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GENDER EQUALITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

A wide range of evidence shows that from a very early age, gender stereotyping can have a significant impact on opportunities and choices for both boys and girls with gendered divisions over what is considered acceptable. Often behavior or subject choices are reinforced through both the attitudes of pupils, staff and parents and through codes of practice in school, school management etc.

By providing children with environments that encourage non-gendered norms and expectations, children can feel more accepted and celebrated for their individuality. By creating a more inclusive culture in schools our children and young people will benefit from a school environment where all individuals are equally safe and respected [1].

We believe that it is never too early to question what is seen as ‘normal’ or what is traditionally expected of boys and girls in our society. In fact, we believe that doing so from a very young age, helps to protect children from the negative consequences of inequality as they grow into adults.

As a result, we can say, that the main goal of gender education is to reduce the level imposed stereotypes about the behavior of people of either sex and learn to go against them, to meet their own individual aspirations.

By providing children with environments that encourage non-gendered norms and expectations, children can feel more accepted and celebrated for their individuality. This can broaden their aspirations and be more open to a wide range of opportunities.

A gender equality approach means helping children to achieve and aspire, promoting a culture of equality and respect where children are able to flourish and no one is limited by their gender [2].

If we are really to get it right for every child in our schools, gender equality must be at the heart of policy and practice.

If we say about school, there teachers play the main role in achieving this aim. There I mean teach pupils without any gender stereotypes or gender inequalities.

By doing this, teachers must be aware of the possible bias or differences in their questioning of girls and boys and take steps to monitor and if necessary improve their own practice. For example, give equal “wait time” to girls and boy, asking higher-order, open-ended questions of both boys and girls [3].

Also, before promoting gender equality in class teacher should observe it, makes conclusions about what gender stereotypes are presented in every pupil.

Moreover, teacher have to understand that all children have equal opportunity to take part in all experiences and are encouraged to access all areas of the curriculum.

In order to develop and plan this approach to promoting gender equality, it can be helpful to find out about the children’s understanding of gender and explore any unconscious bias they may have. This can be achieved through a variety of interactive,

age appropriate activities which both introduce the topic and highlight key areas of learning that may be required.

It would be a good idea to apply diverse games, activities which are aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes in class and school, in general, and it's a good way to expand children's knowledge about gender equality.

For instance, it can be role play, project work, individual games or work, changing roles, learning culture of different countries, choosing responsibilities in classroom or in school etc.

In my opinion, teacher can use a variety of simple, but simultaneously curious activities. And one of them can be sorting activity, for example in topic Professions.

Children worked in groups of 3 or 4 people, using Venn diagram to sort cards with pictures into categories boys, girls, or both. They should decide as a group where is best to place them. Remind them they can ask you if unsure.

This activity created discussion around different ideas and opinions about boys and girls which allowed the opportunity to explore gender stereotypes and encouraged children to challenge both their own ideas and others'.

Next, can be an Agree/Disagree/Unsure activity. Go over the words and what they mean. Show symbols on cards and where in the room they are placed. Tell children you are going to read out some statements/sentences. They should go to area of room to indicate whether they agree, disagree or are unsure. Make sure they understand not to copy their friend. Children should go where they think. There are no right or wrong answers. Approximate list of statement can be: It's okay for boys to cry; Men are the boss of the house; Girls can be doctors; It's mums job to do the housework etc. There children can express their own opinion, can concentrate on their individual interest. Furthermore, children shouldn't think what is normally or abnormally, because all is normally for both male and female. Gender stereotypes which society wants to impose, what is abnormally.

A further consideration would be to apply drama or role play in the class to wide knowledge about gender equality.

Role-playing games are good for exploring gender stereotypes with young children and encouraging them to participate in a range of activities. Try assigning roles at random, or use a magic sorting hat or a bag containing different role cards.

During role play, challenge children assumptions. For example, if you are a woman, you could take on the role of a scientists or explorer or the local doctor. For role play games, make it clear that all children can dress up/take on whatever roles/costume they choose and avoid making assumptions about what role/costumes children would like. Allow children to create their own costumes and characters. Use a range of fabric and materials in the dress up area rather than branded costumes to encourage the children to create their own costumes. All this things, make this activity magic and amazing for children.

Pupils have the freedom to choose and explore how they can use their voice, movement, and expression in role play and drama. They can express their idea, thoughts and feelings. It will be exciting for children and they won't afraid of doing something wrong. Role play or drama allows pupils to show their individuality (personalities), talents and creativity.

The last but not least, it's classroom management. In this case, we would talk about rules and responsibilities in classroom: girls and boys are encouraged equally to take on responsibilities. This will show that you can do the same things regardless of gender.

All things considered, I can say that, all actions should be based on interests and previous knowledge of our pupils. Gender education provides gender equality, the child's understanding that he is a person with his individual abilities, talents and thoughts. Also, no matter who you were born a boy or a girl, you can do what you like in your life, instead of conforming to gender stereotypes invented by society. As for me, the teacher has a main role to explain these things, is a person who creates a favorable environment and conditions for the development of gender equality and overcoming gender stereotypes by doing what was written above.

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