

# Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education



***A Toolkit for Teachers  
and School Leaders***



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and school leaders*

*Published by*

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We trust that together we have done justice to your investment in and dedication to gender-responsive pedagogy in Africa.



## Foreword

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.<sup>1</sup>

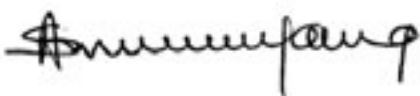
It is in early childhood that learners develop self-awareness and acquire basic values and attitudes. During this time stereotypes become set and are likely to have a long-lasting impact on how learners perceive their own potential and that of others. Early childhood education (ECE), therefore, holds exciting potential to develop in learners a gender-sensitive view of self and others, impacting on the life choices that they will make later in life. While it is generally accepted that both boys and girls should be given a range of opportunities to be kind, thoughtful, strong, adventurous, emotional, brave, gentle, resilient, assertive, active and nurturing, thinking about practical ways of achieving this with all learners can be challenging. ECE teachers and their school leaders can work consciously to challenge gender stereotypes before they become a set and unconscious way of thinking. Providing a gender-responsive environment can help all learners, both boys and girls, develop to their fullest potential.

This toolkit seeks to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on education and gender equality, as well as the African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25). VVOB and FAWE, in collaboration with the ministries of education in South Africa, Rwanda and Zambia, have developed this toolkit on gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) to support ECE teachers and school leaders.

This international toolkit can be contextualised for implementation in different African countries. It can be used as a self-read resource and by institutes and structures that undertake initial training and professional development for ECE teachers and school leaders.

It is our ambition that this toolkit will benefit teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders who want to introduce gender responsive pedagogy in ECE. I therefore call on the African Union member states, regional economic communities and all key partners and stakeholders including the African Union Early Childhood Education and Development Cluster members to embrace this toolkit as the key instrument to guide the integration of gender in early childhood and education development within formal and informal capacity development initiatives for teachers.

We look forward to seeing the roll-out of the toolkit throughout the African continent, beginning with countries in which FAWE is operational, as we firmly believe that the transformative effect of gender responsive pedagogy will contribute to levelling the playing field among boys and girls in education across the continent.



H.E. Prof. (Mrs) Sarah Anyang Agbor

Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology

African Union Commission

# Introduction

Early childhood is characterised by rapid brain development and the acquisition of foundational skills and competences. Investment in early childhood interventions accrue long-term economic and social returns, including making the early start fair to all, and the provision of equal opportunities for both girls and boys. Even though teachers, caregivers and practitioners are among the most influential players to ensure equity, access and quality in ECE, various studies demonstrate that the ECE workforce in Africa is one of the most neglected in terms of training, professionalisation, status and working and living conditions. UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) has been working to strengthen and develop the capacity of teachers in the continent since 1999 in order to improve the quality of education. ECE is a priority for both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Continental Education Strategy of Africa (CESA) 2016-2025. In particular, as a coordinator of the Teacher Education and Development Cluster of CESA 2016-25, we are delighted to write an introduction to this extremely useful, accessible and important toolkit.

## Rationale and purpose of the toolkit

African education systems today are being challenged to extend opportunities for quality education and training to all learners, especially the more vulnerable ones.<sup>2</sup> Gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) aims to respond to the learning needs of all learners and help them reach their full potential. This toolkit can support teachers and school leaders in providing learners with a more gender-responsive learning environment.

## Who is this toolkit for?

The toolkit primarily targets ECE teachers, school leaders, ECE student teachers, ECE teacher trainers, caregivers and any other practitioners who deal with younger children. It is also a useful resource for researchers, school parent committees and governing bodies, civil society organisations, community leaders and education policy makers.

## How can the toolkit be used?

The toolkit offers an introduction to GRP in ECE and serves as a practical guide that can be adapted to any context and the related needs. It is a source of ideas that individual teachers and school leaders can put to immediate use in their classrooms and schools.

The toolkit comprises five chapters. The first gives an overview of gender in education in the African context. The sociocultural environment influences teaching and learning. The first chapter also contains key definitions related to gender and education, and references to international commitments to gender equality in education.

The second chapter, which forms the core of the toolkit, introduces GRP in ECE. It explores how gender-responsiveness in lesson planning, lesson delivery, the teaching and learning environment, learning materials, interactions and use of language can foster real learning. The chapter also provides practical insights and tips on play activities and areas that encourage all learners, without hindrance, and on ways to assess learning. A gender-responsiveness reflection tool is included at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter focuses on GRP and school leadership, identifying ways to integrate GRP in schools

through the different dimensions of school leadership. It explores how school leaders can develop a gender-responsive vision and gender-responsive values for their schools. It also provides guidance on gender-responsive planning and monitoring. The chapter also suggests ways to restructure the school organisation to foster GRP and ways to strengthen gender-responsive teaching and learning by setting gender-responsive human resources policies, developing the gender-responsive capacities of staff, enriching the curriculum and improving conditions for gender-responsive teaching and learning. The chapter provides insights into the role of gender in relationships within school communities and on child safety and protection. The chapter concludes with a reflection tool for the school leader.

Chapter 4 offers some ideas for practical classroom activities for learners, designed to generate opportunities to talk about gender roles and challenge stereotypes in the ECE classroom. There is advice on questions to ask. Materials are provided for some activities, with a picture book provided as an annex to the chapter.

The fifth chapter consists of guidelines for an interactive game, called Go Gender Go, for teachers and school leaders. Playing this game in groups encourages conversation and reflection on the content of the toolkit.

It is not necessary to read the entire toolkit from beginning to end. Teachers are encouraged to focus on Chapter 2 and the learner activities in Chapter 4. Different sections within chapters can also be read independently. The Go Gender Go game is meant to stimulate discussion and self-reflection, and to encourage players to refer to the content of the toolkit.



Yumiko Yokozeki, Ph.D.

Director

UNESCO-IICBA

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ECE	Early childhood education
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GBV	Gender-based violence
GRP	Gender-responsive pedagogy
HR	Human resources
PLC	Professional learning community
PTA	Parent teacher association
PTC	Parent teacher committee
RoSa	Knowledge Centre for Gender and Feminism in Belgium
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VVOB	VVOB, Education for Development

## Interpretation of Terms

The toolkit uses certain terms and words that may have different meanings in different countries. In this toolkit, the words below have the following meanings:

Early childhood education (ECE)	Any context in which young children are exposed to learning
Early childhood teacher	Any teacher, whether trained or not, or other person actively involved in ECE who ensure the development of young learners
Learner	A young child who attends an ECE learning programme
School	Any educational setting – an ECE centre, a home-schooling environment, a community centre and any other setting applicable in your context
School leader	The leader of a school or centre, i.e., a school principal, a head teacher or the owner of a centre

## Chapter 1: An Introduction to Gender in Education

There is overwhelming evidence that education benefits individuals and communities, and promotes national development. However, gender-based discrimination negatively affects the education and learning of all learners.

The gender inequities prevalent in many African societies are carried into the school environment. They manifest themselves in schools' learning, teaching and management processes.<sup>3</sup> Limited awareness of gender-specific needs may lead to the failure of teachers and school leaders to adequately address gender constraints, inhibiting effective learning for their learners.

Within this chapter we look at gender concepts and what they mean, we unpack information on gender in the African context, and we highlight some international commitments. Furthermore, the term 'gender-responsive pedagogy' (GRP) is explained.

### ***This chapter aims to:***

- ✓ Give you a better understanding of gender concepts that are used in this toolkit
- ✓ Refer you to some international commitments to gender equality in education
- ✓ Help you appreciate the impact of gender-related cultural beliefs on teaching and learning in the African context
- ✓ Introduce gender-responsive pedagogy

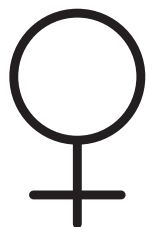


### **1.1. Gender concepts**

This section aims to explain some concepts related to gender that are used in the toolkit.

#### **Sex**

The biological differences between men and boys, and women and girls, which are universal and determined at birth.<sup>4</sup>



Biological symbol for female



Biological symbol for male

#### **Sex roles**

Functions of females or males linked to their biological make-up, for example, breastfeeding.<sup>5</sup>

### **Gender<sup>6</sup>**

The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men, between girls and boys, between women and between men.<sup>7</sup>

### **Gender awareness**

Awareness of the socially determined differences between men and women, boys and girls, and how these differences affect their opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

### **Gender balance**

The equal participation of women, men, girls and boys in all spheres of society, including schools and the workplace.

### **Gender barriers**

Obstacles that prevent the access of a person to relationships, respect, authority, education, etc., on account of being female or male.

### **Gender bias**

An unfair difference in the way women or men, girls or boys are treated.<sup>9</sup>

### **Gender equality**

The absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex. This can be related to authority, opportunities, allocation of resources or benefits, and access to services. It implies that society values men and women, and the varying roles that they play, equally.<sup>10</sup>

### **Gender equity**

The process of being fair to women, men, boys and girls. To ensure fairness, measures must often be used to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field.<sup>11</sup>

### **Gender issue or gender concern**

A situation in which there is an undesirable gender inequality that requires intervention to address it. It results from some form of gender-based discrimination.

### **Gender relations**

How men, women, boys and girls interact with one another, resulting in manifestations of gender-based power. This arises from the roles men and women are expected to play and the impact of their interactions.<sup>12</sup>

### **Gender responsiveness**

Coming up with plans and actions that address the different needs and aspirations of women and men, boys and girls, or taking actions to correct or prevent gender bias and discrimination so as to ensure gender equality and equity.<sup>13</sup>

### **Gender roles**

Learned behaviours in a given society or community, reflected in the activities, tasks and responsibilities ascribed to men and women, boys and girls on the basis of their perceived differences.<sup>14</sup>

### **Gender segregation**

The physical, legal, social or cultural separation of people according to their sexes.

### **Gender sensitivity**

The ability to perceive existing gender differences, issues and inequalities. A gender-sensitive person will take actions to avoid discrimination.<sup>15</sup>

### **Gender stereotypes**

Structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes, behaviours and roles of a specific social group,

based on their sex. These beliefs are often biased and lead to exaggerated images of women and men that are used repeatedly in everyday life; for example, a belief that women should take care of babies while men need to provide for the family.<sup>16</sup>

### **Gender-based discrimination**

Exclusion of a person from educational opportunities, meaningful careers, political influence and opportunities for economic advancement based on their being a girl or woman, or boy or man.<sup>17</sup>

### **Gender-responsive pedagogy**

Teaching and learning processes that pay attention to the specific needs of girls and boys. The processes include lesson planning, teaching, organising and managing the classroom, and managing other forms of interaction.

### **Gender-responsive pedagogical leadership**

School management and leadership practices that respond to the needs of both girls and boys.

## **1.2. International commitments to gender equality in education**

Education is broadly recognised as a human right and is prominent in a number of international treaties and conventions, namely, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its General Comments (1989), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979). On the African continent, the right to education of all people – boys and girls, men and women – is also prominent in a number of treaties administered by the African Union, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008).

Important international social frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (Goal 2), Dakar Framework for Action (Education for All) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also articulate the right to education.

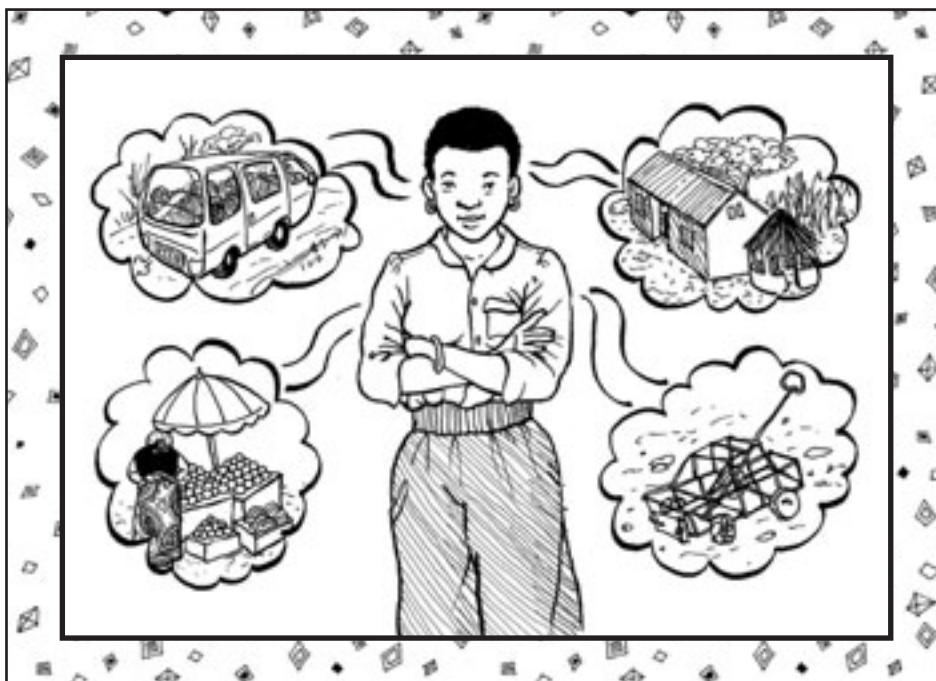
Gender equality in education is explicitly tackled in the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, which states: *The State Parties to this Convention undertake to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which, ... will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment in the matter of education ...*<sup>18</sup>

In the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), often described as the Bill of Rights for Women, discrimination is described as: *... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.*<sup>19</sup> Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, three critical education targets refer to gender equality in education: (4.1): *By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes;* (4.5): *By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations;* and – more specific to early childhood education – (4.2): *By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.*<sup>20</sup>

This toolkit is in line with the above targets and objectives.

### 1.3 Gender in education in the African context

Negative cultural beliefs and practices still permeate many societies and lead to the violation of rights. Women, men, girls and boys suffer rights violations but, on the African continent, girls and women are particularly affected. The 2016 African Human Development Report<sup>21</sup> found 'notable gender inequalities' in almost every single African country. These inequalities range from economic disparities – in most cases, women earn 70% less than men – to social inequality.<sup>22</sup> Women are at high risk of sexual and physical violence, and spend twice as much time as men in domestic labour.<sup>23</sup> Women are underrepresented in politics and leadership positions and are much more likely to find themselves in risky forms of employment, often in the informal sector. Economic and social differences often start with inequalities in education.



Gender differences, present from early childhood, continue in all stages of learners' lives. Gender differences impact negatively on learners' access to and participation in education at all levels, limiting the power of education to improve their lives and futures. Often, girls are brought up to believe that they should be obedient and that they cannot lead and speak out, so they are less likely to participate in a classroom environment unless a teacher makes a special effort to involve them. Boys may be expected to be tough and there may be less room for their emotions. This may result in aggressive behaviour later in life due to an inability to express feelings in a constructive manner.

Both teachers and learners bring into the classroom their individual cultural backgrounds and this can translate into negative experiences at school and lost opportunities for further development. GRP enables teachers to give adequate attention to gender issues in teaching and interaction with girls and boys.

### 1.4. Gender-responsive pedagogy

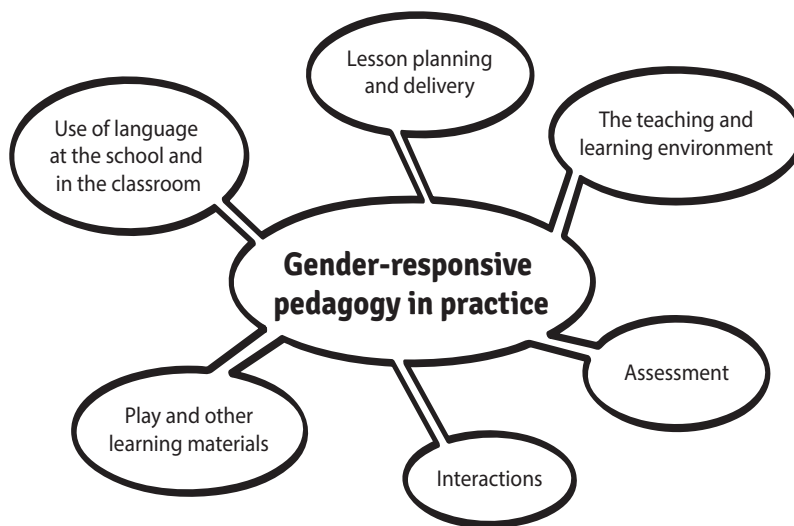
Pedagogy is often referred to as the art and science of teaching. It translates theories of learning into practice by providing strategies and guidance for actions and judgments. Pedagogy includes understanding learners, their needs, their backgrounds and their interests. It also guides how teachers



interact with learners and shapes the environments that teachers create to bring learning to life.

Gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) refers to teaching that pays particular attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys. It requires teachers and school leaders to be gender responsive in all aspects of teaching. Many pedagogical approaches do not take gender issues into account. As an example, many textbooks across countries and levels of education reinforce stereotypes: men often appear in active, leading roles while women merely help. Doctors and engineers are often depicted as male, while people in caring or assisting professions such as nurses and secretaries are depicted as female.<sup>24</sup>

GRP prompts teachers to reflect on their own beliefs about traditional gender roles. It helps teachers to provide equal opportunities for all learners to engage and learn, regardless of their sex, and it provides them with the opportunity to give adequate attention to gender issues in teaching and in all interactions both within and outside of the classroom. Furthermore, GRP guides teachers and school leaders to support equality among the sexes, inspires teachers to observe all children and to address individual differences in needs and skills, and promotes inclusive environments and well-being.





