

Encourage girls to take Science seriously this National Science and engineering week with a change to Science toys

Submitted by: BrightMinds

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National Science and Engineering Week (formerly National Science Week) is an opportunity for people of all ages to take part in science, engineering and technology activities.

Alison Quill, founder of BrightMinds and a former secondary school science teacher, has a personal mission to reverse the stereotypical view that boys are better at science. She wants to get more girls interested in science and calls upon the UK toy manufacturers to put girls' science at the top of their agenda.

"I am fed-up with receiving chemistry sets or electronics kits to review with no girls' photos on the box packaging – only the standard grey-haired, bespectacled, white-coated, male, mad professor " says Alison Quill. "I have even had construction products with the words 'Toys for boys' on the box!"

Recent statistics from the Institute of Physics show that there is a significant reduction in the number of students opting to take physics at A level in general. But the most drastic drop has come from girls who account for only 22% of the total number taking the course*.

But despite this under-representation, and contrary to popular belief, girls outperform the boys in terms of achievement, with 34% obtaining an A grade compared to only 27% of boys. In light of this, Alison is determined that perceptions about girls' ability to get to grips with the laws of science must be challenged. 'Parents, teachers and students need to get out of the mindset that science is a boys' subject. But so do the toy manufacturers. Take a look at most science-based kits and the images on the packaging almost always show only boys.

Through the BrightMinds range, Alison Quill is keen to introduce the young female population to science in a fun and interactive way. The new double-page spread section features such carefully selected products as a perfume laboratory, a Bath Bomb Factory and a Soap Science Lab. 'It would be great if all parents could make a pledge to boycott science products where boys are the sole audience. Maybe we can make some headway this week towards encouraging greater take up amongst female students'.

To get hold of the new BrightMinds catalogue, simply call 0844 41 222 50 or order on-line at www.brightminds.co.uk.

Ends

Further press information available from: Alison Quill, 01761 438 472 or Alison.quill@brightminds.co.uk

Note to editors:

- BrightMinds was recently placed alongside Argos in the Daily Telegraph's top ten mail order catalogues available in the UK

- The top paying jobs across the UK, Canada and the US according to alec.co.uk are in the medical profession, all of which require a science-based degree

- Alison Quill is available for interview

* 2005 figures

