

Name _____

Stereotypes

One common area of stereotyping is gender, or sex roles. A gender role is what it means to be a boy or a girl or a man or a woman. Children learn what is appropriate for their gender in many different ways. Do the following activities to see what kind of messages children receive about sex roles.

Books

Find a book of nursery rhymes or fairy tales. Read at least five selections. Compare the roles and traits of the men and women. What do these roles teach children? Can you think of ways the roles might affect a child's self-concept?

Toys

Look carefully at a toy catalog or at the toy section of a general catalogue. With what kinds of toys are boys pictured? Girls? Do the ads or pictures suggest that some toys are appropriate for girls and others for boys? Did you ever want or get a toy that is usually considered "more appropriate" for the other gender? What was it?

Television

Watch three or four different after school or Saturday morning television shows aimed at children. Notice the roles played by females and by males. Are the females sweet, quiet, and kind? Do the males seem to be strong, brave, and clever? Do any males show tender feelings? Are they accepted for doing so? Are any of the females active and aggressive? If so, how do the other characters relate to them? If you could change the roles on one popular show, what would you do?

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