## Chapter 1 Endnotes

- 1 United Nations [UN]. Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. *Author*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>
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## Chapter 2: Gender-Responsive Pedagogy and Early Childhood Education Teachers

This chapter focuses on gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) in early childhood education (ECE). Hints and tips for teachers throughout the chapter make GRP practical and easy to implement. Though the focus is on ECE, most of the strategies can also be applied in teaching older children.

In order to implement GRP, we analyse the following teaching and learning processes:

- ◁ Lesson planning and delivery
- ◁ The teaching and learning environment
- ◁ Play and other learning materials
- ◁ Interactions, including use of language, at the school and in the classroom
- ◁ Assessment

The chapter goes on to provide guidance beyond the classroom, looking at interaction with parents and caregivers, and offering hints and tips for improving children's nutrition, overall health and well-being. This chapter concludes with a tool to enable the teacher to reflect on and improve their practice.



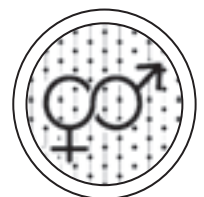
### 2.1. Relevance of gender-responsive pedagogy in early childhood education

GRP is relevant in teaching and learning processes, and outside the classroom, as it plays a big role in determining learners' access to and retention, participation and performance in school. As an early childhood teacher, you can support positive gender relations among your learners and provide them with equal opportunities for learning.

#### 2.1.1. Why gender-responsive pedagogy in early childhood education?

Learners' minds are formed, and their skills, values, behaviours and attitudes are developed, in early childhood. It is in this developmental period that stereotypes are formed and become set. This means that learners at this stage are still shaping their understanding of what it means to be a boy, a girl, a man or a woman.<sup>1</sup>

Good teaching is measured in how well you respond to your learners' needs. Your beliefs, attitudes and practices not only influence the quality of learning and teaching but also influence your interaction with the girls and boys in your class, which in turn influences their interaction with one another.<sup>2</sup>



#### ***This chapter aims to***

- ✓ Help you achieve better childhood learning by applying gender-responsive pedagogy in all curriculum activities, in the learning environment and in interactions within the school and with parents.

### 2.1.2. Gender biases

Your beliefs, attitudes and practices are important for understanding and improving educational processes.

As you bring your own early socialisation into the education process, it helps to look at how this influences your responses to different learners and their needs.

Gender biases may reinforce stereotypes and thus influence expectations and learning outcomes. Such biases may occur unintentionally in your classroom and in the community at large. They are rooted in experiences, culture and the media, and are passed from generation to generation.<sup>3</sup>



#### Examples of biases

- ◁ Treating girls as the weaker sex by gently patting a girl who hurts herself and is crying, while a boy in the same situation is told, 'Get up, boys don't cry.'
- ◁ Preferring to give girls sweeping chores and boys heavier physical duties, such as lifting.
- ◁ Not allowing girls to participate in tree climbing or other activities considered rough, such as football; sending boys away when you are playing with a group of girls or not allowing them to play with dolls.
- ◁ Giving girls easy numeracy exercises while giving boys more challenging operations.

Biases based on gender, conscious or not, are often expressed through your support of stereotyped practices. There is evidence that your expectations of learners' school performance affect their learning outcomes. These expectations can be influenced by your own unconscious biases. Understanding and acknowledging your biases and beliefs will help you to change and teach more effectively.



#### Activity (do in a group or on your own)

##### Examine your values, attitudes and practices

- ◁ Write down
  - Traditional songs, stories, proverbs and sayings that are not gender sensitive. These may emphasise gender differences (praising or belittling men or women).
  - Customary practices that reinforce male dominance and place women in submissive roles.

- Stereotyped, common expectations for men and boys, which may limit them in their behaviours or actions.
  - Stereotyped qualities given to boys and men, and to girls and women (for example, the qualities of being kind or strong, submissive or dominating).
- ◁ For each stereotype, ask yourself or yourselves if a given attribute is assigned to women and girls, or to boys and men, or whether they are born with it.
  - ◁ Reflect on how these stereotypes influence the way you treat learners in class and how learners treat one another.
  - ◁ Ask yourself how changing your beliefs, attitudes and practices can improve teaching and classroom management.

### Assess changes in values, attitudes and practices with your colleagues

- ◁ Draw a picture or use clay to mould a scene of children in a community or village playground. Encourage some colleagues to do the same.
- ◁ Show each other your work and explain:
  - why you depicted girls or boys doing those activities; and
  - why you did not depict the girls or boys doing certain other activities.
- ◁ Discuss what teachers can do to encourage all learners to engage in different kinds of activities. Ask yourselves why you think this is important.



#### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ It is useful to think about your own gender biases regularly as they may be unconscious. It may be interesting to invite your colleagues to join you in reflecting on gender biases.
- ◁ Dealing with your learners in a gentle and caring manner will help them to make the transition from home to the school environment and to overcome barriers.
- ◁ All learners benefit from receiving your praise and encouragement – make sure no learners are overlooked.
- ◁ Give equal opportunities to girls and to boys to take part in all activities, including physical activities.
- ◁ Plan activities that encourage all learners to speak out.
- ◁ Allow learners to choose what they play with or which roles they take up during pretend play without reinforcing gender stereotypes.
- ◁ Challenge traditional gender roles by using both male and female characters as examples, such as a woman who is driving a tractor or a man who is cooking.
- ◁ Questions may appeal more to all learners if they include both boys' and girls' names.
- ◁ Give both boys and girls chances to answer questions.
- ◁ Allow learners enough time to answer questions, especially those who may be shy or afraid to speak out.

## 2.2. Lesson planning

A gender-responsive lesson plan takes into consideration the specific needs of all learners throughout the teaching and learning processes. Although the content of a lesson is often determined by the curriculum or the syllabus, it is the teacher who is responsible for the gender-sensitivity of the lesson. In order to deliver a gender-responsive lesson, you should reflect on the following aspects during the planning of that lesson:

- ◁ how you will deliver the lesson, keeping in mind the class composition, the number of learners and their needs;
- ◁ the environment, including seating arrangements;
- ◁ the activities and the learning materials needed for them;
- ◁ interactions with and between the learners, including the language used; and
- ◁ assessment of the child.

These aspects will also be covered in further sections of this chapter.



### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ To ensure that all learners will like the activities you offer, avoid making them gender-specific.<sup>4</sup>
- ◁ Teach adapted, gender-responsive versions of traditional songs or rhymes.
- ◁ Prepare some activities to be done more independently (in groups). Encourage mixed-gender groups and interaction during these activities.
- ◁ Certain topics allow you to explicitly question gender roles when teaching, for example, topics about different professions, responsibilities, family members and what they do around the home.
- ◁ When planning a lesson, it is useful to think of some open, thought-provoking questions that challenge gender roles, for example:  
'Whose father cooks?'  
'Who helps their parents in the kitchen?'
- ◁ You can share some experiences of your own that challenged gender roles. For example:  
'My husband sometimes cooks; he makes nice stew.'
- 'Who remembers the doctor we saw at the health centre? What was her name?'
- ◁ Make sure you have a few of these examples in mind before you enter the classroom.
- ◁ When planning activities, remember that you want learners to realise that boys and girls, women and men can do the same tasks. There is no need for you to plan separate activities for boys or girls. To reinforce this fact, take mental notes of examples of equality and share them with your learners:  
'How nice that Jana's father likes cutting the vegetables.'
- ◁ However, avoid passing judgement during these conversations with comments like:  
'Fathers who don't cook are not nice.'
- ◁ Together with other teachers, you can take initiative and aim to influence school planning and budgeting to take into consideration the specific needs of girls and boys in your school.





### 2.3. Lesson delivery

During a lesson, you can create opportunities for learners to interact with one another. Use teaching methodologies, such as group work, that encourage the equal participation of all learners. When learners get the chance to play with their peers, they will develop skills for interacting effectively and comfortably with their own and the opposite sex. These social skills will be needed later in life as, in most settings in a society (workplace, church, community), they will have to interact and work with both men and women.<sup>5</sup>

Regularly reminding learners that they are all special, with unique abilities, is important for their well-being, self-esteem and development.<sup>6</sup>





### Hints and tips

- ◁ Encourage the participation of all learners – monitor whether you give boys and girls equal turns in answering questions.<sup>7</sup>
- ◁ Encourage interaction by mixing girls and boys. Seat them in mixed groups. Divide children into groups in random ways. For example, place learners whose first names start with a vowel in one group and those whose names start with a consonant in another group, or base groups on the learners’ favourite colour.
- ◁ Praise and help all learners equally.
- ◁ Give boys and girls similar tasks or chores (like sweeping or tidying away the chairs).
- ◁ Encourage learners to try out all the learning activities or play areas.
- ◁ Regularly change learning materials to provide learners with extra stimulation.
- ◁ Use a variety of teaching approaches to keep all learners involved.
- ◁ Invite learners to reflect on the gender roles which come out of conversations:  
 ‘Do you think some fathers can cook?’  
 ‘Can girls also drive lorries?’  
 The objective is always to broaden learners’ thinking, never to disapprove.

## 2.4. Teaching and learning environment

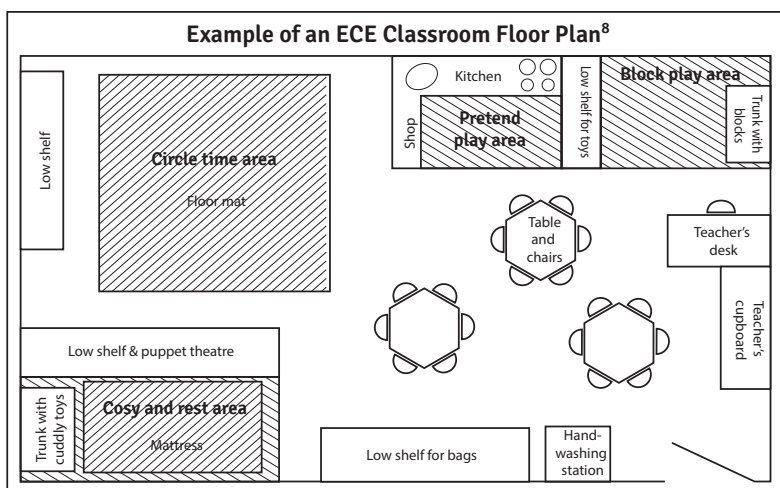
Teaching and learning can take place both inside and outside the classroom. The way in which your learners and the classroom are arranged influences learners’ involvement and learning. Among other factors, the gender-responsiveness of the teaching and learning environment is determined by the seating arrangements in class, the way in which you organise and manage group work, indoor and outdoor learning through play, independent learning in play areas and free play.

### 2.4.1. Classroom seating arrangements and group work

The typical traditional classroom has desks in rows facing the teacher and the board. This set-up is neither learner centred nor does it encourage all learners to participate equally. Learners seated at the back or in corners are likely to feel less involved. Seating arrangements particularly affect learners who are less

interested or shy. Arranging learners in small groups around a large table or on a mat or carpet can improve the participation of shyer or less active or interested learners.

In some communities, girls are not expected to speak out. These social expectations may prevent girls from actively participating, especially when those girls are seated in a corner or at the back.



Many schools are limited in their infrastructure and furniture. Furthermore, overcrowded classrooms are more difficult to set up for effective learning. Regardless of this, girls and boys should be mixed, their participation encouraged, and their specific needs and interests should be considered.<sup>9</sup>



### Hints and tips

- ◁ Divide the class into smaller groups to encourage all learners to participate fully.<sup>10</sup>
- ◁ Have the class sit in a circle (for example, on the ground) with you, the teacher, as part of the circle, to create more equal involvement for a whole-class activity.
- ◁ Increase participation by moving around the room to make sure everybody is involved.
- ◁ Engage with the school leader to make sure the furniture is adequate and appropriate to the needs of your learners.
- ◁ Change grouping regularly to allow all learners to work and bond with one another as well as to give them the chance to take on different roles within the group. Consider organising your groups so a learner can at times be the stronger person in the group, who helps others. At other times, the same learner can be the group member who needs support from his peers.



### **Grouping ideas**

In ECE, you can have all sorts of groups, and boys and girls can be mixed in a group. Grouping frequently occurs naturally when learners are allowed to choose some of the play areas or activities arranged in spaces they will engage in.

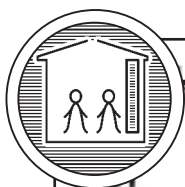
Occasionally you may want to combine certain learners, based on their needs, to work at their specific level. For example, learners who struggle with expressing themselves in the language used in class may benefit from hearing a story in a smaller group and being asked to answer questions at their level.

A list of learners' names, with different colours indicating their levels, may help to group learners for specific subjects like teaching phonics or games like puzzling.

Change groups every so often to maintain motivation. Learners should find themselves in groups that respond to their specific needs.

### **2.4.2. Indoor and outdoor learning through play**

Learning through play is essential in ECE. Playing aids peer interaction and helps learners to work together and solve problems. All play leads to learning and allows for mixed-age and mixed-gender groups.



Nonetheless, boys and girls tend to play in different ways, which may cause them to think boys and girls are very different and unable to do the same things. Boys may play more roughly and take up more space when, for example, they are playing football. Girls may do more musical and rhythmic coordination activities, for example, playing skipping games accompanied by songs. These notions of gender differences may affect learners' aspirations and achievements.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to encourage learners to engage in all kinds of play, without thinking about what is considered socially appropriate for their sex.



### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ Try to intervene when a group of learners takes up all the play space and chases other learners away. Keep an eye on this during indoor and outdoor play activities, and during free play. To prevent this behaviour, physically divide the playground into different spaces, where possible, to allow different groups to play at the same time.<sup>12</sup> You can do this with plants or low hedges.
- ◁ Keep in mind that girls and boys have the same physical strength and the same need to move and play until they reach puberty, but girls are better able to moderate their behaviour and meet social expectations.<sup>13</sup>
- ◁ Encourage games involving mixed-age and mixed-gender groups on the playground, like hide and seek and tag.<sup>14</sup> You can introduce such games or even take part in them to encourage mingling.
- ◁ Sometimes have 'boys or girls only' time for certain activities, for example, time with the ball for girls only.<sup>15</sup> This makes it easier for a certain group to participate in activities in which they would normally not take part.
- ◁ Regularly offer construction or creative play opportunities (such as puzzles, drawing and playing with blocks) as both boys and girls enjoy these.<sup>16</sup> These activities can be encouraged even during free play in the playground. You may, for example, let learners build with sticks or draw in the sand, or have a clay play area outside.
- ◁ When you notice that either boys or girls never engage in a certain activity, ask learners why they are avoiding it.<sup>17</sup> Follow up by asking whether they think boys or girls can be good at this activity. After listening, perhaps inform learners that there are people of the opposite sex who enjoy the activity. When possible, refer to individuals known to the learners, such as a learner from a different class. You can also show a picture of someone of the opposite sex, for example, a female football team member, doing the activity.<sup>18</sup>
- ◁ Challenge boys to explore play that is preferred by girls, and vice versa.
- ◁ If possible, invite professionals to your class to talk about their professions. This can be especially helpful if they work in a profession typically practised by the opposite sex. For example, invite a female mechanic or taxi driver, or a male nurse.<sup>19</sup>



### **Pretend play**

During pretend play, boys and girls often invent very different stories. Boys' stories are often about heroes, while girls' stories tend to reflect everyday life. Nonetheless, they are interested in one another's pretend play and have story ideas suitable for mixed play.

Very young children sometimes mix gender roles without being aware of it, while more aware learners can at times choose and be comfortable in an opposite role. In doing this, learners explore acting outside their stereotypical gender roles – a boy may put a baby doll on his back and a girl may pretend to be a bus driver.<sup>20</sup>

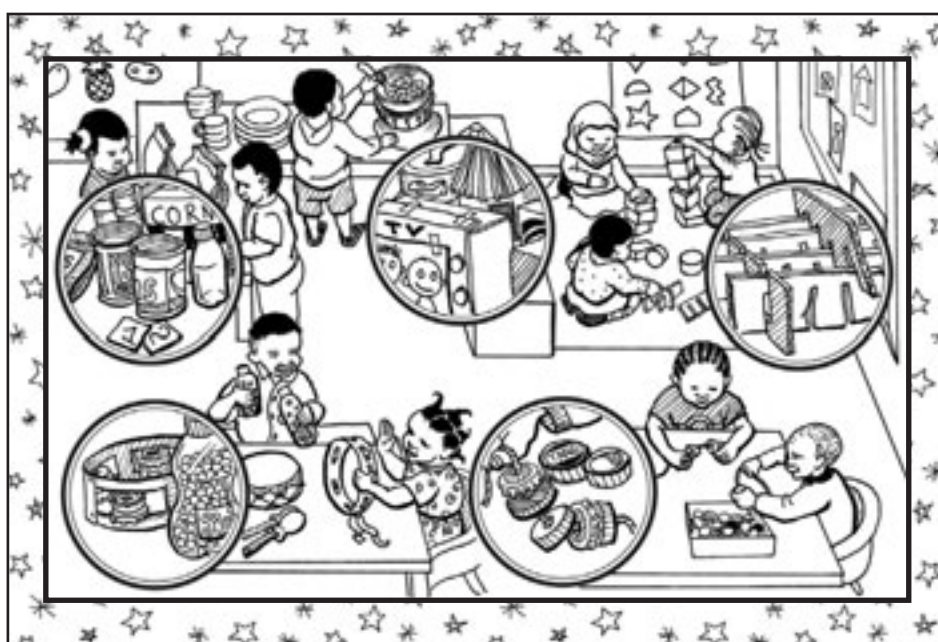
When a learner explores a different gender role, encourage this learner to continue and discourage peers who make negative comments.

