

Lesson 1

Differences: Boys & Girls

Learning Intention

To introduce the concept of male and female and gender stereotypes
To identify differences between males and females

Learning Outcomes

Understand that some people have fixed ideas about what boys and girls can do
Describe the difference between male and female babies

Resources

2 large PE hoops

[Boy/Girl/Both labels](#)

Bag of objects and clothing to explore male and female stereotypes (e.g. hairbrush, something pink/blue, ball, trainers, trousers, kilt)

OR [Pictures of objects and clothing](#)

[Clothed Babies picture cards](#)

[Clothed Babies whiteboard summary](#)

[Pictures of newborn babies](#)

Activities

1. Ground Rules

Sit the class in a circle with children sitting boy/girl/boy/girl. Ask the class questions to help establish some rules for these lessons. Ensure you include the following: listen to each other; treat each other with respect (this includes no laughing at each other and no put downs).

2. Defining Different and Similar

Explain that the lesson will be about differences between boys and girls and refer to the learning outcomes on the whiteboard and discuss what they mean. Write the words DIFFERENT and SIMILAR on the board and ask the children to tell you what the words mean. Ask the children to give you examples of things or people that are similar or different.

3. Differences Between Boys and Girls

In pairs, ask the children to discuss what the differences are between them. Share some ideas. In the same pairs ask the children to discuss what the differences are between boys and girls. Accept their ideas and use them to introduce the next part of the activity, which explores whether the ideas we hold about boys and girls are always true.

4. Who Does This Belong To? Sorting Activity

Using the PE hoops make a venn diagram and label the spaces BOY, GIRL and BOTH. One by one invite the children to select an object from the bag of objects and clothing and place it in the BOY, GIRL or BOTH space. Ask them to explain their choice using the sentence stem: *I put it there because...* Accept the children's decisions for the time being. Alternatively, display the [Pictures of objects and clothing](#) on the whiteboard and encourage the class to sort them and discuss.

5. Discussion and Review

When all the objects have been placed ask the children what they think about the choices made. Explore any stereotypes or assumptions, asking questions such as: *Is it always true that only boys wear trousers? Does anyone know any males with long hair?* Ask whether anyone would like to move any of the objects and why. Ask the children what they have learned from doing this activity. Draw out the idea that some people have fixed ideas (stereotypes) about the differences between boys and girls.

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6. Male and Female Babies

Write the words MALE and FEMALE on the board and ask the children to tell you what the words mean. Check that the children understand that a boy is male and a girl is female. In small groups at tables, ask pairs to briefly discuss how we tell whether a baby is a male or female when it is first born. Give each table a [Clothed Babies picture card](#). Ask the pairs to decide if they can tell if their baby is male or female and how they know.

7. Biological Differences

Display the [Clothed Babies whiteboard summary](#). Feed back ideas with the whole class about whether the baby in the picture is a boy/male or girl/female. Reinforce that we cannot always tell who is a boy or girl by what they wear, like or do. Ask the class how a doctor or midwife would know whether a newborn baby is male or female. Accept any terms the children use such as "private parts" or other familiar names. Explain that in a future lesson they will learn the scientific names for these parts of the body. Use the [Pictures of newborn babies](#) to support the discussion.

8. Word Review

To check whether the children understand the words male and female finish with a quick hands-up game.

Additional Activities

Sorting the Girls from the Boys

Consider using pictures/photos/drawings of girls and boys doing various activities. In small groups ask the children to sort the pictures into piles to show which activities are done by 'only boys', 'only girls' or 'both girls and boys'.

Reading about gender and stereotyping

Read a story that explores gender roles or stereotypes. Explore how the characters are behaving in a way that people might not expect a male or female to behave.

Suggested reading:

Happy Families, Allan Ahlberg

Princess Smartypants, Babette Cole

William's Doll, Charlotte Zolotow

Amazing Grace, Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch