

YOUNGER YEARS

VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE



Non-formal education sessions
for children and young people to help stop violence against
girls and young women.

**STOP
THE
VIOLENCE**

Speak out
for girls' rights

Part of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts' "Stop the violence – speak out for girls' rights" campaign and its Voices Against Violence curriculum.



**WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF GIRL GUIDES
AND GIRL SCOUTS**



**International
Women's Day**



Session: Play rules



International
Women's Day



WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF GIRL GUIDES
AND GIRL SCOUTS

Learning aims

- To think about what toys and films tell us about being a girl or a boy.
- To understand how these stereotypes are used in play and how they limit the lives and development of girls and boys.
- To negotiate more positive gender rules and roles in the playground.

Preparation and Materials

- Research local children's books that challenge gender stereotypes. If there are none then you will need to make some stories up - you can pick a popular children's story that you know and change it to challenge the established gender stereotypes in it.
- Paper, pencils and pens (make sure there are different colours particularly plenty of red, pink and blue).
- (Optional) A short (about 40cm) piece of stick, circles of paper (about 20 cm in diameter), strips of material, triangles of material, glitter and decorations. Plenty of blue and pink material.
- Copies of handout 'Girls play Boys play'.

THINK:

In this session you may need to challenge some deeply held gender stereotypes. You need to be prepared with relevant examples to help your group understand that they can create a more equal world. Create an environment where this activity does not lead to teasing, particularly in mixed groups. If you are not comfortable doing this, try another activity. Children can be teased and bullied by their peers and other adults for not conforming to gender roles and expectations. Listen to children. Remind the children who they can talk to if they have any concerns and follow the anti-bullying policy (if you have one) and the child protection policy and procedure.

Do not reinforce gender roles, norms and stereotypes by telling children what to be. Allow children to be 'me'. Be aware of the risks in this session as children may try to apply its messages and they may experience a backlash from their community. Adapt this session to make it relevant and safe.

KNOW:

Do do your own research by speaking with local and national women's organizations or checking their websites for information about Gender Equality.

INVOLVE BOYS:

It is important to give boys the opportunity to talk about what it means to be a boy. Ask them to think about the expectations that are placed on them. Do they feel pressurized to be violent or to be strong? Are they expected to play certain games? Are they teased if they do not conform? It may be difficult to get boys to talk about this, so perhaps start by focusing on encouraging them to play different sorts of games or to talk about fictional characters. Start to transform traditional harmful ideas of masculinity into something that reflects the diverse experiences of boys and men and which promotes gender equality and healthy relationships.

- If you do not have a co-educational group try to involve a local boys' group in a game in the next session so that girls and boys play together. This could be a game of football with mixed teams or a mixed ballet production.
- Watch a film/read a story where the characters challenge the social rules.



TIME

ACTIVITY : PLAY RULES

NOTES



1. Prepare – Safe session

Remember to create a safe and supportive space for participants. Remind them who they can talk to about their own experiences of violence. Explain the learning aims and what issue you will be talking about.

Give participants the opportunity to take time out and leave the session to do an alternative activity like drawing. Check in with participants – allow them to introduce their mood and tell you about their day.



2. Actor: To think about the messages about being a boy or a girl

Ask everyone to think about their favourite film or story.

Ask everyone to walk around the room pretending to be their favourite character from the film. Girls can be boys, boys can be girls. If you are working with a girl-only group encourage them to act out some male characters.

In the film story are there characteristics that make them a boy or a girl?

Are girls encouraged to be princesses or particular characters from local myth? Are they expected to be pretty and petite? Are boys encouraged to be superheroes or beasts? Dangerous and tough? Is there a diverse mix of characters? Or a narrow view of girls and boys? Can anyone ever really live up to these characters?

Explain that it is important to enjoy films and stories but we do not have to live up to the high expectations of the characters. Use examples of characters that are more complex and realistic (the children may well already bring these up) – take them from children's films and books.



3. Rules of Play: To think about the rules and roles of play for girls and boys

Ask the group to imagine that they are in their school playground or park or somewhere where children play. Talk to them about what they see. Tell them about what you see in a local play area. Make this relevant to your local community – are girls allowed to play outside? Are boys dominating the space where football is played? Are girls inside the house? Are girls and boys playing together? What games do girls play? What games do boys play?

Split the group into pairs and ask them to fill in the worksheet 'Girls play Boys play'. They can either draw or write on the worksheet. Ask them to fill in the first two boxes with ideas about how girls play and what they play with, and with ideas about how boys play and what they play with.

Ask if there are any rules in the playground or park about what boys are not allowed to play or what girls are not allowed to play.

Ask participants to fill in the next boxes showing girls playing what they described as boys play and boys playing what they described as girls play. Then ask them to draw boys and girls playing together.

Explain that every child has the right to play but that children are often expected to play in certain ways. Make this relevant to your community and discuss the rules of play for girls – in some communities girls are not allowed to play outside or play with boys, and in other communities only boys play very active games. Sometimes girls might be called tom-boys or boys are teased for playing girl games or with girls.

Explain that if girls and boys do not stick to society's rules of play they can experience teasing or bullying. Use local examples. You could discuss the names that girls and boys might be called if they do not conform to the rules of play. How would they deal with these situations?

TIME**ACTIVITY : PLAY RULES****NOTES**

4. We all play: To breakdown gender stereotypes

If it is appropriate spend some time challenging stereotypes in the playground. Draw pictures of boys doing ballet or girls playing football or girls playing outside. Ask girls to act being boys and boys to act being girls.

Ask the group to draw pictures of a playground or create a short drama piece where there are no 'gender rules' and everyone can play with what they like.

If it is safe to do so in your community you can talk about how participants can play the games they would like to play?

Do not put girls at risk by encouraging them to do anything that they would be unsafe doing.



5. Close the session

What have they learned from this activity and how will this learning affect their lives now and in the future. Remind participants that if they want to talk to someone you can support them with that. Also remember to follow up any concerns.

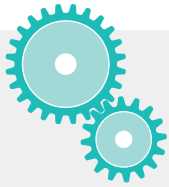
Give the group the opportunity to talk to you at the end of the session.



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Tool: Girls play Boys play



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GIRLS PLAY

BOYS PLAY

GIRLS CAN PLAY...

BOYS CAN PLAY...

GIRLS AND BOYS CAN PLAY TOGETHER

GIRLS AND BOYS CAN PLAY TOGETHER



Session: Toy story



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Learning aims

- To understand gender stereotypes and how to challenge them.

Preparation and Materials

- Collect a selection of different toys for boys and girls or alternatively use images (see pg. 9 - 11).
- Flipchart or board, pens or chalk.

THINK:

You may need to challenge some deeply held gender stereotypes. You need to provide a space for young people to consider who they are, who 'ME' is. Be careful to create an environment where this activity does not lead to teasing, particularly in mixed groups. Create a safe space where children can choose not to conform.

Do not reinforce gender roles, norms and stereotypes by telling children what to be. Instead allow children to be 'me'. Be aware of the risks in this session as children may try to apply the messages from the session at home and in their community and they may experience criticism. Adapt this session to make it relevant and safe in your community. Some children may experience bullying and abuse from their peers if they do not conform to gender roles. Listen to children.

KNOW:

Young children are already learning about what it means to be a girl or a boy. They receive messages about gender roles, norms and stereotypes. Even play can convey these messages – for example boys are expected to play outdoors and with cars, soldiers and guns. Girls may be expected to play indoors and with toys such as dolls, cooking sets or sewing. This can influence how they see themselves, how they see others and how they make choices and play together. Girls and boys may not think of themselves as always doing activities or behaving in a way that is specific to their own gender. Gender should be seen as a sliding scale and not as a rigid box.

INVOLVE BOYS:

It is important that boys have the opportunity to talk about what it means to be a boy and to think about the roles and expectations placed on them. Do they feel pressurized to be strong? Are they expected to play certain games? Are they teased if they do not conform? It may be difficult to

engage boys in talking about this, so perhaps focus on encouraging boys to try playing different sorts of games or to talk about fictional characters. Start to transform harmful ideas of masculinity into something that reflects the diverse experiences of boys and men.

TAKING IT FURTHER:

Why not invite a local children's or women's group with expertise in this area and ask them to come and help to run a session or speak about their experiences.

Adapted from Expect Respect, Women's Aid

TIME**ACTIVITY : TOY STORY****NOTES****1. Prepare – Safe session**

Remember to create a safe and supportive space for participants. Remind them who they can talk to about their own experiences of violence.

Explain the learning aims and what issue you will be talking about.

Give participants the opportunity to take time out and leave the session. Check in with participants – allow them to introduce their mood and tell you about their day.

**2. Pick a toy: To introduce the session**

Ask the children to choose a toy and to introduce the toy to everybody explaining why they chose it and what they like about it. Do they consider it to be a girl toy or a boy toy?

Explain that this session is about thinking about the toys we play with.

**3. Toy sorting: To think about how toys can be divided**

Ask participants what makes the toys different and how can we sort them?

Ask the group if they can sort the toys into piles.

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.