When you engage in pretend play with the learners, you can model behaviour that is non-stereotypical, for example, play a mother building a house or a father cooking.<sup>21</sup>



### **2.4.3. Independent learning using play areas**

In some ECE settings, learning materials are organised in play areas. For example, there may be a shop, a library and a construction area. You may equip these areas with low-cost, locally available materials: empty packages for the shop; stories written by the teacher and illustrated by the learners for the library; and a variety of materials for building, such as bottle caps, small boxes (to use as blocks) and stones for the construction area. Other areas, such as a quiet area, can also use materials that are locally available. Such play areas are ideal for introducing independent learning activities in the ECE class.



The set-up of play areas can influence how attractive they are to both sexes and which activities boys and girls engage in. Your class will be actively engaged in learning if you use some of the ideas mentioned below and adapt them to your context. Above all, change your materials regularly, be creative and **have fun!**

You can read more about gender-sensitive play and other learning materials in Section 2.5.



### Hints and tips

Learning increases when a wide range of materials is available for learners. Real items from home or the community can inspire learning. From time to time, let the learners engage with these real objects in class. Play and other learning materials can be low-cost and made by you or by the learners themselves.

There are different approaches to using play and other learning materials in class. Some ideas are listed below. Try all of these approaches, switch between them or combine them as best fits you and your learners.

- ◁ Be gender neutral by offering materials that are attractive to both boys and girls and have neutral colours.
- ◁ Offer similar materials that have an element of interest for each sex. For example, you can use drawings or pictures from magazines to make different puzzles, with some featuring cars and others featuring dolls. In this way, your learners have the same learning opportunity but can use the puzzle they like best.
- ◁ Organise whole-group activities that break traditional gender roles. For instance, while learning about transport, all learners can pretend to drive tractors. This may initially meet some resistance and learners may make remarks about certain behaviours not being for boys or for girls. This is a perfect opportunity to introduce learners to examples of people who do break these gender roles by, for example, showing a drawing of a female tractor driver or car mechanic.<sup>22</sup>
- ◁ Regularly changing the variety, placement or combination of play and other learning materials keeps learners engaged and interested. It can also inspire boys and girls to use materials that they would usually be less interested in playing with during free play. For instance, boys are more likely to try playing with dolls when these are found next to the blocks, maybe building a house for the dolls and including the dolls in their pretend play.<sup>23</sup>
- ◁ The set-up of the materials can have an impact on who plays with them. Reorganising your play and other learning materials can be an easy way to inspire new games and encourage different learners to mingle. The shop area, for instance, can occasionally be placed near the construction toys and then hardware tools, such as hammers and saws made from cardboard, can be 'sold to customers'. This may engage different learners in pretending to shop.
- ◁ Learners who can choose the activities they want to engage in have increased motivation and learning outcomes. It is, however, useful to have the learners rotate between different activities once in a while. This persuades them to play with all materials (including things that they may typically consider boyish or girlish).<sup>24</sup>
- ◁ Occasionally have some boys-only or girls-only groups, especially when you want to encourage play activities that are less often chosen by a specific sex (for example, construction for girls and cooking for boys).<sup>25</sup> Once boys and girls are more confident playing with these materials, you can reduce boys- or girls-only time and expect learners to play with these materials together.
- ◁ Take learners' personal interests into account when they are playing. For example, if some learners have a great interest in animals, you can stimulate their involvement by using animal themes or learning materials. If certain boys and girls share an interest, providing relevant materials can also encourage mixed-gender play.
- ◁ The name of an activity or game can make it more or less attractive to all learners. For example: referring to the area with pots, pans, dolls and dress-up clothes as 'the doll area' may attract fewer boys than if it is called 'the pretend area'.<sup>26</sup>
- ◁ Involve parents to further increase your gender responsiveness. For example, ask them to avoid sending their children to school with very gendered materials.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.5. Play and other learning materials



The learning environment should be rich in play and other learning materials like picture and story books, play materials and toys, illustrations and posters on the walls. If your school is unable to purchase these materials or to obtain them from the government, be creative and make your own materials from locally available resources (rag dolls, empty packages, blocks, milk carton cars, wire cars, etc.).

### 2.5.1. Play materials

Many play materials are gender neutral, meaning that they are equally attractive to boys and girls. However, advertisements, companies and shops often make toys gender specific. This means that children and their parents see a clear division between toys for boys and toys for girls. This limits the variety of toys parents and schools can buy and thus limits what boys and girls play with. Some children refuse to play with materials advertised for the other sex. The same goes for self-made toys that are gender specific.

When play materials appeal to one sex only, all learners miss out because a variety of experiences with different materials will help them learn a wider range of skills and develop holistically. Gender-specific play materials may also influence learners' understanding of male and female roles. If dolls are only for girls, both boys and girls may think that caring for children is only for women.

For these reasons, it is important to think consciously about gender before you make, or buy, play and other learning materials.



#### Hints and tips

- ◁ Instead of using gender-specific play materials, choose those that are equally attractive to boys and girls. For example, you can make a doll that can be a boy or a girl. If you name the doll, choose a name that is used for boys and girls. If you dress it in clothes, use a colour and design that is not typical for either boys or girls. Another option is to make several dolls so that you provide variety: male and female dolls, different ages, different sets of clothes.
  - ◁ The colour of play materials can, in some contexts, be important. For example, boys may refuse to play with anything pink while girls may claim pink toys as 'theirs'. There is no need to avoid pink or blue – there are no wrong colours – but aim to use a range of colours. Question beliefs about colours. You can, for example, point out: 'Anybody can play with pink toys.'
  - ◁ Always question learners when they say things like:
    - 'Only boys can play with cars.'
    - 'Dolls are for girls.'
- Ask them whether they are sure this is true. In our examples, you can ask other learners if they know girls who play with cars or boys who play with dolls. Alternatively, you can offer other views yourself.
- 'When I was a child, I loved playing with cars.'
- 'I think lots of the boys in this class will enjoy playing with dolls because they are caring and like being kind to others.'

- ◁ Model non-stereotypical behaviour yourself by exploring play materials that are typically for the opposite sex. Female teachers enjoy playing football and male teachers have fun 'cooking' during pretend play.





### 2.5.2. Pictures and stories

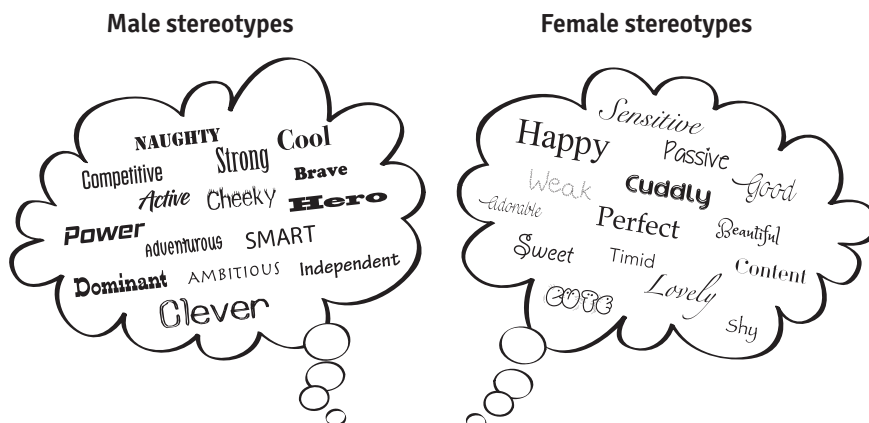
Story books and picture books, posters and visuals are important in the learning of young children as they are considered a reflection of society. They help learners to form their idea of the world, to find their way in it and to become sure of themselves.



The storylines, language and illustrations in books and on posters are often stereotypical. Research into story books shows that:<sup>28</sup>

- ◁ Boys and men are more often the main characters in a story than girls and women.
- ◁ Women are represented in a family or home context while men are most often depicted in a professional context.
- ◁ Women and girls are often passive and watch events happen while confident and strong boys or men undertake exciting and worthwhile adventures and occupations.

The words used to describe characters in a book are often linked to stereotypes and may reinforce gender roles.



In the same way, pictures and illustrations used in books and posters can reinforce stereotypes and gender roles.

**Accessories often used in illustrations and pictures that reinforce stereotypes and gender roles**

For girls and women



For boys and men



**Roles and activities often used in illustrations and pictures that reinforce stereotypes and gender roles**

For girls and women



For boys and men



**Gender stereotyping in text books (learners' books and teachers' guides)**

In some countries, specific guides and learners' books are developed for young learners and their teachers. These books can help you as a teacher to implement the national or regional early learning curriculum.

Research has found gender stereotyping is widespread in text books across the world. There are now initiatives to screen textbooks for gender stereotyping before they are disseminated. Nonetheless, it may be wise to check publications for stereotyping yourself, as there are still many textbooks in circulation with stereotypes in the text, stories and illustrations.<sup>29</sup> If you are given the opportunity to provide feedback to stakeholders,<sup>30</sup> you can play a vital role in raising awareness on gender stereotyping in textbooks.



## Hints and tips

From a gender perspective, **there are no bad story books and picture books.** Every book, even one with stereotypes, can offer an opportunity to talk with learners about gender roles. Checking a book or a poster for stereotypes before you use it can help you decide whether to use it and how to do so.

### Checking a story book, picture book or poster for stereotypes

Be aware of the gender sensitivity of your books or posters before you use them with your learners. Read the story, look at the title and the pictures, and ask yourself:

- ◁ How many characters in the book are male and how many are female?
- ◁ How often are male and female characters mentioned or shown in the book?
- ◁ How are the male and female characters portrayed – do they have stereotyped male or female behaviours or not?
- ◁ Do some of the pictures break the gender stereotypes in your society? (Girls playing football, a man caring for a child, a female community leader, etc.)
- ◁ How are roles and relationships between male and female characters portrayed – are they stereotypical or not?
- ◁ What adjectives are used to describe male and female characters?
- ◁ Do the illustrations reflect the diversity of society? Is there a variety of people with, for instance, different skin colours, clothes, heights and body shapes? Are minorities like people with disabilities represented?
- ◁ Based on the answers to these questions, you can decide whether, and how, you will use the book or the poster.
- ◁ Be careful when using pictures from magazines as they often depict men,

women, boys and girls in a highly stereotyped way.

### How to challenge stereotypes with young learners

When a book, poster or illustration confirms or challenges stereotypes, you can draw learners' attention to this. You can, for instance, encourage discussion during storytelling:

- ◁ Encourage learners to identify stereotypical characters in the story or illustrations. However, keep in mind that your learners do not always notice stereotypes and how these affect the characters in the book. You can help your class to become aware by asking questions:
  - 'Do you notice something different about the girl/boy in the book?'
  - 'What are the girls/boys doing in this picture?'
  - 'Would you like to do this?'
  - 'What do you think about this?'
  - 'Is it always this way?'
  - 'Is it like that in our school?'
  - 'Do you see this often?'
- ◁ Link characters in books or on posters to real-life role models. Give other examples yourself or ask learners about examples:
  - 'Can a girl/boy also do this?'
  - 'Why can they do this?' or
  - 'Why can't they do this?'

## 2.6. Interactions and language use



Young learners learn through interactions with one another, with adults and with materials. These interactions influence the well-being of the learners. They also provide emotional support, especially for the youngest learners. This section looks at the interactions between learners and between teachers and learners, and at the language used in interactions.

The interactions of children extend to the wider school community and to the home environment. Children observe interactions between adults. What they see and hear in such interactions will influence how they see the world and themselves. This section, therefore, also looks at the interactions between teachers and the interactions between teachers and parents or caregivers.

### 2.6.1. Teacher-learner interactions

Language, both verbal and non-verbal, reveals a lot about how you feel and what you think and believe,<sup>31</sup> including your unintentional and unconscious biases (see also Section 2.1.2). Given that young learners are still shaping their ideas with regard to gender, it is extremely important that the language you use in class is gender responsive. The use of gender-responsive language can make all learners feel respected and valued, which will serve as encouragement and can improve learners' performance. It contributes to a learning environment that is conducive to learning and inclusive, and where all learners express themselves freely.

Learning, as well as learners' self-esteem and confidence, increases when they are encouraged to interact freely and when their contributions are taken into consideration. Young learners do best when you make lots of eye contact with them, show them warmth and affection, and use kind words.

On the contrary, inappropriate use of language, including non-verbal body language like gestures and facial and eye expressions, can transmit negative gender biases and messages that may



prevent learning. Inappropriate language may instil fear in your learners, hamper communication between them and with you, and reinforce gender differences and inequalities.

### Examples of stereotypical language

- ◁ Compliments to your learners can be stereotypical if, for example, you use words like 'good' or 'excellent' specifically for boys and words like 'beautiful' or 'lovely' specifically for girls.
- ◁ Your tone and intonation may be calm or pleasant when talking to girls but harsher when talking to boys.
- ◁ Your responses may differ depending on the sex of the learner. For example, a girl may be allowed to scream when seeing something scary but if a boy screams in a similar situation, you may react by being surprised or amazed (verbally or non-verbally).
- ◁ You may find that you are more likely to interact with girls by bending over or sitting down next to them to be at their height but that you remain standing when talking to boys who are seated.
- ◁ You may use language that suggests that boys or girls naturally have certain qualities or behave in a certain way. Some examples:
  - Descriptions like 'sensible, helpful girls' versus 'silly, naughty, rough boys'
  - Stereotypical requests, such as:  
'Girls, please show these boys how to organise these bags nicely.'
  - Complaints like 'boys will be boys'
  - Assigning boys and girls different tasks:  
'Boys, you carry these heavy things while the girls tidy up.'

This leads learners to believe there are certain things only girls or only boys can do. This perceived difference may make your learners perform poorly in certain areas or be reluctant to do certain tasks.



### Activity

Sometimes it is hard to reflect on the language you yourself use when teaching. Therefore, it can be helpful to get a different perspective. Perhaps a colleague with a passion for GRP or even a school leader can be asked to help you by observing you teach. The observer can pay specific attention to the language hints and tips above and count how often boys and girls participate, check if there is a difference in the type of questions you ask learners or in the compliments you give to girls versus those you give to boys, and so on.

If you have access to filming equipment (even a smartphone) you can film yourself and afterwards look at the footage and reflect on your personal language use.

Even learners can play a role in changing your habits by, for example, having a chart or a specific area on the blackboard where they make a mark every time you say something that you want to avoid. This may be a phrase, like 'boys and girls', or a certain adjective commonly used for one sex, like 'beautiful' for a girl. Learners will be motivated to catch their teacher saying one of these words and will enjoy being allowed to help you.





## Hints and tips

- ◁ Regularly reflect on the language you use. Aim to be conscious of gender biases and make efforts to avoid gender-specific words so as not to exclude one sex. Choose generic words, such as 'people', 'learners', 'kids', 'they', 'them', instead of gender-specific words like 'boys', 'girls', 'he' and 'she'. It is a good habit to use learners' names when giving positive or negative feedback. Thus, rather than saying, 'Boys, stop quarrelling!' use the boys' names instead: 'Tendai and Musa, stop quarrelling!'
- ◁ Encourage all learners equally. Stimulate them at their own level and consider their needs. Encourage girls and boys to contribute to discussions and to games equally. It is not always easy to ensure all learners are equally talked to or asked to talk. Some shyer or quieter learners are easily overlooked. Make sure that everyone has a turn. Some teachers tick a list of names, others temporarily put aside the nametags of those learners who have already participated. Choose a system that works for you and your class.
- ◁ Reflecting on your non-verbal communication in class can also be helpful. Do you bend over to be at the same level as the learner for both boys and girls? Do you treat girls and boys with the same gentleness or harshness in similar situations? Avoiding discrimination between boys and girls in body language will set a good example for them that will positively influence their body language towards each other.
- ◁ Aim to be consistent in the language you use with both girls and boys. You can also check if you use the same kind of tone and give the same kind of attention to all learners.
- ◁ Compliments should not be stereotypical but uniform across sexes; use words like 'good' or 'excellent' for all learners. Compliments are best given for something the children have accomplished and should be specific to the child rather than their sex:
  - 'Tendai, you kick the ball very well,'
  - 'Thandi, you have done a very neat job with your painting.'

Do not discourage girls from being assertive by telling them they are 'behaving like boys'. When boys cry, do not caution them to 'stop behaving like girls'.
- ◁ Allow learners to interact freely but discourage any teasing and name-calling (especially if it is based on sex). Explaining to learners that some words are hurtful and may make their friends sad can help to stop this behaviour.
- ◁ It is positive to encourage all learners, no matter if they are girls or boys, to take up leadership roles in the classroom.
- ◁ Do not assign tasks according to sex. Have mixed groups of girls and boys do tasks that could be considered more boyish (like lifting) or girlish (like sweeping).
- ◁ Class and school rules that focus on respect for all people can increase the gender responsiveness of the environment.
- ◁ When selecting stories or inventing them, try to include some that have positive role models for both boys and girls (also see Section 2.5 on play and other learning materials).
- ◁ Create different versions of traditional children's music, rhymes and finger plays so that they include characters of both sexes. You can alternate male and female names, swap parental roles, make verses gender neutral, and so on:
  - In The wheels on the Bus, use 'parents' instead of 'mommies'.
  - Instead of 'Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O // And on his farm ...', you can teach learners to sing:
    - 'Tendai's parents had a farm, E-I-E-I-O // And on their farm ...'

### 2.6.2. Learner-learner interactions

Studies have shown that boys and girls, even at preschool age, prefer to mix with their own sex. However, in most cases, learners do not dislike or want to avoid the other sex, but instead simply favour their own.<sup>32</sup> Young learners begin to believe that some activities are for girls and others for boys through observing older learners and other people.<sup>33</sup>



The more learners of the same sex interact (girls with girls and boys with boys), the more likely they are to display behaviour considered typical of their sex. For example, boys who play with boys all the time may become more violent.

Consider this example:

*Thandi and Tendai got on well and liked doing puzzles together. They often sat next to each other during break and shared their food. Sometimes other boys teased Tendai for playing with girls. Tendai began to refuse to play with Thandi and, whenever she approached him, he ran away from her to join the 'boys' group'.*

In this instance, Tendai initially crosses the gender barrier but, when he is laughed at by the other boys, he gives in to peer pressure. Crossing the gender barrier often takes courage for learners. Teacher encouragement and support are very important.

When learners have many different playmates and try different activities, they will build skills to interact and function successfully in other situations.



### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ It is useful to create and plan for opportunities for learners to talk to and learn from one another, and work together. Guide and assist learners in putting their ideas together. For example, during group work, you can ask boys and girls to complete a task, such as beading, together. Materials and groups could also be combined: if you notice girls playing with dolls and boys with building blocks, you can ask if the dolls need a house and if the learners could design and build a doll's house together. (More tips on the teaching and learning environment can be found in Section 2.5.)
- ◁ Observe your learners in class as well as on the playground to find out which learners play together, and where. This information, together with what you already know about your learners, can be useful in planning activities that will encourage learners to mix. Here is an example:  
If you know that Msinzo only plays with a few girls and panics when there is too much noise and activity, encourage Msinzo to mix with other learners, including boys, by choosing a quiet activity like looking at a book or playing with wooden blocks. This may motivate Msinzo to join in play with other classmates.
- ◁ When a learner crosses the gender barrier (perhaps a boy chooses a doll to play with or engages more with girls) try to understand, recognise and support this learner and encourage him or her to continue. Discourage negative comments and any bullying from the child's peers.

- ◁ Make one of your class rules 'We are all friends'. Stick this rule, with a picture, up on your wall and refer to it regularly. Introduce the rule by telling a story about teasing, bullying and excluding. The story should make clear to your learners that this behaviour is never fun and that it causes sadness.



- ◁ Statements like, 'Only girls can play in this kitchen, boys do not know how to cook,' are best challenged through questions. After questioning these beliefs and listening, present learners with role models. In the case of the statement above, you could inform them that many successful restaurants have male chefs, or you could show a picture of a male chef.
- ◁ Provide learners with examples (for instance, pictures) of people who break gender roles, like a female doctor and a male nurse. Refer to local people who like activities that may be considered atypical for their sex, like a female teacher who rides a motorbike or a male teacher who washes the dishes.



### 2.6.3. Teacher-teacher interactions

It is important for you to realise that you cannot change the gender responsiveness of your school alone. Changes in school organisation and culture require the action and commitment of all teachers, guided by the leadership of the school. You will find more about this in Chapter 3.

Your interactions with other teachers can either reinforce or reduce stereotypical behaviour. Be mindful that learners learn a lot from observing others; the manner in which you and other teachers relate with one another is easily noticed and imitated.<sup>34</sup> This includes the way teachers address, treat and regard teachers of the opposite sex. This gives learners an impression of how being male or female is seen and influences children's perceptions of the role of men and women in school as well as in society. Male and female teachers' interaction with one another will affect the way girls and boys will treat one another.



#### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ It is helpful to regularly reflect on your communication or to exchange open feedback with your colleagues. This increases your awareness of stereotypes in what you say and how you say it.<sup>35</sup> Think about behaviours that reinforce negative gender stereotypes and discuss with colleagues how these can be addressed (for example, female teachers being put in charge of serving tea during school meetings).
- ◁ Use teachers' meetings to explain to fellow teachers and school leaders the benefits of GRP in the development of learners.
- ◁ Identify gender-related problems at the early education level that require your intervention. You can discuss these with your fellow teachers and work with them to address the identified gender problems.
- ◁ Discuss with other teachers the importance of being role models when it comes to teacher-teacher interactions.
- ◁ Lobby for school-based professional development on gender awareness so that all teachers adopt gender responsiveness in the teaching process.
- ◁ Advocate with the school leadership to make GRP part of the school system.

### 2.6.4. Teacher-parent interactions

Parents and other caregivers often unconsciously pass on their beliefs and behaviours about gender roles to their children. From the time they are born, most boys are treated differently from girls by their parents. Some common examples: girls are dressed in gender-specific colours, such as pink and purple, and given toys that encourage caring for others, like dolls. Boys are given toys that encourage critical thinking, such as cars and building blocks.<sup>36</sup> Girls are taught to be obedient, boys are taught to be strong. Sometimes girls are excessively protected and treated



as though they are fragile to the extent that even male learners feel they have to protect their sisters from some unknown harm. Boys, on the other hand, are expected not to cry because it is a sign of weakness.



Other examples are situations where parents reinforce gender stereotypes by having expectations that are different for boys and girls. Girls are often expected to do all the housework chores like cleaning, sweeping, cooking and washing, and boys are expected to do 'manly' work outside the house.

In order to deal with gender stereotypes and biases in learners' homes and communities, work closely and respectfully with parents and other caregivers.



#### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ It is helpful to reflect on local cultural practices, norms and beliefs that reinforce gender stereotypes. These can be passed on by parents and caregivers to their children. Think about how some of these can be addressed in your interactions with parents.
- ◁ When a learner displays gender-discriminatory behaviour, try to gain more information about their home situation and the causes of the behaviour. Thereafter, have a private conversation with the parents or caregivers to discuss the benefits of equal opportunities and request their support. It can be helpful to team up with colleagues as well as your school leadership when involving parents.
- ◁ Remember that mutual respect is central to gaining parents' support.
- ◁ Given the central role of parents and caregivers in shaping learners' gender roles, touch upon this topic in a teacher-parent meeting with all parents. Encourage parents and caregivers to join you in promoting positive gender relations among boys and girls. Urge parents to allow their children to dream outside gender roles, suggesting that, for instance, a girl can dream of becoming a doctor. Presenting some data on the effects of gender-based discrimination can also be a powerful stimulant to both yourself and the parents.
- ◁ More information on interactions with parents and the community can be found in Chapter 3.

## 2.7. Assessment

Assessment can be used to gather and provide teachers, parents and families with critical information about a learner's development and growth. The information coming from assessment can also be used to adapt the teaching to learners' specific needs. Doing so can result in more efficient teaching and, eventually, in better learning outcomes. When assessing, you can also praise behaviour that is in line with your expectations, for example, gender-sensitive play behaviour. Receiving this type of encouragement can further motivate learners.

Your observation of both boys and girls will help you to assess gender interactions. Use the information you have gathered to enhance your learners' behaviours, attitudes, values and learning.

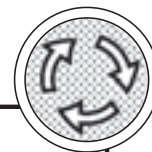


### Hints and tips

- ◁ The best way to assess young learners is through regular observation. Through observation, you may identify which stereotypes are prevalent in your classroom and if these act as barriers to learning.
- ◁ Reflect on some of the behaviours that you observe in boys in your class that may be interfering with the ability of the girls to learn, and vice versa. For example, the boys may be using all of the available balls to play football, so girls cannot play with balls and the balls cannot be used for other games. Your response to these behaviours can create a more equal and gender-responsive learning environment. The previous sections in this chapter may guide your response.
- ◁ During observations (whether planned or unplanned), focus on learners' facial expressions, gestures, body language, spoken words, actions, songs, dance, pictures and writing. In the course of a planned assessment, take some short notes that you can use to record learners' gender interactions and behaviours in their individual records. Write down any relevant information. This helps you to plan appropriate action.
- ◁ Encourage learners to play with materials that are usually chosen by the opposite sex (for example, give boys dolls) and observe or note down their responses.
- ◁ You can ask individual learners questions that can help you gauge their understanding and mindsets around gender. Below are some possible questions – make sure to adjust them to your situation.
  - What career do you want when you grow up? Why?
  - Which sports do you like? Why?
  - Who do you think should wash the dishes at home? Why? Who should sweep at home? Why? Who should put your baby brother to bed? Why? (This list can be extended with more household chores you think relevant.)
  - Which toys do you receive as gifts? Which colours do these toys have? Is that important?
- ◁ Make your own observation tool related to gender so that it is applicable in your context. An example of an observation tool is included below.

### Example of an observation tool

This sample checklist is useful for observing learners’ behaviour in class. You can adapt and add to this list to fit your classroom needs.



Name of learner _____	Tick where applicable	Extra information
Interacts with peers		With whom?
Interacts with peers of the opposite sex		With whom?
There are no differences in non-verbal communication when talking to peers of the opposite sex		Description
Plays near learners of the opposite sex		Near whom?
Engages with peers of the opposite sex		How often? (In every activity? Once a day?)
Engages with play and other learning materials		Which materials?
Engages with materials in a non-stereotypical way		How?
Pictures drawn have both male and female characters in them		Description (pay attention to the roles of the characters)
Stories or anecdotes told have both male and female characters in them		Description (pay attention to the roles of the characters)

## 2.8. Health, nutrition, well-being and gender in the ECE classroom

Body image (the way a person perceives his or her body) and body awareness (the way a person understands his or her body and body parts, and their capability of movement), nutrition and emotions play a great role in learners’ physical and mental well-being and development. When addressing these topics with young learners, you have many opportunities to develop positive gender interactions and to question gender stereotypes. This section gives more guidance on how to deal with these topics in a gender-responsive manner.

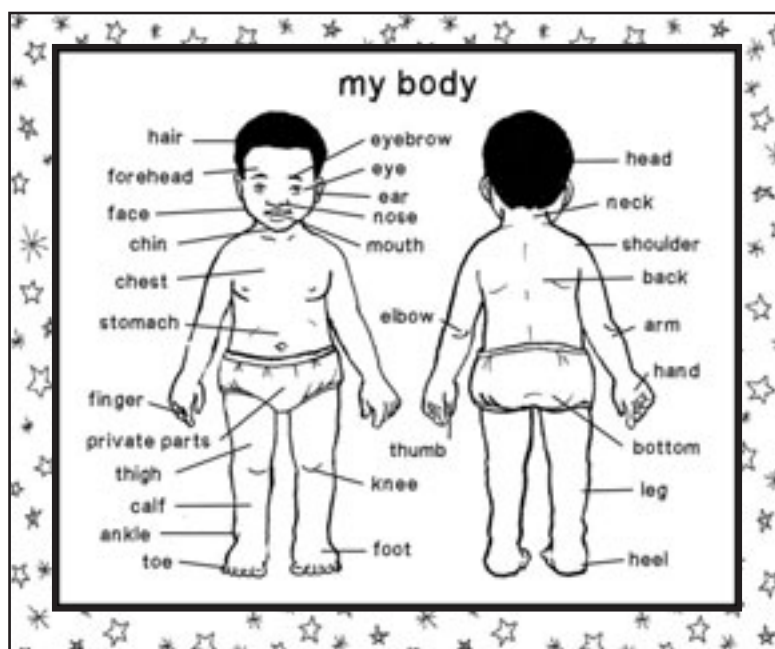
### 2.8.1. Basic knowledge of the human body and self-awareness

Problems related to body image and low self-esteem start when learners are young. Learners, either directly or indirectly, get messages from older learners and adults, at home and at school. Girls are often

told to cover up but boys are seldom told to cover up. Some girls may conclude something is wrong or shameful about their bodies, while boys may think their bodies are superior.

Both boys and girls must be taught in a simple, fun way to love and to take good care of their bodies. These are some of the messages you can communicate to learners:

- ◁ The human body is composed of different parts.
- ◁ The different parts all play a useful function and are complementary.
- ◁ Only some parts are different for boys and girls (for example, their private parts).
- ◁ Though different, both boys' and girls' bodies are beautiful.
- ◁ It is important to love your body and to take good care of it.
- ◁ It is important not to allow strangers or indeed anybody, whatever their sex, to touch your body, especially if it makes you uncomfortable.



### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ Teach some specific ways to take care of the body – brushing teeth is one example.
- ◁ You can encourage body appreciation in different subjects by, for example, comparing heights, for measuring in maths or to teach comparative nouns: Thandi is taller than ... but shorter than ....
- ◁ Make sure to compare boys with girls as well as girls with girls and boys with boys.
- ◁ When a child is absent from school due to illness, talk about why they are ill and what children can do to avoid this situation, explaining, for example, that washing hands before eating can help avoid an upset stomach.

### **2.8.2. Sexual behaviour**

Young children (especially those under the age of five) tend to be very curious both about their bodies and about the bodies of others. This means that you, as a teacher, may stumble upon any of the following behaviours:

- ◁ Learners looking at one another's private parts or touching their own private parts
- ◁ Learners trying to look at others when they are naked (perhaps when others are in the toilets)
- ◁ Children engaged in fictional games like 'Doctor' that involve nudity and (consensual) touching
- ◁ Kissing and hugging<sup>37</sup>

This behaviour generally occurs between children who are similar in age.<sup>38</sup> Be aware though that, in the earlier years, this behaviour may occur openly, whereas with slightly older learners (children over five years old) it may be hidden. This does not mean it is not happening. Your learners may also approach you with questions about the private parts of others or about the origins of babies. These questions are particularly common when they are expecting a new baby in the family.

These behaviours and questions may make you feel uncomfortable, alarm you or make you insecure about how you should respond, even if they are common and developmentally natural for this age group.

This early exploratory behaviour should not be confused with sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involves coercion, intimidation, force or any other type of power imbalance, such as a difference in age.



### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ It is important to consider how you respond to these behaviours and to be gender sensitive in your response.
- ◁ It is wise to involve parents in such situations. Reassure the parents by informing them this curiosity is natural and common. Discuss which response is most beneficial for their child.



Punishment or scolding is likely to cause guilt and shame, which may result in body issues at a later age.<sup>39</sup> When they grow older, this feeling of shame may prevent them from seeking medical attention or advice on issues related to their bodies.

- ◁ To avoid causing guilt or shame, encourage these learners to ask you or their parents questions. When possible, it helps to look at books about bodies.
- ◁ You may want to explain that some body parts and behaviours are very private, even when they are nothing to be embarrassed about. For example, when a learner has their hands in their pants you may want to separate the learner

from the others without drawing much attention to them (if possible) and tell them this sort of touching is very private and should not be done around other people.

- ◁ When asked difficult questions, about the origins of babies, for example, it is good practice to find a balance between the truth and something you and parents find acceptable.
- ◁ When learners are going to the toilet, you may name private parts and use the correct medical term, if this is culturally accepted. If you do not know an acceptable name in the local language, ask learners which word their parents use and use that word. For example:  
*'Did you wipe your private parts after peeing, Thandi?'*
- ◁ However difficult it is, providing the correct information and making sexuality a topic that can be talked about has benefits. For instance, children who know names for their private parts are less likely to feel unnecessary shame about their bodies and are more likely to report abuse if it occurs.<sup>40</sup> They realise that their bodies belong to themselves and that they have a right to say no to unwanted touching.<sup>41</sup> At a later stage in life, this may contribute to their confidence in making decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

### 2.8.3. Abuse

Abuse can take different forms. It can be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological. Neglect and abandonment may also be considered abuse.<sup>42</sup> Abuse can happen to both sexes.

Being vigilant for signs of violence against your young learners is critical as they are often not able to express what is happening to them. When abuse happens at home, family members often do not report it – they may be victims themselves or may keep quiet out of loyalty to their family. You, as a teacher, know your learners well, yet you are not part of their families. This can put you in a position where you can alert people within the referral system when you suspect abuse.

Follow up on indicators of abuse with further investigations and report abuse to child protection agencies (see Chapter 3, Section 3.8 on child safety and protection).

#### Signs of abuse

- ◁ There may be physical signs, such as multiple and recurring bruises or black eyes, and broken bones.
- ◁ The signs may also be emotional. A learner who is being abused may be withdrawn, fearful or depressed, sad or angry. They may lose interest in activities they once loved or lose focus on their schoolwork.
- ◁ Victims of abuse may act out and be disruptive in class. Some may behave violently towards themselves (through self-harm or by engaging in irresponsible behaviour that puts themselves and others in danger) and towards others. They may become bullies and be unable to manage their anger. These changes can all happen fairly suddenly.
- ◁ Excessive sexual behaviour, that is, behaviour that goes beyond what was described in the previous section or behaviour that is very pronounced, may be an indication of sexual abuse.
- ◁ Some victims of abuse do not show any of these typical signs but will avoid going home after school or taking part in any activity that would involve them spending time alone with their abuser.
- ◁ Children who are not abused themselves but who witness abuse (against siblings, for instance) sometimes show similar signs.

