

DIY TOYS 'R' US FOR ALL OF

Becoming gender stereotype detectives in the toy world and wider world

- 1 If working in a large group, split the class into small groups.
- 2 **Containing gender:** Give each group 2 containers. Decorate one container with the letter R and one with the letter C.
- 3 **What is a gender stereotype?** Discuss what a gender stereotype is and what it means to **challenge** or **reinforce** gender stereotypes in the toy world and in the wider world (e.g. clothes, jobs, identities, music, adverts etc.). For more ideas, resources and lesson plans on how to do this, see **Gender Watch Bingo**
- 4 Ask each group to choose a shop they have been to recently or seen online. Each group explores their chosen website (if it is possible, take a fieldtrip to the store).
- 5 **Gender stereotype detectives:** Investigate together how the toys are marketed and displayed. Can you tell which products are for 'girls' and 'boys'? How do you know? (e.g. colours, font, images). Are any products challenging gender stereotypes?
- 6 **Collecting the Evidence:** Using the two containers, place a button in the R container each time you spot a gender stereotype being REINFORCED and place a button in the C container each time you spot a gender stereotype being challenged. Take a screen shot of 'challenging' and 'reinforcing' examples. Count up how many buttons you collected in each container. Display your findings creatively (e.g. sticking the buttons on the container, hanging them from ribbon or string)
- 7 **Toys are for (all of) us:** invite each group to write a letter or email to the retailer expressing either their concern for reinforcing gender stereotypes OR praising their gender inclusive marketing. Include photos. Maybe insert some buttons if you are using paper and envelopes.

Extension activities: this activity can be explored through any area of society and culture (e.g. jobs, music, hobbies, identity, TV adverts, gaming sites etc.). Children can also create their own adverts or write a poem or song to communicate their findings.

Before you begin adapting this activity for the children and young people in your setting, read the section on **Safety and Support**.

What is a stereotype?

Stereotypes come from, and are rooted, in deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices. They will vary across culture, place and time.

What you need

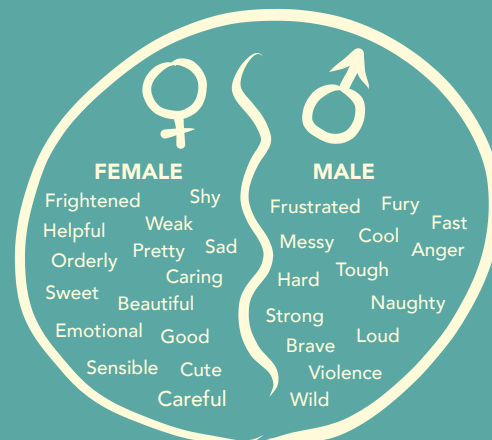
- 2 containers (e.g. bottles, buckets)
- Art materials to decorate each container
- Beads or buttons (if you want to explore feelings alongside the task, see **'Felting Our Feelings'** Starter Activity for more ideas).
- Digital tablets (for website searching and taking screen-shots)

Breaking the mould: challenging gender stereotypes



HEN!

Loosening the gender straight jacket for children in Sweden: 'Hen' is a gender neutral pronoun



Addressing gender stereotypes in the early years

Gender Respect Project: supporting children and young people to understand, question and challenge gender inequality and violence

Why gendered marketing matters

Biology doesn't justify gender divide for toys

Lesson plans to help schools challenge gender stereotypes