Toys can portray strong messages about what society says about being a boy or a girl. It is important to give children the opportunity to think about this and think about how to be 'ME'



TIME**ACTIVITY : TOY STORY****NOTES**

4. Toy talking: To think about gender stereotypes in toys that they play with and start to break them down

Lead a discussion about how toys and games seem to be aimed at either girls or boys. Each time there is a suitable comment 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.

After about twenty minutes summarize the discussion by looking at the new piles and reminding 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 physically different, 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 about what is a girl's or a boy's toy.

Think of examples personal to the children in your group – who has a cuddly toy at night? Whose mother is a police officer? Leaders need to carry this out in an environment where it is acceptable to not conform to gender stereotypes - otherwise children who give examples which are non-conformist may be teased.

If it is a co-educational group did girls and boys mix (or not) when we were playing just now? What (if anything) did you play with together?

How might you know what a girl's or a boy's toy or game is? 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 would ever like to play with?

Do any of the boys ever play with any of the girls' toys?



5. Toy playing: To start to breakdown gender stereotypes

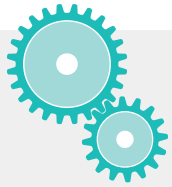
Finish with free play with all the toys.



6. Close the session

What have you learned from this activity and what games and toys will you now try and play with. Remind participants that if they want to talk to someone you can support them with that. Also remember to follow up any concerns.

Give the group the opportunity to talk to you at the end of the session.



TOOL : Images of toys



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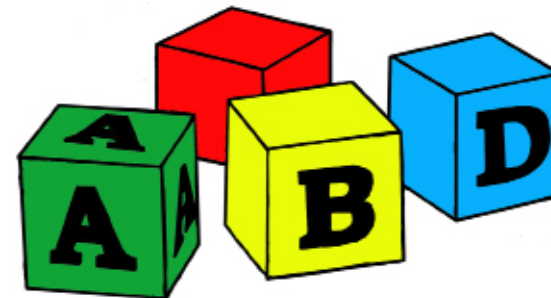
Car



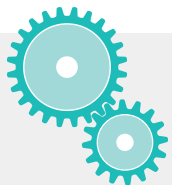
Football



Doll



Blocks



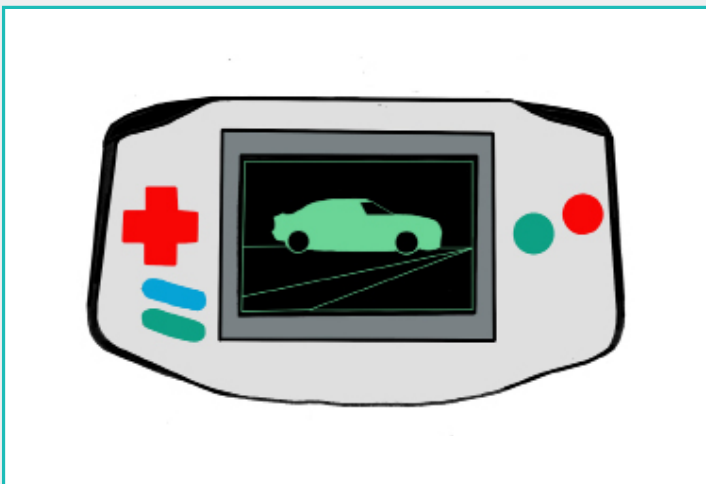
TOOL : Images of toys continued



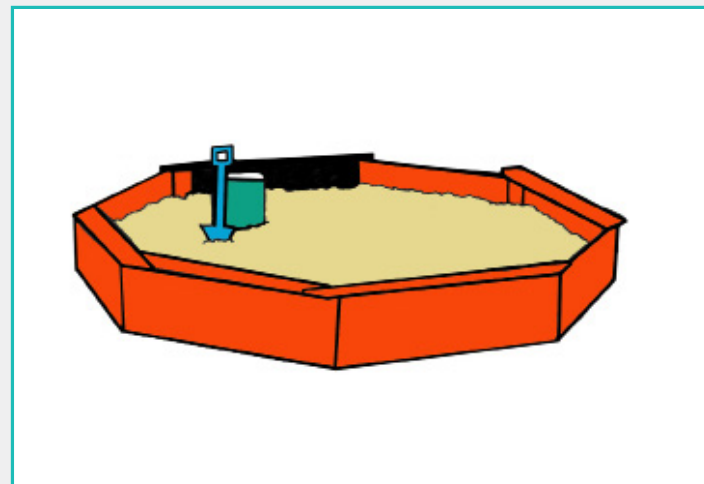
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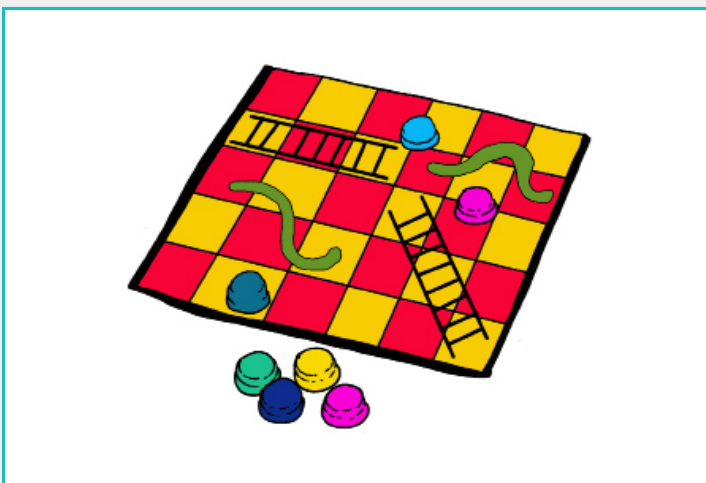
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Computer game