These signs in a child do not necessarily point to abuse. Learners in stressful home situations may also change their mood or disposition.<sup>43</sup>

As the teacher, you may be one of the most trustworthy persons in the abuse victim's life. Your learner is more likely to tell you what is going on than a person who is unfamiliar to them.



#### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ Investigate any suspicion thoroughly, perhaps talking privately with the child and trying to discover the cause of their suspicious behaviour.
- ◁ It is important that you know whom to contact within the referral system so that you receive support when you suspect abuse. Helping a learner who is a victim of abuse is not a burden you should have to carry alone; it is important that you involve others in the school or in the referral system.
- ◁ When learners struggle to talk about what is happening in their life, drawing or role playing with a doll may help them to express what has happened.

## Good classroom management to avoid corporal punishment

Research has shown that children do not learn when they do not feel safe. Besides being a violation of the rights of the child, corporal punishment has a strong negative effect on learning. Reward systems, on the other hand, can increase motivation and well-being, resulting in better learning outcomes.

Good classroom management reduces undesired behaviour from learners and helps teachers to avoid the use of strong language or corporal punishment. As with other aspects of teaching, classroom management needs to be gender responsive. If not, it can reinforce existing gender stereotypes.



### **Hints and tips**

- ▽ Communicate your expectations clearly to learners by setting clear rules and informing learners about their programme for the day (showing them pictures of the different activities or telling them the activities they will engage in). Make sure that expectations, rules and routines are the same for boys and girls. Avoid routines that separate the boys from the girls.
- ▽ Use positive reward systems to prevent undesirable behaviour. This means you encourage the behaviour you want from your learners with a reward. A reward can be something as simple as a high five, a smile or praise.
  - Motivate learners by telling them in advance how you will reward them when they meet expectations.
  - Make sure that all learners receive equal, gender-sensitive rewards. To ensure everyone gets rewards, mark a checklist with the learners' names every time you give a reward.
  - If you are being observed, perhaps by a peer or by your school leader, request this person to check whether you reward boys and girls equally. This person can tally how often boys and girls are rewarded or check if all learners receive rewards.
- Consequences are a last resort and must only be enforced after a warning. If the bad behaviour continues after the warning, then be consistent and follow through with your consequence.
- Ensure that your consequences are gender responsive and do not differ according to the sex of the learner. Avoid making girls do things like sweeping the floor or boys do tasks involving carrying something heavy.
- Consequences should be meaningful (perceived as unpleasant), logical (linked to the undesired behaviour), prompt (happening as soon as possible after the action) and proportional in time or duration. For instance, a learner who has littered may be made to pick up some trash, a learner who has kicked you may have their shoes removed.
- Make it clear to the learner that, after a consequence, all is forgiven and forgotten.

### **2.8.4. Nutrition**

Good nutrition plays an important role in learners' growth and development. Improving nutrition has the potential to positively influence learners' academic performance and behaviour.<sup>44</sup> In some cultures, learners' eating habits are influenced by prevailing stereotypes, which may impede healthy nutrition.



Below are examples from Zambia, Rwanda and South Africa that may also exist in some other cultures.

- ◁ Boys should eat more than girls because they need to be strong.
- ◁ A sickly boy is like a girl.
- ◁ Girls don't eat much.
- ◁ Men shouldn't eat vegetables and fruits.
- ◁ Women don't eat goat meat.
- ◁ Girls should not eat eggs.
- ◁ Girls should not eat dairy during their menstrual cycle.
- ◁ Children should not eat eggs or meat.
- ◁ Boys are never satisfied; it is either the food that finishes or the ribs that crack.<sup>45</sup>



As a teacher, you can talk with parents and emphasise the importance of a balanced diet.



### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ If you are aware of prevailing stereotypes that influence the eating habits of your learners, you could, with the support of your school leader, make this a topic for an open day for parents, or you can have discussions with specific parents.
  - As a teacher, you can advise parents about healthy and affordable nutrition and emphasise that these will benefit both boys and girls. Suggest locally available snack options, such as fruit and raw vegetables, boiled eggs and sweet potato, and water to drink instead of a sugary drink.
  - Point out that children have different tastes and appetite but these are not gender specific, and that active young boys and girls have the same dietary requirements to grow and learn optimally.
- ◁ Talk to your learners about the importance of healthy eating in a language that will help them understand and tell them that all learners need similar foods to be healthy.
- ◁ You can introduce theme days like a regular health day in the week. On that day, learners can only bring healthy snacks to school.
- ◁ If your school has a snack or feeding program, boys and girls should enjoy the same nutritious snack or meal. If learners help serve the snacks to the others, make sure you select both girls and boys for this task.

### **2.8.5. Expressing emotions**

In some cultures, showing emotions, especially those considered negative, is not encouraged. Generally, girls are allowed to express their emotions more than boys because 'boys must be strong'. Boys learn not to show how they feel. There is a Kinyarwanda saying that could be translated as 'Boys' tears flow inside, not outside'. Not being able to talk about emotions may lead to aggression or other antisocial behaviour

at a later age. Researchers have found that, even more than intelligence, your emotional awareness and ability to handle feelings will determine your success and happiness in all walks of life.<sup>46</sup> All learners should know that it is fine to feel a range of emotions and to cry at times. They should be encouraged to express themselves freely and to talk about how they feel. To achieve this, it is helpful to create a safe environment.



### **Hints and tips**

- ◁ Put a stop to any negative comments from other learners when a child shows emotions or vulnerability.
- ◁ Encourage learners to comfort each other by telling them 'this is what good friends do'.
- ◁ Use the pictures above to make an 'emotions chart' to help your learners become conscious of the four basic emotions (happy, scared, angry, sad) and to learn which behaviour is acceptable and which is not.
- ◁ To help a learner cope with the emotion and to control themselves:
  - Suggest that the learner spends some time alone in a quiet corner of the classroom.
  - Give the learner a task to distract them.
  - Ask the learner to draw a picture of what they are feeling.
- ◁ Once a learner has managed to work through their feelings, it is important to talk to the child about what happened, especially if the related behaviour was disruptive.<sup>47</sup>

## 2.9. The gender-responsive ECE teacher – a reflection tool

You can use the checklist below as a reflection tool to work out how gender responsive you, as an ECE teacher, are. This may help you to decide in which areas you want to improve and where in the toolkit you can find relevant hints and tips.

You can also use the reflection tool with a group of teachers. Fill in the reflection tool individually first and then discuss your scores with one another. Help one another to think about gender responsiveness and come up with ideas for GRP in your lessons and interventions as a professional learning community. You can ask one another questions and give one another feedback. For example:

- ◁ What do you think of my scoring? Do you think I have scored myself correctly? Where do you think I can improve?
- ◁ Why did you give yourself such a poor/good rating on this statement?
- ◁ You are doing really well on this. Can you share with me what you do?
- ◁ Some of us are doing badly in this area. What can we try to do to improve?

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Comments
<b>Gender biases (Section 2.1.2, page 10)</b>					
I think about my own gender biases and how they affect my learners.					
I am aware that my gender biases may be unconscious.					
I discuss my gender biases with other teachers.					
<b>Lesson planning (Section 2.2, page 12)</b>					
I plan activities that both girls and boys like.					
I plan a variety of activities to reach all my learners.					
I read the story I will use in class beforehand to check for gender bias.					
I adjust stories and illustrations before I use them to make them more gender sensitive.					
I prepare questions to use with my learners that help prevent gender stereotypes.					

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Comments
I plan activities in such a way that both boys and girls are encouraged to interact.					
I plan for a variety of play and other learning materials that are attractive to both boys and girls.					
I plan for my learners to use a variety of play and other learning materials.					
<b>Lesson delivery (Section 2.3, page 13)</b>					
I encourage and monitor the participation of all my learners.					
I give girls and boys similar tasks and chores.					
I engage my learners in conversations that help them think about gender roles.					
<b>Teaching and learning environment (Section 2.4, page 14)</b>					
The seating arrangement in my classroom encourages the participation of all learners.					
I use various ways of grouping my learners so that they can work and bond with many other boys and girls and take up different roles in group activities.					
I encourage my learners to engage in various kinds of play, regardless of their sex.					
I intervene when peer pressure discourages a learner from exploring different gender roles.					
I make the play areas in my class and outside attractive to all learners, creating a wide range of opportunities for learning through play.					
<b>Play and other learning materials (Section 2.5, page 20)</b>					
The play materials in my class are attractive to both boys and girls.					
I use strategies to ensure all learners use a range of play materials.					

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Comments
I check stories, picture books, illustrations and posters for gender stereotypes.					
I adjust words and illustrations in learning materials to make them more gender sensitive.					
I encourage discussion with and between my learners about the gender stereotypes we encounter in play and other learning materials.					
<b>Interactions (Section 2.6, page 24)</b>					
I use kind words, make eye contact and show kindness to all my learners.					
I use the same language and tone of voice with boys and girls.					
I am careful to avoid gender-specific words. For example, I use the names of learners rather than calling them 'boy' or 'girl'.					
I compliment all learners, in a non-stereotypical way, on good behaviour.					
I change words in songs or stories to make them more gender neutral and appealing to all learners.					
My class rules focus on respect for all people.					
I create opportunities for learners to talk to each other, work together and learn from each other.					
I am a positive role model for boys and girls, and I break stereotyped gender roles in my own actions.					
I use examples of role models that break stereotyped gender roles.					
I reflect with my colleagues on our communication and interaction with one another.					
I have a good understanding of local cultural practices, norms and beliefs that confirm gender stereotypes.					

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Comments
I talk to parents and caregivers about the benefits of creating equal opportunities for all learners. I respectfully lobby for their support.					
<b>Assessment (Section 2.7, page 31)</b>					
During observations and planned assessment, I take note of the gender interactions and behaviours of my learners.					
I use these assessment records to plan my future lessons and interventions.					
<b>Health, nutrition and gender in the ECE classroom (Section 2.8, page 32)</b>					
I teach both girls and boys in my class to love their bodies and take good care of themselves.					
I understand that learners may have questions and curiosity relating to sexuality. I avoid making learners feel ashamed about their curiosity on this topic.					
I am vigilant for signs of abuse and follow up.					
I reward all learners equally, regardless of their sex.					
The consequences for bad behaviour I give out are fair and not influenced by the sex of the learner.					
I talk to parents and learners about the impact of stereotypes on healthy eating for both boys and girls.					
I encourage all learners to express their emotions.					



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## Chapter 3: Gender-Responsive Pedagogy and School Leaders

In a school, accountability is core to good leadership, management and governance. Leadership is a shared responsibility; however, the school leader is the custodian of accountability. This chapter is thus targeted at school leaders.

The information provided will help school leaders create a gender-responsive environment in their schools – an environment in which all learners, boys and girls, have the opportunity to succeed and develop to their full potential, regardless of their sex.

We examine different dimensions of school leadership and how they can contribute to a more gender-responsive school environment. These dimensions are: gender-responsive vision and values; planning and monitoring; distributed leadership; enhancing teaching and learning; strengthening teacher quality; enriching the curriculum; improving conditions for teaching and learning; nutrition; and gender in the relationships both within and outside the school community.

We then focus on a particularly important part of gender-responsive policy, which is child safety and protection, and discuss how to make sure boys and girls are equally protected against all forms of violence and harm. A reflection tool for a gender-responsive school leader closes the chapter.

### *This chapter aims to help you:*

- ✓ Develop a gender-responsive, shared vision and values for your school
- ✓ Integrate gender responsiveness in planning and monitoring
- ✓ Develop ways to support teachers in applying gender-responsive pedagogy through monitoring and support, capacity development, human resources (HR) policy and distributed leadership
- ✓ Examine the gender responsiveness in the conditions for teaching and learning and come up with ideas for enhancing the gender responsiveness of the curriculum
- ✓ Take on a key role in ensuring parental and community involvement and act as a gender-responsive role model
- ✓ Be inspired to shape policies on school-related gender-based violence



### 3.1. Dimensions of school leadership

A school leader can support the creation of a gender-responsive environment in their school in many ways. This chapter uses a model with eight components of leadership to inspire you (see the diagram<sup>1</sup>).



This research-based model puts the learning and well-being of the learners at its core. School leaders can address the gender responsiveness of their school environment through each of the dimensions shown in the diagram. These dimensions and their relevance to gender-responsive pedagogy are discussed below.

A gender-responsive school starts with **a vision and a set of values** that promote equality between boys and girls, men and women. A gender-responsive school leader takes the needs of each and every individual learner into account. School leaders shape this vision and translate these values into their own actions and into clear guidelines for all stakeholders within the school community. These become concrete through gender-responsive school plans, budgets and policies. The vision and values form the foundation for all new developments, policies and actions.

By **building trust**, school leaders create the context in which vision and values can be translated into shared practice. Through trust, and by creating a safe and supportive environment for teachers to try out new gender-responsive models, they can enhance gender-responsive teaching and learning in their schools.

### 3.2. Defining a gender-responsive vision and values, and setting direction

#### 3.2.1. Gender-responsive vision and values



While a school's vision and values will always be rooted in the context of the education system, the school leadership plays a crucial role in defining their institution's vision and values.

Your school's vision and set of values heavily influence your own actions and the actions of others, and will establish a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. Equity, which includes gender equity, needs to be a vital and clear part of this shared vision and values.

Developing a shared vision and values requires the participation of all stakeholders in the school community (teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, learners, etc.). While it will take time to achieve, it need not be a complicated process.



### **Activity to develop a shared vision**

A good way to develop a shared vision is to bring staff, parents and other stakeholders together (in one session or in separate sessions) and ask them to describe their ideal school. What would the school leaders be doing? What would teachers be doing? What would learners be doing? What would parents be doing? What would the community be doing? Give special attention to how all learners, boys and girls alike, will have the opportunity to succeed and develop to their full potential.

Even though learners in ECE are still very young, it does not mean they cannot participate in such a process. Why not ask learners to draw their ideal school and tell you what they think is important for it?

Once there is a clear and shared understanding of what kind of school you want to be, you can ask all stakeholders what their core values for such a school would be. List all values and try to bring the number of values down by grouping together similar values until you reach five or six core values that everybody can agree on.

Having established your school's shared vision and values, it is important to distribute and share them widely so that everybody involved in the school community is aware of them.

### **3.2.2. Gender-responsive planning and monitoring**

A school leader needs to plan, support and monitor policy making, policy implementation and policy delivery at the school and these processes should be guided by the shared vision and values of the school. Your vision and values must be reflected in the planning and monitoring processes.

It is the responsibility of the school leader to ensure that policies reflect the gender-responsive vision and values of the school, whether they apply to classroom management; teacher performance; staff recruitment and selection; teaching and learning conditions (including health and safety standards related to hygiene and sanitation); learning material; school-related gender-based violence; and age- and culturally appropriate sexuality education.

Human, physical and financial resources should be equally and equitably available to both boys and girls. It is crucial to continue making parents, teachers and the wider school community aware of how the use of the school budget is linked to the gender responsiveness of the school's vision and values.<sup>2</sup>

A successful school plan needs to be realistic and within the means of the school to allocate adequate human and financial resources to each action point. To support ECE in a gender-responsive way, an effective budget and procurement system must consider the different needs of all learners and take their social and economic status and background into account. This can be achieved by including a variety of community members in the planning process.<sup>3</sup> Include male and female parents, local leaders, teachers and learners. Doing so safeguards both diversity and inclusion.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ◁ What is the current budget allocation to address the specific needs of girls and boys in our school?
- ◁ What programmes, with matching budgets, does our school have for promoting the education of all learners equally?
- ◁ What specific procurement policies (and matching funds) should be put in place to address the needs of young girls and boys?<sup>4</sup> Gender sensitivity should always be considered when deciding which materials to buy.

The implementation of the school plan needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is therefore helpful to make time to reflect on the progress made and, if need be, to adapt the plan.

When monitoring, it helps to segregate your data collection by sex, as gender-related issues are more likely to emerge. For example, segregate data for enrolment, attendance, retention, progression and achievement rates. In addition, it is also useful to collect more qualitative data through interviews, focus group discussions, observations, etc.

### **3.3. Restructuring of the organisation – distributed leadership to strengthen the school’s gender responsiveness**

Distributed leadership, or the division of roles and responsibilities, has many advantages, among them fostering more ownership, more creativity and balanced decision making. As the school leader, you can assign roles and responsibilities to individuals or groups in your team to implement gender responsiveness in your school.



Because gender inequality affects everyone, it is important that spaces are created for participatory discussions within the school, giving everyone the opportunity to contribute. Discussions on how the school can become more gender responsive can happen at different levels – at student level but also at the levels of support staff, teachers, senior teachers, parents and others.<sup>5</sup> In order to promote this kind of discussion, you can set up formal committees to undertake some tasks and you can support or encourage more informal working groups. You can even engage parents informally in the community or through an open-door policy at school-leader level. This motivates and empowers stakeholders.

Keep in mind that our experiences influence our perceptions and judgement related to gender. Reflection activities such as the examples in Section 2.1.2 on gender biases are an important first step<sup>6</sup> in

engaging with different stakeholders on gender while setting up participatory structures and promoting shared leadership on gender responsiveness. Reflection helps us become aware of our own biases and stereotypes, and may open new views and possibilities for action.

A gender-responsive project within the school and its participatory approach can also serve to promote, market and distinguish a school. You could, for example, hold a gender day once a year where gender issues and policies are shared and discussed with parents.

