



## TOY MARKETING AND GENDER: DESIGN A WELCOMING TOY STORE FOR EVERYONE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

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**SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL:** 1 – 3

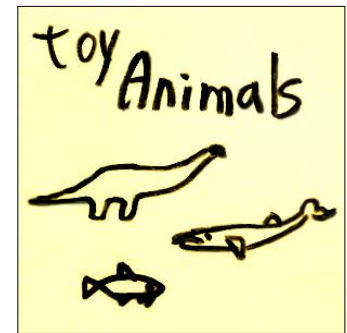
**LENGTH OF TIME:** One 40 minute introductory session and two 40 minute project sessions

### GOALS

- To help students create a classroom climate where everyone gets to like and play with the toys that make them happy without being teased or bullied around gender stereotypes.
- To teach students that “in this classroom community, everyone gets to like what they like!”
- To help students deconstruct gendered messaging around toys.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will engage in discussions on how toy marketing focuses on and reinforces gender stereotypes.
- Students will design a toy store that is sorted by categories other than gender.
- Students will discuss how to design a toy store that is welcoming to all students in their class.



### ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners around grade two topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. (Also SL. 1.1, 3.1)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.2: Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood. (Also SL. 1.2, 3.2)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.5: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts and feelings. (Also SL.1.5, 3.5)
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.MD.B.3 Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

### EDUCATORS' NOTES

The lesson begins with a showing and discussion of a short video of 4-year-old Riley giving a very persuasive speech in a large toy store wondering why “all the girls have to buy pink stuff and all the boys have to buy other color stuff.” To counter this messaging, students will

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design their own toy store that is organized by categories other than gender (such as type of activity, color of toy, magical toys, electronic toys, reading materials, art supplies, etc.).

This lesson involves having each student think of a favorite non-violent toy (no toy guns or water squirting guns, teachers may also need to be clear that video games with weapons are not to be part of this project). The reason for non-violent toys is that students learn to include and respect each other through peaceful play; also elementary schools do not allow weapons, so students should be directed away from these choices.

Students will then work collaboratively in groups of three or four to design and name a toy store that includes favorite toys from all of their classmates. Each team will also come up with a name for their toy store. Example: Ms. Eide's third grade class named their toy store Enchanted Eides. Some groups may also want to plan a coffee shop in the toy store for caring adults or add in all gender/family restrooms so everyone feels welcomed and included at the store.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Video on YouTube: [Riley on Marketing](#)
- Small sticky notes, black permanent markers, pencils, markers or colored pencils
- 12" x 18" drawing paper (or larger poster size)

### **SESSION ONE: TOY MARKETING AND GENDER**

#### **SHOW THE VIDEO *RILEY ON MARKETING***

- What is Riley upset about in toy stores?
- Do you agree with Riley?
- What are some ways we could change toy stores and ads so that all children felt like they could play with any toy they like?



#### **DRAW A FAVORITE TOY ON A STICKY NOTE AND LABEL IT**

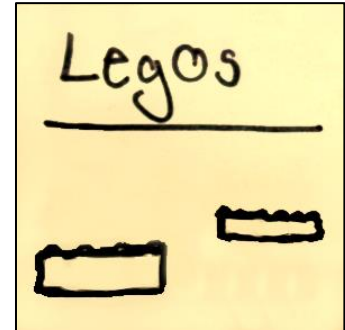
- Give each student a sticky note and have them draw a picture of a favorite toy and write the name of that toy by the picture. Remind students that you want them to pick non-violent toys (for example, no nerf guns or violent video games). The reason for non-violent toys is that students learn to include and respect each other through peaceful play; also elementary schools do not allow weapons, so students should be directed away from these choices.
- Have the students place their sticky notes on a large paper at the front of the classroom.
- Gather the students and read out the different toys to the class.



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## SESSION TWO AND THREE: TOY STORE DESIGN PROJECT

- Explain to the students that you will be placing them in small groups and that they will be designing a toy store that is welcoming to everyone in the class with ALL of the toys that they put on the sticky notes. (You may want to give each group a word sheet with the names of the toys written on it. The idea is for them to include every student's toy.)
- Brainstorm with your students different ways that toys could be sorted without using gender, such as by category, size, activity or theme (e.g. magical toys, soft toys, building toys, reading, etc.). Help them look through the sticky notes from the class to form some connections between kinds of toys that could go together.
- Put up another chart paper and brainstorm some names for your classroom's toy store. Some examples from Ms. Eide's class are: Enchanted Eide's Toys, Global Toy Store or Playthings.



### SORT STUDENTS INTO GROUPS

- Group your students into teams of four students. Make sure each team has a good mix of students in terms of genders, interests and kinds of toys they like.
- The conversations that students have as they sort the toys provide invaluable teachable moments around gender.
- Give each group a large piece of poster paper, pencils and markers or colored pencils.
- You may want to give each group a list with the names of the toys written on it. The idea is for them to include every student's toy. You could also have each group send a person up to check the class toy list to make sure they have not omitted any.
- Students generally need two 40 minute sessions to complete their labelled toy stores.

### SHARING THEIR TOY STORES

- Once all of your groups have completed their toy stores, have them share their projects with the class.
- Highlight the many creative ways that students sorted toys without using gender.
- Put the toy stores up in the classroom as an anchor point for gender inclusivity.

### EXTENSIONS

- Think about how you might have toys/centers arranged in your classroom. Could they be sorted in a new, more inclusive way after this activity? Think about having your students rearrange your centers to be more inclusive.
- Be mindful of your language and actions with students: Use students/friends/learners instead of boys/girls/guys. Sort students in ways other than gender. Examples: velcro