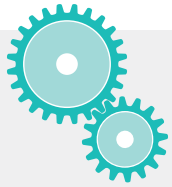
Sand pit



Snakes and ladders



Wendyhouse



TOOL : Images of toys continued



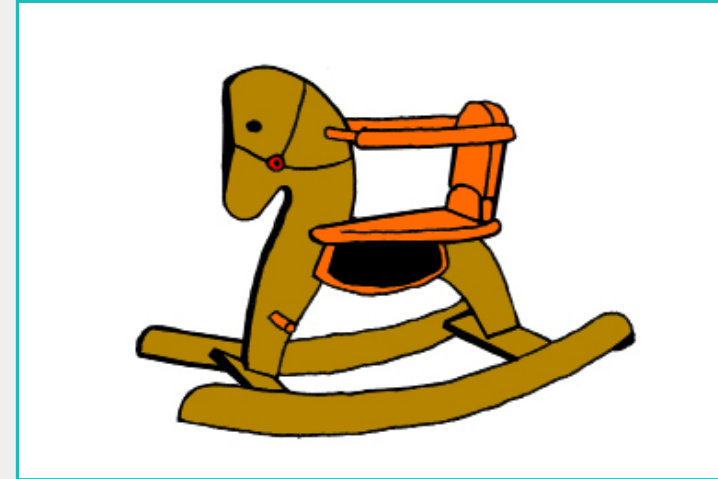
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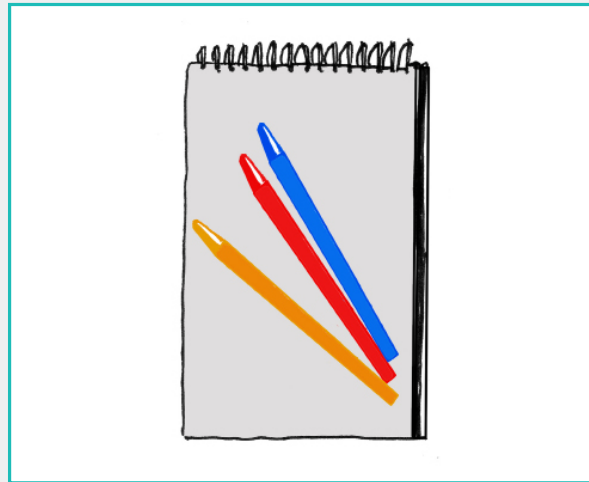
Treehouse



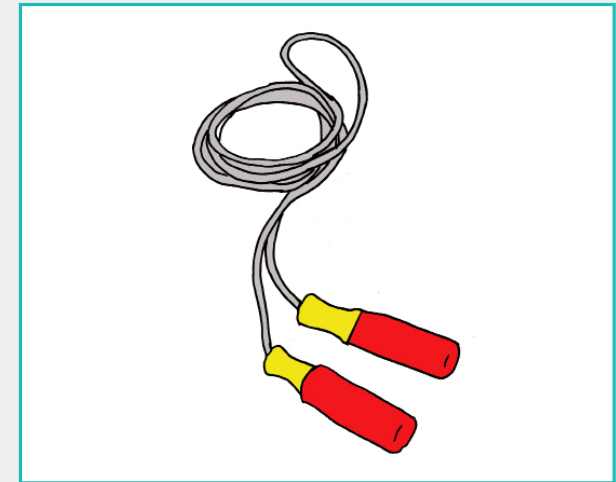
Rocking horse



Teddy bear



Pens and paper



Skipping rope



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