### **3.4. Enhancing gender-responsive teaching and learning and strengthening teacher quality**

The quality of the teachers and the quality of the teaching and learning processes are key elements of a gender-responsive school environment. Pursuing a gender-responsive human resource policy and providing teachers with opportunities for continuous professional development in gender-responsive pedagogy are crucial factors in enhancing the gender responsiveness of the teaching and learning processes in your school.

### 3.4.1. Gender-responsive human resources

As an agent of change, a school leader needs to have a gender-responsive perspective on school HR. The school can have a gender-responsive curriculum and materials, but if teachers and support staff do not understand and believe in gender-responsive pedagogy, it will be difficult to achieve the intended goals.<sup>7</sup> Even if all elements of your school's HR management are not under your control, you can assess it for gender responsiveness by asking yourself the following questions:

- ◁ Is the diversity (gender, age, background, ethnicity) of the school community reflected in the teaching staff? Do both female and male teachers hold positions of responsibility? What can I do to influence teaching staff selection and allocation of roles?
- ◁ Is the diversity of the school community reflected in the support staff? Are both sexes represented? What can I do to influence support staff selection?
- ◁ Is the diversity of the school community represented in the parents who are on parent teacher committees (PTCs) or parent teacher associations (PTAs), and other school committees? Are both sexes represented?
- ◁ Are policies related to staff recruitment, promotion, retention, development and motivation gender sensitive? In what way can I influence these policies to be more gender responsive? Can I make suggestions and to whom can I make them?
- ◁ Is gender sensitivity part of the job description for staff? If not, whom can I approach to make sure this is considered?
- ◁ Are new teachers oriented on the school's gender policies?
- ◁ How are the roles of staff distributed? Who takes notes, who serves coffee, who attends trainings, etc.? Is this gender balanced?

### 3.4.2. Teacher professional development

Encourage teachers to participate in continuous professional development programmes in different areas. Regarding gender, support teachers in learning about gender and diversity and encourage them to learn more. Encourage them to use this toolkit. As mentioned in Section 3.3 on distributed leadership, you can also assign teachers to set up committees on gender responsiveness to facilitate sessions for their colleagues. In addition, you can support earnest self-reflection moments to help teachers to implement gender-responsive pedagogy in ECE or encourage teachers to participate in school-based working groups as well as in professional learning communities (PLCs)<sup>8</sup> which may spread across schools. For example, early childhood teachers from nearby schools could meet to address some of the challenges they face in implementing GRP.

As the school leader, support ECE teachers to be more aware of gender stereotypes in early



childhood. Offer guidance and advice on the implementation of gender-responsive pedagogy by carrying out frequent and supportive teacher observations in their classrooms.

As explained in the previous chapter, GRP touches on different aspects of teaching:

- ◁ Lesson planning and delivery
- ◁ The teaching and learning environment (including seating arrangement)
- ◁ Play and other learning materials
- ◁ The interactions of the teacher with learners, other teachers and parents, as well as the interactions of learners with other learners and the language used
- ◁ The assessment of learners

It is advisable to tackle only a few of these areas at a time. Below are some useful hints and tips. These tips can help you decide what to observe when you visit the classrooms and how to support your teachers after your observations.



### **Hints and tips**

#### **Observing the seating arrangement**

- ◁ Are learner seating patterns segregated according to sex? Limiting interactions between boys and girls will limit them in their development.
- ◁ Where do girls and boys sit in the classroom in relation to the teacher? Learners who sit near the teacher are usually called on more frequently or receive more of the teacher's attention.
- ◁ In the conversation with the teacher afterwards you may want to ask about seating arrangements – how they are chosen, when they change, and so on.
- ◁ You can go further in your observation of the seating arrangement by drawing a map of the classroom:
  - Label the front, back, door, windows, chalkboard, etc.
  - Where do the girls and the boys sit? Mark 'g' for girls, 'b' for boys and 'T' for the teacher.
  - Count the number of girls and boys who sit closest to the teacher (all learners in the front row or the ten learners who sit nearest to the teacher).

#### **Observing use of learning materials**

- ◁ Do the pictures on the wall show equal numbers of males and females?  
Do they appeal to and inspire both boys and girls?  
Are they stereotypical in any way?
- ◁ Do some pictures challenge stereotypes?
- ◁ Do girls and boys have equal access to play and other learning materials?
- ◁ Is there a balance between girls and boys in the illustrations? Are the girls and boys doing similar tasks?
- ◁ You can go further in observing learning activities by counting the number of play materials you see girls and boys using during the lesson(s) and observing what the boys and girls are doing in the pictures of the materials being used.
- ◁ Do the textbooks and stories used by the teachers represent girls and boys equally and fairly?
- ◁ If there are some gender stereotypes in the books or stories, does the teacher engage the learners in talking about them?

**Observing teacher-learner interaction and language use**

- ◁ When the teacher walks around the classroom, does she or he walk near and stop to talk to girls and boys equally?
- ◁ During some observations it may be helpful to tally how many times the teacher calls on or addresses a girl or a boy during the lesson.
- ◁ You may also want to check if specific learners, such as those who are faster or more outgoing, get many more opportunities than others.
- ◁ If you do draw the map of the classroom described above, you can go further in your observation of teacher-learner interaction and language use by drawing a broken line to show where the teacher walks. Draw an arrow pointing to the learner every time she or he stops to talk to a girl or a boy.
- ◁ You can ask teachers if they have tried systems that can help them call upon learners more equally and what their experiences were, or you can recommend a system used by one of their colleagues.
- ◁ Does the language that the teacher uses in the classroom involve both boys and girls?
  - Are gendered words avoided?
  - Are male and female examples given?

- Are compliments uniform across sexes?
- Is the body language of the teacher the same for boys and girls? (For example, does he or she bend down to the level of the learner?)
- Is the tone of the teacher equally kind towards all learners?

**Observing learning activities**

- ◁ What activities do girls and boys engage in in the classroom setting?
- ◁ How are class tasks assigned?
- ◁ How are the children grouped?
- ◁ Do assignments encourage the mixing of boys and girls? For example, are materials that are typically liked by one group combined with materials preferred by the other group?
- ◁ It may also be useful to observe learners during outdoor and indoor free play.

**Giving feedback to the class teacher**

- ◁ Share your findings with the teacher after your observation. You can ask additional questions and for clarification for the reasons behind certain choices.
- ◁ Thank the teacher for what went well.
- ◁ Reflect together on any points for improvement.
- ◁ Formulate action points together.

**3.5. Enriching the curriculum to be more gender responsive**

In many cases, the curriculum in your school is predefined and the available teaching and learning materials are provided to schools by the government. Redesigning the curriculum to become more gender responsive is therefore not always an easy task for school leaders. This, however, does not mean that school leaders cannot play an important role in enriching the existing curriculum to make it more gender responsive. For example, you can:

- ◁ Establish a task force in your school mandated to screen all teaching and learning materials for their gender responsiveness and motivate teachers to challenge the gender stereotypes encountered in the materials.
- ◁ The task force can check story and picture books, posters and other visuals for stereotypes and urge the staff to write questions that challenge any stereotypes in the margins of these books. In addition,

these books could be supplemented with more gender-sensitive materials.

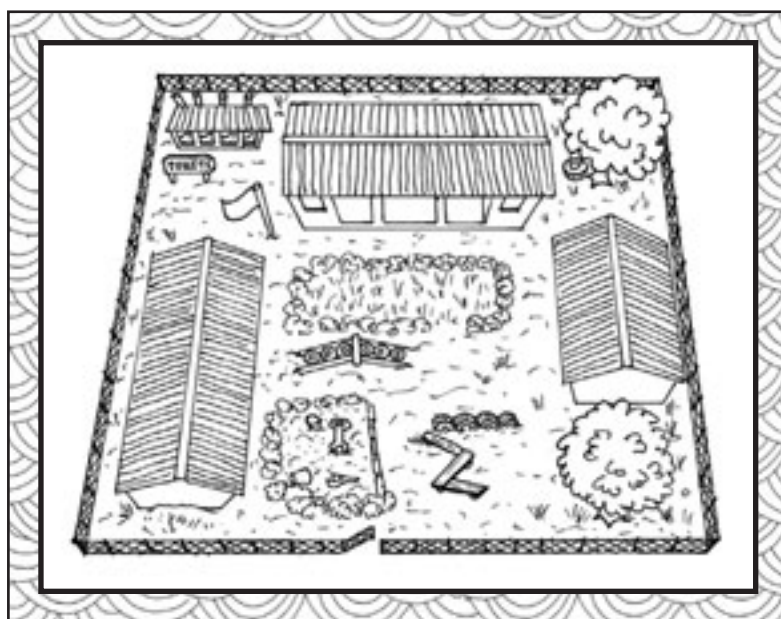
- ◁ Stimulate and support teachers to develop and use gender-neutral play materials and other learning materials.
- ◁ Look out for, and distribute free or at a low cost, gender-responsive teaching and learning materials to supplement the existing curriculum. Praise your team for creating their own gender-sensitive materials with locally available resources and stimulate them to be resourceful in creating such materials.
- ◁ Bring gender stereotypes in existing learning materials to the attention of publishers and education officials when given the opportunity to provide feedback.



### 3.6. Improving conditions for gender-responsive teaching and learning

#### 3.6.1. Gender-responsive school infrastructure

The buildings and the overall set-up of school infrastructure have an impact on teaching and learning processes. It is important that the school leader understands how this can affect the quality and gender responsiveness of ECE.<sup>9</sup> The school infrastructure should support the needs of boys and girls.



Ensuring adequate school infrastructure for young children can be challenging as your school may have limited financial resources. In the guidelines below, there are ideas that you can easily implement at your school, even with limited resources.



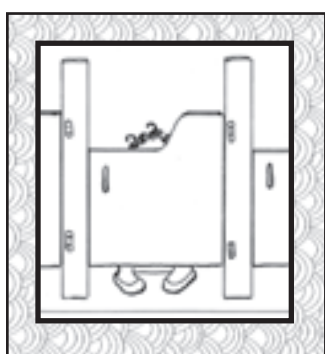
## Physical infrastructure

As girls and boys have the same physical strength and ability until they reach puberty,<sup>10</sup> little or no distinction needs to be made in the school's physical infrastructure to suit both. It is important, however, that classrooms provide enough space for learners to move.

Door handles should be within learners' reach so they can enter and leave the classroom independently. Where noise is not an issue for children in other grades, you could also consider adopting an open-door policy where classroom doors remain open at all times. This increases transparency in what is happening within the classrooms, creates possibilities for stronger teacher collaboration and improves the safety of the learners.

## Access to water and sanitation

Water is essential, even in schools that do not have direct access to tapped water. Adequate safe and accessible ablution facilities must be in place and they should be appropriate for all children in the school. For example, the youngest learners may need a step to be comfortable on adult toilet bowls and to reach the water basins.<sup>11</sup> In the case of pit latrines, the holes should be smaller to avoid accidental falls. Distance to the ablution facilities is a key factor in ensuring that young learners can use the facilities safely<sup>12</sup> and independently.



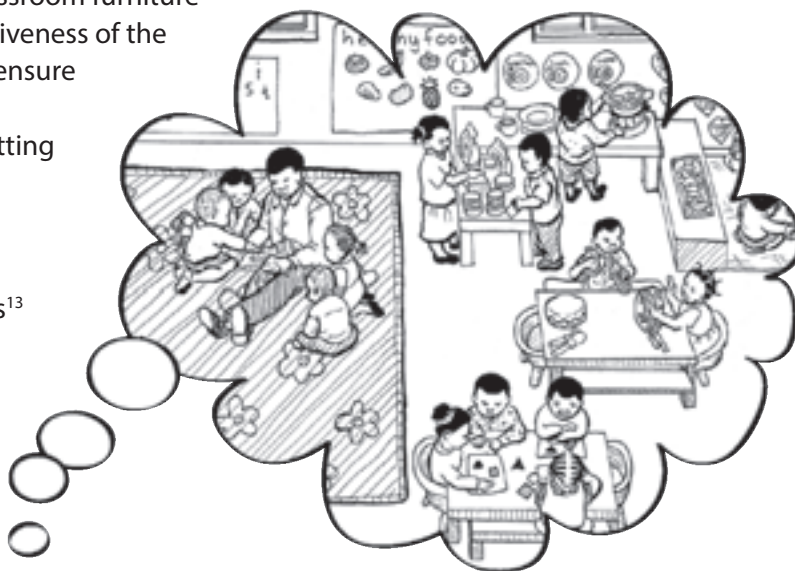
At this early age, it may not be necessary to have toilets separated by sex, especially if half doors are in place. If the toilets are separated, ensure the signage is gender responsive and does not reinforce stereotypes. For instance, do not make the signage pink for girls and blue for boys, but use the same neutral colour.

## Furniture

The appropriateness and quality of classroom furniture affects the quality and gender responsiveness of the education provided. As school leader, ensure that adequate classroom materials are provided to support the teachers in setting up classrooms for effective learning.

When procuring tables and chairs, it is advisable to cater for the diverse age groups in many ECE classroom settings<sup>13</sup> as well as their appeal to both boys and girls.

Mats can be a low-cost alternative to tables and chairs. In addition, mats can encourage the mingling of all learners.



## Play area

An outside play area is very beneficial to learners, who are developing their motor skills.

If a play area is provided, encourage teachers to supervise outside play while bearing in mind some of the tips in Chapter 2 (for example, ensure that the equipment available, such as tyres, skipping ropes or balls, is accessible to all learners). You may consider dividing the play area by, for example, adding low bushes to prevent one group dominating the available space.

### 3.6.2. Nutrition

It is important that school feeding programmes do not reinforce stereotypes (by, for example, having only women prepare food) and it is important they provide nutritious meals to all learners, without bias. Interaction with parents about the feeding programme can be an ideal opportunity to talk with the community about prevailing harmful stereotypes that prevent healthy nutrition. The school could, for instance, point out to parents that girls in the feeding programme will be given the same portions as boys because their needs are the same, as long as this is in line with their willingness to eat and avoids wasting food.

Locally available, healthy foods represent a greater opportunity for equity among children as they will then eat similar foods. If your school has a tuck shop or canteen, have healthy options on offer. There are also some hints and tips on nutrition (in Section 2.8.4 of this toolkit) suggesting how teachers, with the support of school leadership, can engage parents regarding healthy foods.

## 3.7. Building gender-responsive relationships within and outside of the school community<sup>14</sup>

A school leader should act as a role model for all staff by ensuring that gender-related considerations are always tabled when implementing activities or effecting any changes. This will show the importance a leader gives to gender and can stimulate staff to go the extra mile and lead by example.



Children, however, also interact with family members, neighbours, extended family and community members. It is therefore essential that schools, parents and communities work together to overcome societal barriers to gender equality. Without the support of the larger community, there are limits to what the school can achieve in creating equal opportunities.

Participation of parents and the larger community also promotes good governance, functionality and accountability within the entire school.

Outlined below are points to consider in enlisting the support of parents, the community and the school governing body for gender-responsive ECE.<sup>15</sup>

As the school leader, you can:

- ◁ Create and maintain effective partnerships with parents. This includes communicating effectively about the learners' performance and welfare.
- ◁ Put in place PTCs or PTAs that are gender sensitive and that reflect the diversity of the community. Encourage parents to engage in school activities and decision making through these structures.
- ◁ Work with community members to ensure that learners travel safely to and from school.
- ◁ Work with parents and other family caregivers to raise awareness of the persistence of gender

stereotyping in school systems and how this affects learners and the community at large. Use occasions like school open days and parent meetings.

- ◁ Partner, where appropriate, with non-governmental organisations, agencies, businesses or other organisations to support gender-sensitive teaching and learning.
- ◁ Establish partnerships and share practices related to gender sensitivity with other schools.
- ◁ Increase appreciation of the importance of ECE and respect for its workforce in the community and among community leaders.

## 3.8. Child safety and protection

### 3.8.1. Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is a violation of Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been signed by all African countries.<sup>16</sup> School leadership has the responsibility to uphold a ban on corporal punishment in their school.

- ◁ A school leader can shape school policy relating to classroom management and punishment. Taking a stance against corporal punishment, including pinching and beating, contributes to creating a safe environment for all learners.
- ◁ Advise the school team against using harsh language and promote acceptable consequences for undesirable learning behaviour. Encourage the use of positive reinforcement systems, like giving compliments or giving symbolic rewards, to prevent undesirable behaviour.
- ◁ Teacher professional development in classroom management may be necessary for the teachers. Good classroom management reduces poor behaviour and thus helps reduce the temptation to make use of strong language or corporal punishment.
- ◁ Include gender sensitivity and the use of non-violent forms of discipline, such as positive reinforcement systems and clear expectations, in the school's code of conduct for teachers.



### 3.8.2. School-related gender-based violence

According to the Global Guidance on Addressing School-Related Gender-Based Violence (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016),<sup>17</sup> millions of children are affected by school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). It is defined as *acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics*.<sup>18</sup> SRGBV is complex and multifaceted.<sup>19</sup>

A school leader can promote a gender-responsive school environment and thus prevent gender-based violence from happening by having an open dialogue about the topic with the school team. This can be further reinforced by creating awareness among all stakeholders of the policies and mechanisms in place at the school to prevent and deal with incidents of SRGBV.

