



SIMPLE WAYS TO DISCUSS GENDER AND DIVERSE FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

As adults, we influence what young children hear, see and experience each day. Below are a few strategies to spark conversations about gender, families and love that will give children the language and freedom to explore a more diverse and inclusive world.

GET CREATIVE DURING STORYTIME

A lot of children's stories perpetuate stereotypes, like fairy tales that portray princesses as victims and love that's only between a boy and a girl. By changing characters' genders when we read aloud ("the *princess* rode in on her horse and rescued the *prince*"), making up stories that challenge biases, and choosing books and movies with diverse families and characters who do not fit the gender norm, we broaden young children's sense of what's possible.



CHALLENGE MARKETING MESSAGES

When we take young children to the clothing, toy, or even grocery store, they are **inundated with messages** about how to dress or act like a "boy" or a "girl", as well as what makes a family. By noticing and discussing these stereotypes, we help children **choose what is right for them**, not simply what the world is telling them to be.



USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

We can make room for diverse families and non-traditional gender roles and identities by incorporating more **inclusive language into our lives**. For example, instead of assuming a person's gender based on their appearance, or using phrases that presume family makeup and/or gender ("mom and dad", "boys and girls"), try more neutral words like those on the right.

