

## Respectful Relationships- Wellbeing Programme

In weeks **6-10**, students will be looking at Topic 7: **Gender and Identity**. Learning activities within this topic assist students to challenge stereotypes and critique the influence of gender stereotypes on attitudes and behaviour. They will learn about key issues relating to human rights, gender, identity and focus on the importance of respect within relationships.

The activities designed promote respect for diversity and difference.

The primary purpose of covering this topic, is for the children to understand that:

- We are all different and unique and that's ok
- We can do anything we choose
- We can be both strong and gentle
- We can be brave and kind
- That our likes and dislikes do not have to be limited by our gender
- That it's ok to show our emotions
- We can be fair and friendly

*Why are we covering this topic?*

Family violence is one of the most significant and complex issues facing Victorian communities, with a devastating impact on the health and wellbeing of many Victorians.

**Victoria's Plan for Change** recognises that family violence is preventable and that schools play a critical role. This supports the range of evidence that was presented to the Royal Commission. This body of research indicates that:

- Violence against women and their children is deeply rooted in power imbalances that are reinforced by gender norms.
- Attitudes, gender stereotypes and social norms are learned through social and cultural expectations.

Schools can be effective in changing these attitudes and subsequently in reducing the incidence of family violence.

Research shows that children become aware of gender at an early age, being well aware of gender norms and making efforts to fit within gendered expectations by the time they are in kindergarten. As children become aware of gendered patterns of behaviour, and attempt to fit within the categories that they perceive themselves as belonging to, they begin to limit their opportunities.

They may, for example, insist that some games are for boys and others are for girls and actively reject peers from certain games. This means that it is important to commence work on building positive gender relationships within these early years. Being free from gender expectations is good for **all** students. Did you know that much of the bullying that happens in schools is gender related?

We are planning to achieve two things through this initiative;

1. Create a safe place for **all** our students to reach their potential.

- By educating young people how to engage in safe and positive relationships, we will provide them with the skills necessary to engage in safe adult relationships.

*Will the lesson content be age appropriate?*

Yes. Each lesson has been specifically designed to match the age of the students within that particular year group.

In the table below are the definitions that students will be introduced to within the lessons.

Year Level	Key Terminology
Year 1 and 2	<b>Gender:</b> Is used to talk about the ideas that people have about what it means to be a boy or girl. These ideas can change over time.
Year 3 and 4	<b>Sex:</b> The different bodies that people are born with. Some of us get born with female body parts and others with male body parts. <b>Gender:</b> Some differences in ideas about how boys and girls or men and women should behave like how they should dress, or what they should like doing. These differences do not come from their body parts.
Year 5 and 6	<b>Puberty:</b> Is a time when the male and female bodies begin to change. The physical differences between males and females becomes more evident. <b>Sex:</b> the difference in biological characteristics of males and females, determined by a person's genes. <b>Gender:</b> Describes the characteristics of girls and boys, women and men that are shaped by our culture, traditions and history, and the way that societies organise what boys and girls, men and women are expected to do. This includes things like the way people are expected to dress and behave. Gender roles and expectations are learned, can change over time, and can vary from culture to culture. <b>Gender identity:</b> The gender that a person feels that they are. This might fit with what most people in society expect or it might go against them. <b>Sexual orientation:</b> The words heterosexual (opposite-sex attracted) and homosexual (same-sex attracted) are words used to describe something different from gender.

Please click on the links below as they will take you to the lesson plans.

[Prep](#)

[Year 1 and 2](#)

[Year 3 and 4](#)

[Year 5 and 6](#)

*How could I support my child at home?*

- Reflect on the roles within your home
- Reflect on what behaviours you validate your child on
- Ask your child what they have been doing in their Wellbeing lessons.

# Gender Stereotypes

The What, How and Why for Families



# What Can Families Do?

## Are Girls and Boys In Your Family:

- Offered toys & books based on their interests and skills?
- Provided with play equipment that includes cooking utensils, action figures, dolls, trucks and lego?
- Encouraged to explore a range of situations and role play?
- Provided with books & activities that depict women and men in diverse roles?

## Other Considerations:

- When talking to girls & boys, does language and tone of voice vary according to gender?
- Are boys sometimes excused for aggressive behaviour because "boys will be boys"?
- Are a variety of roles modelled by parents and other family members e.g. cooking, cleaning, caring for children, paid employment, mowing lawns?

## What Are Gender Stereotypes?

Gender stereotypes are generalisations about the characteristics of an entire group based on gender. Gender stereotypes dictate behaviours that are considered acceptable or desirable for males and females. For example, boys are naturally rough and aggressive and girls are nurturing.

## How Are Gender Stereotypes Reinforced?

Gender Stereotypes are reinforced to children through toys, sports, games, clothes, books, the media, advertising/marketing and sometimes through messages from teachers, families and friends.

## Why Avoid Gender Stereotypes?

Gender stereotypes have a major influence on children's interests and skill development. Stereotyping in the early years can limit children's choices and aspirations. This impacts on the roles that they take on as adults, leading to gender inequality.

By breaking down gender stereotypes, girls and boys are able to 'dream big'. They are able to develop and learn based on personal skills and interests, unhindered by society's expectations.

Look for opportunities to have conversations with children about gender stereotypes

Use books, movies, media etc to stimulate discussion



## Ideas for books

Provide books & stories that depict men & women, boys & girls in a variety of roles. Contact your childcare centre/kinder for a suggested reading list.

Women's Health East

Any questions?  
For further information, contact  
Women's Health East - 8951 3700

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's classroom teacher.

Kindest regards,

Miss Wilson (Leader for Respectful Relationships)