rhodes at New York University and her colleagues suggests an interesting and unexpected answer. It has a lot to do with subtle features of how we talk to children about science. Do we talk about “being a scientist” or “doing science”? It turns out that children are more likely to stay engaged in science if they think of it as something you do rather than something you are.

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