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# Children's Book Audit Guide

[WWW.ZEROTOLERANCE.ORG.UK](http://WWW.ZEROTOLERANCE.ORG.UK)

# Preventing violence against women

Gender inequality can have a profound impact on the mental and physical health of women and girls, and has been identified through international research as the underlying cause of violence against women.

Evidence shows that levels of violence against women are significantly and consistently higher in societies, communities and relationships where there are more rigid distinctions between the roles of men and women.

Parents and educators play a powerful role in shaping our understanding of gender norms, power and respect.

By challenging rigid gender stereotypes and instilling respect from an early age, parents and educators effectively become front-line workers in the work to end violence against women.

## Introduction

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.

Like all stereotypes, gender stereotypes are harmful because they enforce strict rules and expectations. Children learn by seeing and copying the world around them, and so rules and expectations about what girls and boys 'can' and 'cannot' do or 'should' or 'should not' be shape children's understanding of the world and their own place within it.

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 the audit sheet checklist

1. Print out the audit sheet below.
  2. Count the total number of books you have in your collection.
  3. Look through the categories below before reading the book. This will help you identify what to look for when you analyse the book.
  4. Read the book.
  5. Count the number of books that fall into each category and fill out your audit form.
  6. Segregate books into two piles: books that belong to green pile and books that belong to red pile. Count how many books are in each pile. Label the two piles (you can use a post it note).
  7. 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.
  8. Take a couple of photographs of your audited book piles\* and email them to [jo.zawadzka@zerotolerance.org.uk](mailto:jo.zawadzka@zerotolerance.org.uk)
- \*The photographs will be shared via social media and so please make sure there are no children in the picture.
9. Complete [this short feedback](#) form

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY BOOK AUDIT

How many books in total are in your book collection?



### PUT ALL BOOKS THAT FALL INTO THESE CATEGORIES IN ONE PILE

CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF BOOKS	COMMENT
Number of books with no male characters		
Number of books where female characters are presented in the non-stereotypical roles i.e. as pirates, heroes, adventurers, or in jobs 'typically' done by men etc.		
Number of books where male characters are presented in the non-stereotypical roles i.e. as dads, supportive friends, carers or in jobs 'typically' done by women etc.		
Number of books with characters from diverse backgrounds? (culture, race, religion, belief)? Add books including non-traditional types of families, e.g. one parent families or non-heteronormative families, in example families, two mums, two dads etc.		
Number of books with characters with disabilities who have significant roles in the story		



### PUT ALL BOOKS THAT FALL INTO THESE CATEGORIES IN ONE PILE

CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF BOOKS	COMMENT
Number of books with no female characters.		
Number of books where male characters are presented in stereotypical roles - men as the family breadwinner, 'Mr Fix-It', men in jobs 'typically' done by men		
Number of books where female characters don't speak		
Number of books where female characters are only in a supportive role of a male character		
Number of books where female characters are presented in the stereotypical roles - cooking, care giving, princesses waiting to be saved etc.		