These policies will be most successful if they are created in consultation with all the staff at the school, across all sections. Policies on the prevention of violence should cover the following elements:

◁ **A definition of violence**

This definition may encompass bullying, school fights, inappropriate remarks by teachers and learners, etc. Different forms of violence and how they manifest themselves within different age groups can be included. For example, in secondary schools, bullying is different and may be more sexual. In ECE, bullying may take the form of the same child always hitting another child, or a certain child always being blamed by peers or the teacher.

A distinction can be made between violence by people in power, such as teachers with learners, and violence between peers.

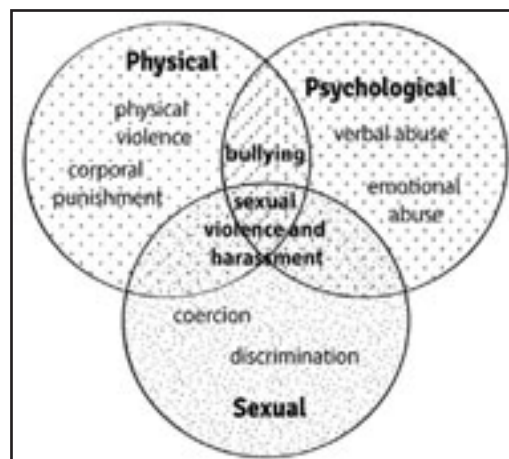
◁ **Suggested activities for learners related to the prevention of violence**

Teachers can address violence in class through activities like role-play and group conversations on the topic or by telling a story – for example, one about a child being bullied or abused. There can also be activities at whole school level, such as making bullying the topic of an assembly.

◁ **Safe formal and informal child-protection referral mechanisms**

The school can have a system for referring cases to more specialised organisations where needed. Teachers and learners can participate in the school referral system. If the school has access to the services of a counsellor, they can also play a role.

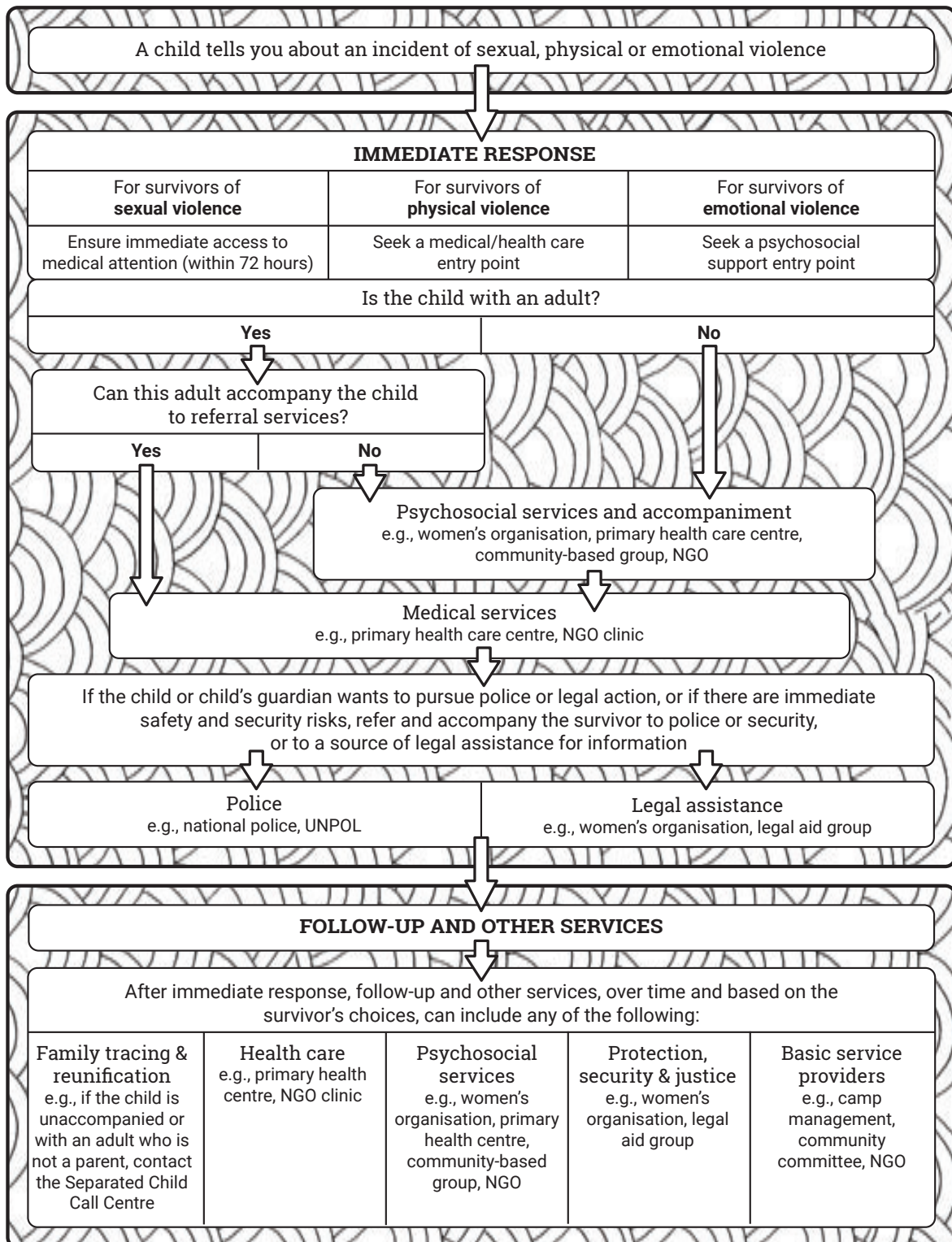
- Once a safe referral pathway is established, learners need to know how they can report violence and to whom they can turn. It is helpful to share referral pathways broadly, both within the school and within the community, so that teachers, administrators and families, in addition to learners, can report or respond to child protection issues that occur in and around ECE environments and homes. The community can also play an important role by denouncing acts of violence by people in power, like a teacher’s use of corporal punishment.
- Having transparent referral, reporting and disciplinary procedures is important in severe cases of SRGBV, but even for less severe instances of violence it is important to have clear and transparent procedures in place. Intervening in the early stages of SRGBV is often a lot easier than dealing with cases that have worsened into severe forms of violence.
- In the case of violence among pupils, it is good practice to have the measures that will be taken against SRGBV perpetrators clearly outlined within your school policies for the sake of transparency. Refer to national policies on child protection and to guidelines from the Ministry of Education. If in doubt, contact the higher levels of the ministry for support in putting solid policies in place.
- Pay explicit attention to gender in these policies with, for example, a chapter dedicated to gender-related violence and a separate chapter on sexual violence and harassment. In the latter, information on referrals is very important for directing victims themselves or teachers of victims to adequate support. The diagram<sup>21</sup> on the next page illustrates a possible entry point and pathway to be followed for referrals and follow-up.



Source: UNESCO<sup>20</sup>

In addition to having policies and referral pathways in place, leadership also needs to raise awareness and empower teachers to reflect on their practices and to monitor and report on violence. Teachers must be enabled to identify and address signs of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation, both within and outside of their classes. It is especially critical for early childhood teachers to be vigilant for signs of violence against young learners as they are less able to express themselves.

### Referral pathway for child survivors of GBV



### 3.9. The gender-responsive school leader – a reflection tool

This table can assist a school leader in establishing a gender-responsive environment in the school.

	No	Somewhat	Yes	Exceeding expectation	Comments
<b>Defining a gender-responsive vision and values, and setting direction (Section 3.2, page 46)</b>					
Does your school have a gender-responsive vision?					
Do the collective values of your school community reflect and reinforce gender equity?					
Were the different stakeholders (staff, parents, learners, parents, etc.) consulted in the development of the vision and values?					
Does your school have policies to ensure that the school curriculum and learning materials take into consideration the specific learning needs of girls and boys?					
Is gender sensitivity a factor in deciding which materials to buy?					
Does the budget and procurement system consider the different needs of all learners and their social and economic status and backgrounds?					
Is a variety of stakeholders included in planning to safeguard diversity and inclusion so that all needs are taken into consideration?					
Is the school plan based on or influenced by information gathered during monitoring in order to cater to context-specific needs?					
Is the school plan based on or influenced by gender-disaggregated school data on enrolment, attendance, retention and achievement rates?					
Is the implementation of the gender-responsive school plan monitored and evaluated?					
Does monitoring occur regularly? If so, how often?					

	No	Somewhat	Yes	Exceeding expectation	Comments
Is more qualitative data on gender responsiveness collected through, for example, interviews, focus group discussion and observation?					
<b>Distributed leadership to strengthen the school's gender responsiveness (Section 3.3, page 48)</b>					
Have reflection activities on possibly unconscious gender biases taken place? If so, with whom?					
Have participatory discussions within the school taken place, giving everyone the chance to contribute on gender-related issues? How often?					
Are there formal or informal working groups or committees looking at how the school can become more gender responsive? Do these happen at different levels (students, support staff, teachers, senior teachers, etc.)? Specify					
Is there transparency with regards to the decision-making processes?					
<b>Enhancing teaching, learning and teacher quality (Section 3.4, page 48)</b>					
<i>Gender-responsive human resources</i>					
Is the gender diversity of the school community reflected in the staff?					
Are there equal numbers of females and males in leadership positions or positions of responsibility at your school?					
Is the support staff diverse and gender balanced?					
Are policies related to staff recruitment, promotion, retention, development and motivation gender sensitive?					
Is gender sensitivity part of the job description for staff?					
Are new teachers oriented on the school's gender policies?					

	No	Somewhat	Yes	Exceeding expectation	Comments
<b>Continuous professional development</b>					
Do gender and diversity form part of staff members' continuing professional development trajectories?					
Do some staff members participate in professional learning communities (possibly spread across schools) focused on gender responsiveness?					
Have you helped your ECE teachers to implement this toolkit practically?					
<b>Classroom observations</b>					
Is the seating arrangement gender sensitive?					
Are learners all given the same room to participate, regardless of gender?					
Is the language used by the teacher and learners inclusive and free of gender stereotypes?					
Is mixed grouping commonly used?					
Do all learners have equal access to play and other learning materials, regardless of gender?					
Are the teaching and learning materials gender responsive? If not, do teachers talk to learners about the stereotypes represented?					
Are tasks and responsibilities allocated to girls and boys free of gender stereotypes?					
<b>Enriching the curriculum to be more gender responsive (Section 3.5, page 51)</b>					
Do you encourage teachers to develop and use gender-neutral play and learning materials?					
Do you or your teachers check story and picture books and visuals for stereotypes?					
Do you encourage teachers to challenge stereotypes in learning materials?					
Is there a task force in your school mandated to screen all teaching and learning materials?					
Do you use free or low-cost, gender-sensitive learning materials that supplement the existing curriculum?					



	No	Somewhat	Yes	Exceeding expectation	Comments
Do you bring stereotypes to the attention of publishers and education ministries?					
<b>Improving conditions for gender-responsive pedagogy (Section 3.6, page 52)</b>					
<i>Gender-responsive school infrastructure</i>					
Are the school surroundings gender sensitive (decoration, safety, etc.)?					
Are ablution facilities easily accessible and safe for both boys and girls?					
Is there adequate and diverse furniture to cater to the needs of all learners?					
Is the outdoor play area safe, easily accessible and appealing to all learners?					
Are the decorations in the school gender sensitive and reflective of the diverse community?					
Is there dialogue with the community on prevailing harmful stereotypes and practices that compromise healthy nutrition?					
<b>Gender within and outside of the school community (Section 3.7, page 54)</b>					
Are gender-sensitive PTCs or PTAs in place?					
Is the diversity of the school community reflected in the parents on the school PTA and other school committees? Are both sexes represented?					
Have measures been put in place by the community and school to safeguard the safety of learners on their way to and from school?					
Have parents and other community members been approached about the persistence of gender stereotyping and how this negatively affects learners?					
Have parents and other community members been informed of the importance of ECE in creating equal opportunities?					
Are there effective partnerships with parents, including effective communication about the learners' performance and welfare?					

	No	Somewhat	Yes	Exceeding expectation	Comments
<b>Child safety and protection (Section 3.8, page 55)</b>					
Are there policies in your school to address corporal punishment?					
Is there a code of conduct in your school for teachers that includes gender sensitivity and the use of non-violent forms of discipline?					
Are the discipline techniques directed towards girls and boys free of gender stereotypes?					
Has a policy on the prevention of violence been created in dialogue with all the teaching staff? Is the implementation of this policy monitored?					
Have activities related to prevention of violence taken place with learners?					
Is a safe referral pathway in place?					
Is a safe referral pathway known within the school?					
Is a safe referral pathway known within the wider community?					
Have measures against SRGBV perpetrators been put in place and agreed upon?					

## Chapter 3 Endnotes

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## Chapter 4: Activities to Engage Your Learners on Gender

In this chapter you will find some activities to do with your learners in class. They are designed to generate opportunities to talk about gender roles and to challenge stereotypes in your ECE class.

Sometimes this is done explicitly, for example, in sorting the toys in the first activity. Other activities are less explicitly about gender, for instance, the puzzles.



### 4.1. Sorting

Two teacher-led sorting activities, with guided discussions, for working on gender with your learners.

#### 4.1.1. Toys in the classroom

Sort toys into groups of toys typically for boys, those typically for girls and those that typically everyone plays with.

#### Before learners come in

- ◁ Collect some class toys in a big bag and close it.
- ◁ Draw a picture of a girl, a boy and of both together.
- ◁ Space them well apart.

#### Introduction

- ◁ Ask a boy to come and lift the bag. Ask: 'Is it heavy?'
- Ask a girl to lift the bag. Ask: 'Is it heavy?'
- ◁ Ask different learners to predict what's inside.
- ◁ Invite others to come and feel, and guess what's in the bag (no looking).
- ◁ Have one child come and peek into the bag but tell them to keep what's inside a secret.
- ◁ Briefly open and close the bag and ask them what they saw.

#### Objectives

- ✓ Sorting activities, often used to develop young learners' mathematical abilities to match and sort, can create opportunities to talk with learners about gender roles and ask challenging questions.



#### Core

- ◁ Allow a selected learner to take a toy out of the bag. We will use the example of a boy, Arnold, who picks a car. Learners can still not see what's inside, so each item taken out is a bit of a surprise.
- ◁ Ask questions (**there are no wrong answers**):
  - 'Arnold, what did you take out of the bag?'
  - 'Do you like playing with this?'
  - 'Arnold, do girls also have fun playing with cars?' (Use the sex not typically associated with the toy.)
  - 'Why do you think that?'

## Activities to Engage Your Learners on Gender

- ◁ Possibly ask other learners:  
'Who in our class likes playing with cars? Raise your hand.'
- ◁ Encourage learners of the opposite sex to raise their hands too, especially if you have seen them playing with the toy. If no learner of the opposite sex raises their hand, you can continue to challenge them:  
'Arnold says cars are only for boys, is that so?'  
'Do you know girls who like playing with cars?'
- ◁ You can also ask a specific learner if they like to play with this toy. Ask the learner to place the object with the picture of their choice (again, there are no wrong answers).
- ◁ Ask the next learner to come and pick a toy. The questions can be asked again. As the activity continues, there is no need to ask as many questions with every toy. Learners can also be encouraged to ask questions themselves.
- ◁ The activity can continue until all the toys are out of the bag.

### Closing

- ◁ Ask the learners which picture has the most toys with it.
- ◁ Ask how many toys there are.



### Follow-up activity

The bag of toys and the pictures used for sorting can also be offered to the children when they are working more independently or in small groups.



### 4.1.2. Family and gender roles

This activity is similar to the one above but uses family members and objects from the home this time.

#### Before learners come in

- ◁ Place four pictures on the floor: a mother, a father, a son and a daughter. If one of the female characters is wearing a skirt, perhaps prepare a challenging question:  
'Could the mother also wear trousers?'
- ◁ Collect items that the learners may recognise from their own homes in a bag, box, suitcase or doll's house, or under a piece of cloth. Examples of items are a hoe, a watch, trousers, a bracelet, a tie, a pot.
- ◁ It can also be fun for the learners to bring in household objects themselves for sorting. All the objects can then be collected together.

#### Introduction

- ◁ This can be similar to the activity with toys, thus putting all the objects in a box or bag, lifting the box or bag, predicting what is inside, and so on.
- ◁ Alternatively, cover the objects with a piece of cloth.
  - First, ask a child to feel the objects under the cloth.
  - Then lift the cloth briefly and ask the learners to spot some objects, or pull the cloth back gradually to reveal the objects.

## Core

- ◁ Assign a learner to take an object from under the cloth or an object that is revealed when you pulled the cloth back.
- ◁ Another option is to have the learners present some of the things they brought in from home. The sorting is then done immediately after a child has explained their object.
- ◁ Ask learners to name what they picked, explain what it is used for and who uses it.
- ◁ Occasionally ask challenging questions related to the item:
  - 'Can a mother also wear the trousers?'
  - 'Can fathers also cook with pots?'
  - 'Can mothers also work on the laptop?'
 You can ask these questions both of the group and of the learner who picked the item.
- ◁ Ask learners which picture they should place the item with, based on who uses it:
  - 'Does the object go with the mother picture or the father picture, or does it fit under both?'
  - 'Does the ball or doll go with the son or the daughter, or with both children?'
 You can also ask an occasional challenging question at this stage:
  - 'Why is this item for the mother?'
- ◁ Continue until all the items have been sorted.



## Closing

- ◁ Remind learners of some examples that came out of the conversation which were non-stereotypical.
- ◁ Ask a couple of learners whether, when they grow up, they want to be a mother or a father, and which tools they will use in their home.



