

# 5 ways to offer a gender neutral service

While there is a lot of buzz in the last few years about gender and pronouns the research around gender biases in the early years has been around for decades. Here are some tips on addressing this within your service...



## Start from enrolment

If your enrolment forms and parent handbook are the first things that families get to engage with about your service how do they set the tone for a gender neutral service? Is language reflective of inclusive approaches? Is there an opportunity for families to express their parenting choices around gender?



## Provide a variety of role models

Spending time finding books and posters that represent a variety of non-stereotypical gender roles helps children to understand that gender is not a prediction of success. Also consider this with your employment strategies to ensure children have an awareness of different representations of gender.



## Provide gender neutral resources

A lot of services are moving away from traditional toys such as dolls and prams, trucks and cars. Often these can be gendered in the way they are coloured and presented. Open ended resources like loose parts and wooden blocks tend to be more neutral and also use the child's imagination.



## Provide equal opportunities for all children

A lot of the research around gender in play shows that a lot of the times boys are allowed to play in certain ways (loud and rough) while girls are expected to play in different ways (gentle and supportive). This means behaviour guidance and responses may not be fair for both groups of children.



## Address any subconscious bias that may exist

One way to really reflect on your practices around gender are to address any biases that may have happened unconsciously. Things like gendered language, expectations, discussions about future prospects etc. can all slip in and become habits if they aren't addressed and reflected on.