

## Book Selection Checklist

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### **This checklist will help you select books that challenge gender stereotypes.**

Stereotypes are generalisations about a particular group that are applied to everyone in the group. Examples include: all girls like playing with dolls and all boys like playing with trucks. Stereotypes can be harmful, as they can impact on the way children think and feel about themselves, and how they interact with others.

This checklist can also help you to select books for your room that embrace diversity beyond gender. These can include race, culture and ethnicity, sexual orientation and ability.

As a general guide, an appropriate book will include characters that challenge or break traditional ideas about gender roles and femininity/masculinity. Characters will be positively portrayed and celebrated for their uniqueness. Ideally, these characters and their attributes are seen as being 'normal' rather than 'different but okay'. This helps to normalise people who do not conform to stereotypes and expectations relating to gender, culture, disability etc.

It's important to consider all aspects of the book, when using the checklist. Look at the storyline, the characters and the illustrations.

### **How to use this checklist:**

1. Look through the checklist before reading the book. This will help you identify what to look for when you analyse the book.
2. Read the book.
3. Complete the checklist by placing a tick in the 'yes' or 'no' column for each question. Some questions might be best answered with a tick in both boxes. This is completely fine; just write a note to explain your decision.
4. Some questions might not fit with or apply to the book. In this case, just write an 'N/A' next to the criteria.
5. If a book is **appropriate**, it will have more 'yes' ticks than 'no' ticks in the Gender table.
6. A book is **not appropriate** if it has more than two 'no' ticks in the Gender table.
7. A book may pass the gender check but not the diversity check. You may decide that the book is still okay to share, as long as it does not exclude or make fun of people from diverse backgrounds.
8. Make a simple note of whether the book is appropriate or not. Consider how you could use this book in your room to promote the message of challenging gender stereotypes, embracing diversity and celebrating individuality.

**Book title**

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**Author**

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**Illustrator**

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# Gender

Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
Does the story challenge gender roles? <i>Examples of stereotypical gender roles: women looking after the children; men as the family breadwinner or 'Mr Fix-It'.</i>			
Do female and male characters in the story have the same opportunities?			
Is it clear that female characters are not restricted to traditionally 'feminine' qualities and interests? <i>Traditional 'feminine' qualities include: caring, passive, beautiful, image-conscious, emotional, vulnerable, dependent.</i>			
Is it clear that male characters are not restricted to traditionally 'masculine' qualities and interests? <i>Traditional 'masculine' qualities include: strong, physical, aggressive, tough, protective, controlling, independent, unemotional.</i>			
Are female characters who have 'masculine' qualities or interests portrayed as normal? Are they welcomed and included?			
Are male characters who have more 'feminine' qualities or interests portrayed as normal? Are they welcomed and included?			
Are there both female and male characters in prominent or important roles?			
Does the book show that people who don't conform to gender stereotypes can be great friends with people who do?			

# Diversity

Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
Is diversity represented through any of the characters in the story?			
Cultural backgrounds?			
Family types?			
Age ranges?			
Ability/disability?			
Variety of different body shapes and sizes?			
Other?			
Was this diversity promoted in a positive way?			

# Reflection

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Is this book appropriate for your service? Why/why not?

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How could you use this book in your room to promote the message of embracing diversity and celebrating individuality?

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