

Women's Health East (WHE), with the support of Outer East Primary Care Partnership (OE PCP), held a series of Masterclasses to support the *Together For Equality & Respect* (TFER) Partnership to use the *Framing Gender Equality Message Guide* in practice. This tip sheet has been developed using messages that participants workshopped over two Masterclass sessions. It is not intended as a standalone resource, but rather as a reference point that illustrates how the *Framing Gender Equality Message Guide* is used to create a message.

## EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

**Purpose:** Challenge gender stereotypes.

**Audience:** Parents and carers.

**Action:** Encourage children to play with a diversity of toys.

**Messenger:** Early years educator.

**Channel:** Newsletter.

Thank you to our Masterclass participants for letting us use the messages that they created in training for the development of this tip sheet!

### THE VISION

describes an attractive and relatable vision – a tangible outcome from the desired action.

### WORDS TO USE & LOSE:

By using 'children' instead of 'girls & boys', the message avoids unnecessarily reinforcing gender binaries when talking about things that apply equally to all genders.

### THE CAUSE

explains a key reason why the barrier exists and who is responsible.

### THE ACTION

tells the audience what they can do to overcome the barrier.

We want our children to have every chance to develop all the skills they need to succeed in life. We know that the best way children learn is through different kinds of play.

**Children** need time and space to play in a variety of ways – like playing with dolls to learn about caring and empathy, and building block towers to learn about patterns and hand-eye coordination.

**When children are restricted in what they can play with, and how they play, they can lose out on building certain skills. Some toy companies contribute to this by still doing things like colour-coding particular toys into pink for girls and blue for boys. They also have ads showing girls playing with dolls and boys playing with trucks.** This isn't helpful for our children as it can teach them to think that not all toys are for them, and they may miss out.

Although some toy companies are beginning to attempt to show that toys can be for everyone, parents still need to show their children that everyone can play with all types of toys. **When you provide a variety of toys for your children, you're giving them the best chance at becoming well-rounded people.** Here are some resources:

- [www.notonlypinkandblue.com](http://www.notonlypinkandblue.com)
- [www.thecoffeeapple.com.au](http://www.thecoffeeapple.com.au)
- [www.amightgirl.com/toys](http://www.amightgirl.com/toys)

### THE BARRIER

stands in the way of the vision, and provides a tangible example.

### TIP #2 – Focus on causation, not just outcomes

This statement focuses on unequal expectations, pressures & treatment of people based on gender, which builds the narrative for why unequal outcomes occur.

### TIP #4: Be solutions focused

The message engages the audience by making them part of the solution and encouraging action.

# FRAMING GENDER EQUALITY: TIP SHEET 4

## ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

We want our children to have every chance to develop all the skills they need to succeed in life. We know that the best way children learn is through different kinds of play.

Children need time and space to play in a variety of ways – like playing with dolls to learn about caring and empathy, and building block towers to learn about patterns and hand-eye coordination.

When children are restricted in what they can play with, and how they play, they can lose out on building certain skills. Some toy companies contribute to this by still doing things like colour-coding particular toys into pink for girls and blue for boys. **They also have ads showing girls playing with dolls and boys playing with trucks.** This isn't helpful for our children as it can teach them to think that not all toys are for them, and they may miss out.

Although **some toy companies are beginning to attempt to show that toys can be for everyone, parents still need to show** their children that everyone can play with all types of toys. When you provide a variety of toys for your children, you're giving them the best chance at becoming well-rounded people. Here are some resources:

- [www.notonlypinkandblue.com](http://www.notonlypinkandblue.com)
- [www.thecoffeeapple.com.au](http://www.thecoffeeapple.com.au)
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### TIP #2: Focus on causation not just outcomes

Using stronger language to highlight the active role that toy companies play in creating the unequal expectations, pressures and treatment of children based on gender it will strengthen the message that this is wrong, rather than something that just happens.

### THE ACTION

The focus on toy companies confuses the message, and makes it sound like parents remain the biggest problem. Strengthen the action by providing a clear role for the audience and framing it in a way that affirms our shared values, rather than as a top-down approach that forces people to change.

## THE FINAL MESSAGE

When children are restricted in what they can play with, and how they play, they can lose out on building certain skills. Some toy companies contribute to this by still doing things like colour-coding particular toys into pink for girls and blue for boys. **They also target children with advertising that shows only girls playing with dolls and boys playing with trucks.** This isn't helpful for our children as it can teach them to think that not all toys are for them, and they may miss out.

**As parents and carers, we can show our children that everyone can and should play with all types of toys.** When we give our children a variety of toys to play with that nurture all sides of their development, we're also giving them the best chance at becoming well-rounded people. Here are some resources:

- [www.notonlypinkandblue.com](http://www.notonlypinkandblue.com)
- [www.thecoffeeapple.com.au](http://www.thecoffeeapple.com.au)
- [www.amightgirl.com/toys](http://www.amightgirl.com/toys)

### TIP #2: Focus on causation not just outcomes

Reframing this sentence strengthens the message that toy companies have an active role in reinforcing the unequal expectations, pressures and treatment of children based on gender, and effectively externalises the problem.

### THE ACTION

By removing the focus from what toy companies are doing to address the problem and changing the language from 'you' to 'us', the ACTION provides a clearer message that makes parents part of the solution, not the problem, and gives them the tools to do what they know is right.