

Year Reception

Looking at and Challenging Gender Expectations Using Toys

Time: approximately 40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson:

All children will be able to talk about themselves and the girls'/boys' toys they like to play with at home and at school;

Most children will be able to talk about how some toys are seen as girls' or boys' (and whether or not this is fair) and begin to accept that, although girls and boys are not the same, they can still all play with a whole range of different kinds of toys;

Some children will be able to understand that their own identity as a boy or a girl is not determined by which kinds of toys they play with and begin to think about why some toys are seen as girls' or boys' toys.

Resources

- ✓ Space for walking round;
- ✓ Toys brought in from home by the children (with plenty of spares for children who forget) or enough toys for at least one per child provided from school;
- ✓ 3 hoops for sorting toys.

A Warm up

Time: about 5 minutes

Walking game

First make no eye contact, just walk round.

Then, walk round and catch each others eyes and smile – try to smile at everyone in class.

Finally, walk round and gently shake hands with everyone and say 'Hello, how are you?' and smile at each other.

B Main Activity

Time: about 30 minutes

1. Explain that today we are all thinking about toys. First, let the children get out the toys they have brought in (or the toys you have provided) and simply share them with each other and play with them for ten minutes or so.
2. When they have had enough playing, ask the children to try and get into a perfect circle and sit down, bringing the toys with them.
3. Briefly go round the circle and let the children show everyone what toys they have brought; then explain you want them to think about sorting them out – how could we sort them? Get some ideas from the children and select an idea that might lead to some discussion about gender (e.g. materials/colour/type of toys): aim for three piles – **girls'**, **boys'** and **neutral** toys.
4. Lead a discussion about the gender issues with the toys – get the children to think about:
 - Did girls and boys mix (or not) when we were playing just now? What (if anything) did you play with together?

- How might you distinguish girls' and boys' toys? Or can they all be for anyone?
- If they are different, how are they different? Why do you think they are different?
- Are there any boys' toys here that any of the girls ever like to play with (or – think about the female characters in what might be seen as boys' toys)?
- Do any of the boys ever play with any of the girls' toys (or – think about times that men might look after babies or children, and so on)?
- Can you think of what grown-ups do? Discuss the role of some grown-ups that you know. (e.g. Do women drive cars? Do men look after babies?)

Think of lots of relevant examples personal to the children in your class – who has a cuddly toy at night? Whose mummy is a police officer? Who likes playing power rangers?

5. Each time there is a suitable point made, move some toys between piles (e.g. if someone says boys can play with dolls, move all doll type toys into a middle neutral pile). Aim to get as many toys as possible into the middle neutral pile.

6. After about twenty minutes sum up the discussion by looking at the new piles and remind the children how the discussion led to toys being moved from girls' or boys' piles into the middle pile for anyone. Although boys and girls are different in some ways they can still share and enjoy the same things – try to move the children away from too rigid a view of gender roles. Finally, ask if any of the children have changed their minds at all about what is a girls' or boys' toy.

C End game

Time: about 5 minutes

Get the children to take it in turns to name the next child to leave to go to play (or snack time, or whatever will follow the session). Ask girls to name boys and vice versa

Suggested Extension Activities

Read one of the following books to the class:

- ➔ 'Amazing Grace' Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch
- ➔ 'A Very Unusual Day' Sandy Toksvig
- ➔ 'Give a Dog a Name' Barry Wade
- ➔ 'Stephanie's Pony Tail' Robert Munsch
- ➔ 'Prince Cinders' Babette Cole
- ➔ 'Princess Smartypants' Babette Cole
- ➔ 'Giraffes Can't Dance' Giles Andreae
- ➔ 'Drum, Chavi, Drum!' Mayra Dole
- ➔ 'Princess Backwards' Jane Gray
- ➔ 'Oliver Button is a Sissy' Tomie de Paola

Learning outcomes	Early Years Foundation Stage Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Links to SEAL	Every Child Matters
<p>All children will be able to talk about themselves and the girls'/boys' toys they like to play with at home and at school</p> <p>Most children will be able to talk about how some toys are seen as girls' or boys' (and whether or not this is fair) and begin to accept that although girls' and boys' are not the same they can still all play with a whole range of different kinds of toys</p> <p>Some children will be able to understand that their own identity as a boy or a girl is not determined by which kinds of toys they play with and begin to think about <i>why</i> some toys are seen as girls' or boys' toys</p>	<p>Dispositions and Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group <p>Self Confidence and Esteem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others <p>Making Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly <p>Behaviour and Self Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show confidence and the ability to stand up for own rights 	<p>Theme Six</p> <p>'Relationships'</p> <p>(Red Set)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Choices – I can tell you what is fair or unfair 	<p>Be healthy</p> <p>Enjoy and Achieve</p>