

Discussion/Activity

Provide the children with small post-it notes or small pieces paper. Ask the children to write a different toy on each piece of paper.

Collect the post-its and then ask some children to read them aloud. As a class decide if the toy is usually thought of as for boys or girls.

Note, children will sometimes say that everyone can play with the toy – at this point encourage them to think about which gender is stereotypically associated with the toy.

Once the toys are sorted, lead a discussion on how the toys have been sorted:

- Why do you think these toys are often associated with girls/boys?
- Can you see anything in common with the toys for boys/toys for girls? E.g. colour, shape, material.
- What do these toys encourage the people who are playing with them to do/think? (What traits do they encourage?)
- How do you feel about these toys being commonly associated with girls/boys?
- Is there pressure on boys/girls not to play with certain toys?

Expand the Investigation

This investigation could be expanded to look at adverts in catalogues and magazines or on TV and online. Consider and discuss the language and messages of these adverts with the children.

It could also be expanded to consider the above questions with toys from the past e.g. 1980s or Victorian times. Have there been any changes in how toys were perceived or marketed?

Persuasive Writing

Following the discussion on toys, ask the children to write a piece of persuasive writing arguing either: 'Toys should not be gendered' or 'Toys should be gendered'.

You could make this into a real-life activity, by asking children to write letters to a toy manufacturer with their thoughts and posting them to the manufacturer for a response.

Re-Brand a Toy

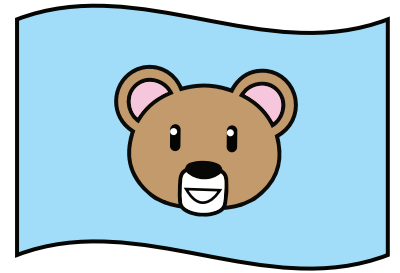
Ask the children to choose a toy that is heavily gendered e.g. dolls, kitchen equipment, dinosaurs, cars, etc.

Discuss

- Why is this toy often perceived as just for a girl or boy?
- Is it OK for anyone to play with this toy?
- What are the good things about the toy that would be great for everyone, regardless of gender?
- What skills, knowledge, etc would the toy help a child to develop?
- What words/slogans could we use to market this toy for everyone (encourage the children to think about the attributes of the particular toy rather than just 'anyone can play with it').

Activity

Either individually or in pairs, ask children to design either a poster or a TV advert to promote the toy for everyone. Peer assess the work in progress to encourage the children to think critically about each other's work – Does it focus on the benefits of playing with the toy for everyone? Would this advert appeal to everyone?



**World's Best
Toys Ltd**

Dear New Employee,

Welcome to World's Best Toys Ltd!

I hope you enjoy working here.

Your first task is to re-brand one of the following traditional toys:

- Cars and Trucks
- Baby Dolls
- Fashion Dolls
- Toy Tools and Workbench
- Building Bricks
- Toy Kitchen/House
- (Another toy you feel is heavily gendered)

In the past these toys have often been stereotyped and marketed to either girls or boys, but we want you to put a new spin on things!

Toys don't need to be gendered. Any child should be able to play with any toy, and they should feel 100% comfortable doing so.

I need you to design either a poster, a TV advert or infomercial for your chosen toy.

Showcase and demonstrate:

- The best things about this toy.
- How any child, regardless of gender, can play with this toy.
- The skills and knowledge that this toy can help a child to learn/develop.

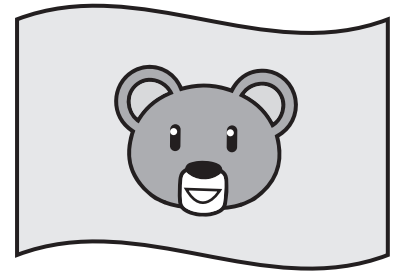
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Best wishes,

Ima Toy

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CEO World's Best Toys



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