### Follow-up activity

The materials and pictures used for sorting can also be offered to the children when they are working more independently or in small groups.



### Reminder

In both these sorting activities it is important that the teacher emphasises that there are no wrong answers and occasionally asks if the opposite sex could also use the objects. If this is not done, these activities can reinforce gender stereotypes.



## 4.2. Puzzles

The illustrations used in these puzzles give you opportunities to discuss certain topics with your learners, such as gender roles and stereotypes. The scenes depicted challenge stereotypes and show learners that boys and girls can do the same things.

### How to make the puzzles

- ◁ Copy the pictures on the following pages. Use the large picture for the puzzle. A smaller version of each has been provided to serve as a visual guide or template.
- ◁ Colour the pictures if you wish and glue them onto cardboard. You can laminate the pictures by covering the picture with tape.
- ◁ Cut the pictures into pieces using the guidelines on each.
- ◁ Keep the pieces for each puzzle in a separate envelope with the small template picture glued on the front. Draw a little symbol on the envelope and draw the same symbol on the back of each puzzle piece. Write the number of pieces on each storage envelope. This will help learners to choose puzzles at their level.

### Objectives

- ✓ Puzzles help learners to develop problem-solving skills, spatial orientation, visual discrimination, hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. In addition, learners practise describing what they see and gain an understanding of the vocabulary depicted in the pictures. Furthermore, puzzles, especially when challenging, can cultivate perseverance and self-esteem in learners.

### How to use the puzzles

- ◁ Offer puzzles to the learners to work on independently.
- ◁ Ask learners to describe what is depicted in each puzzle.



### Alternative activities with these pictures

Instead of gender-sensitive puzzles, the pictures on the following pages can also be used in other ways:

- ◁ Picture reading – make the pictures the basis for a conversation with learners in which learners describe what they see and possibly make up more details. You can, for example, ask, 'What will happen next?'
- ◁ Classroom decoration – learners can colour the pictures and stick them up on the walls.







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Rice  
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Eggs  
MILK  
BREAD  
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100 Hestings

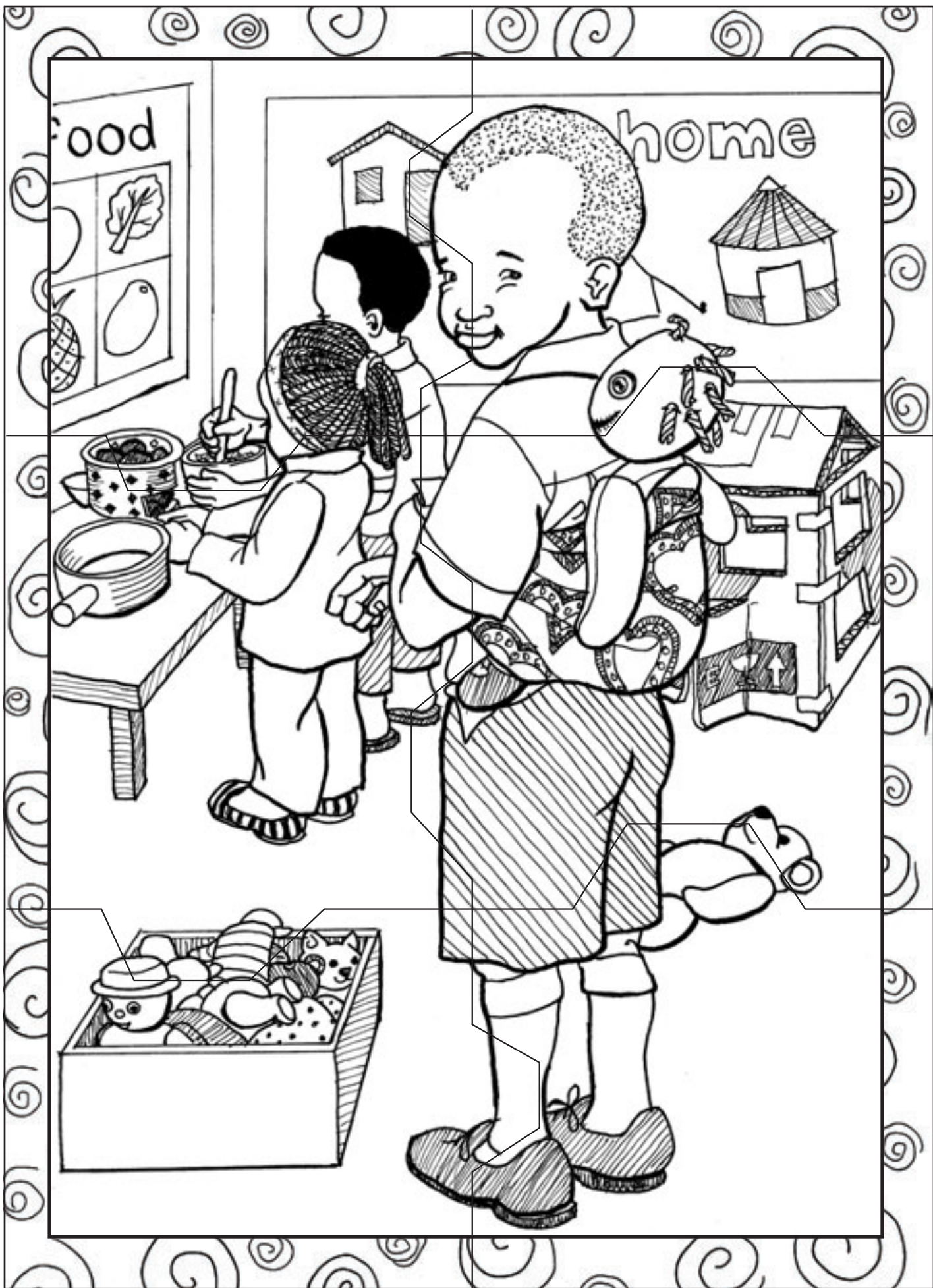
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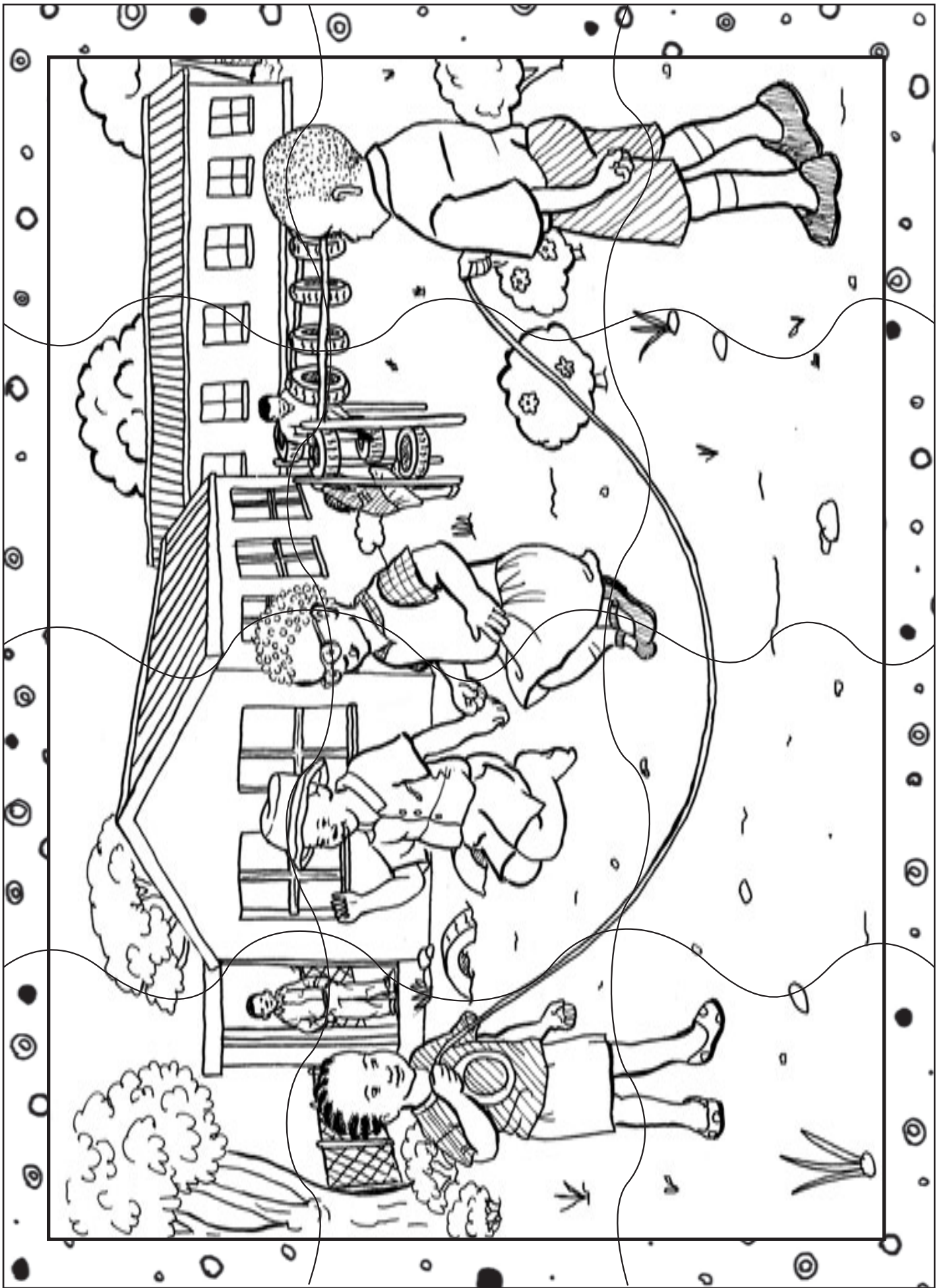




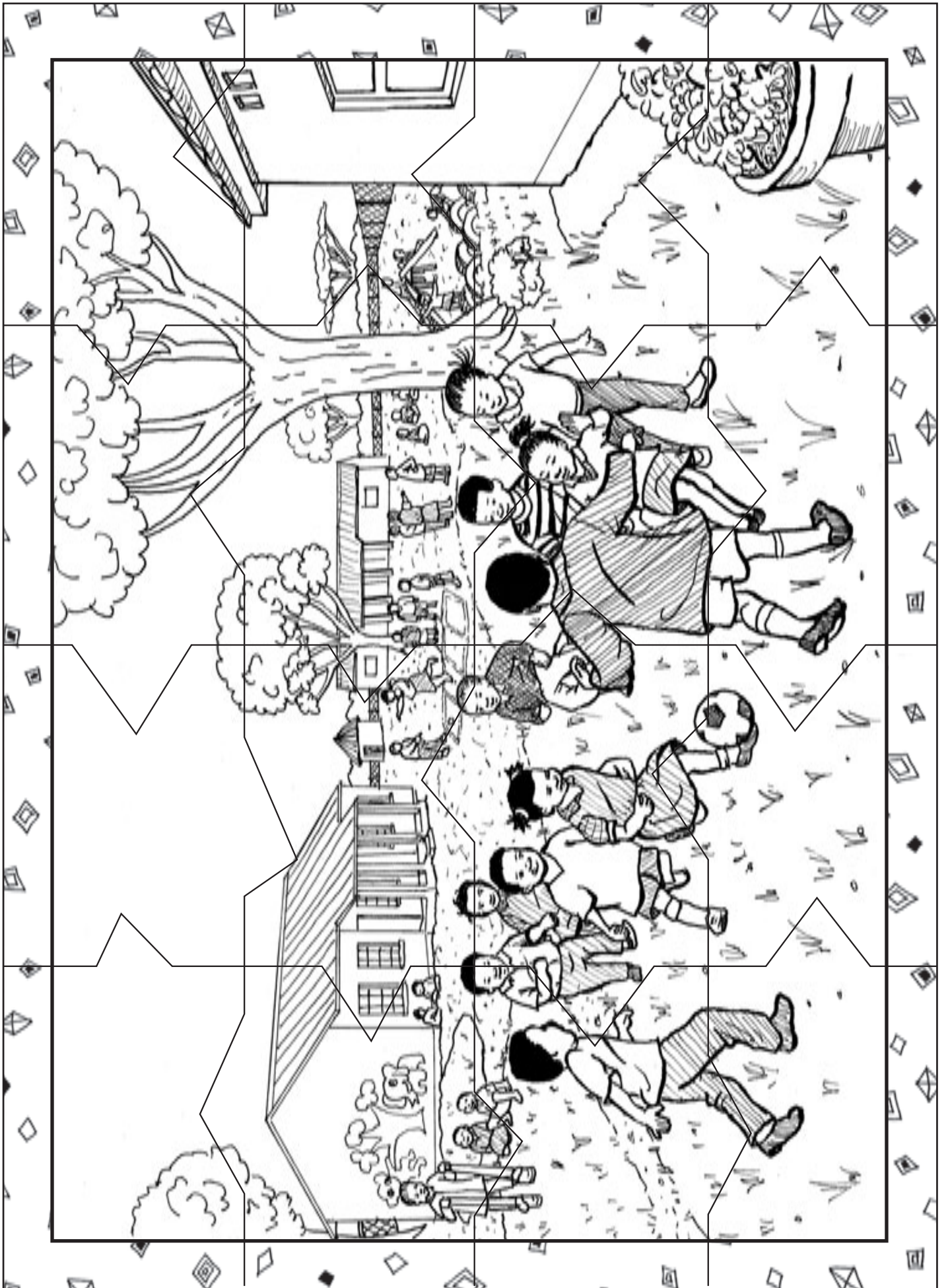








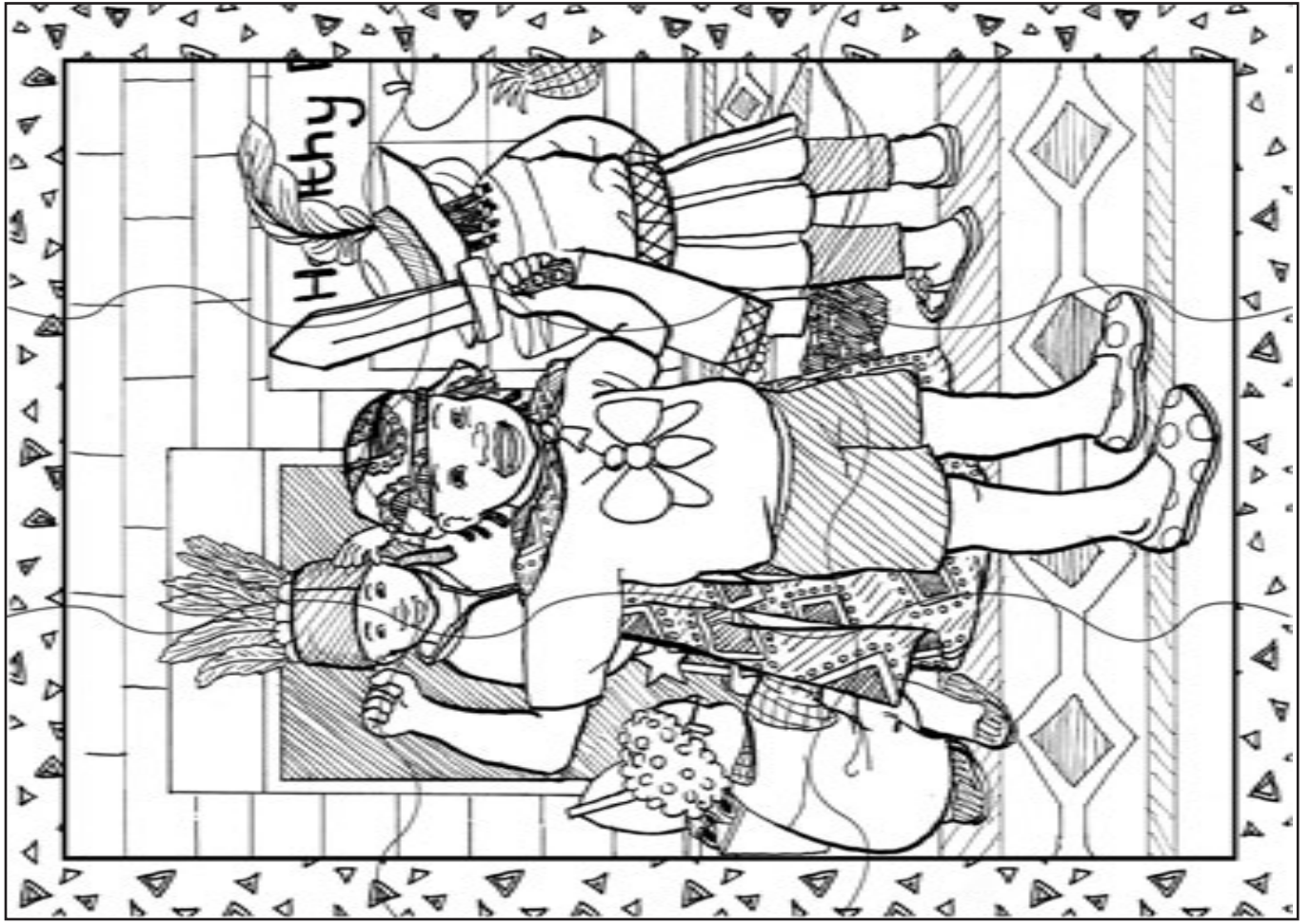
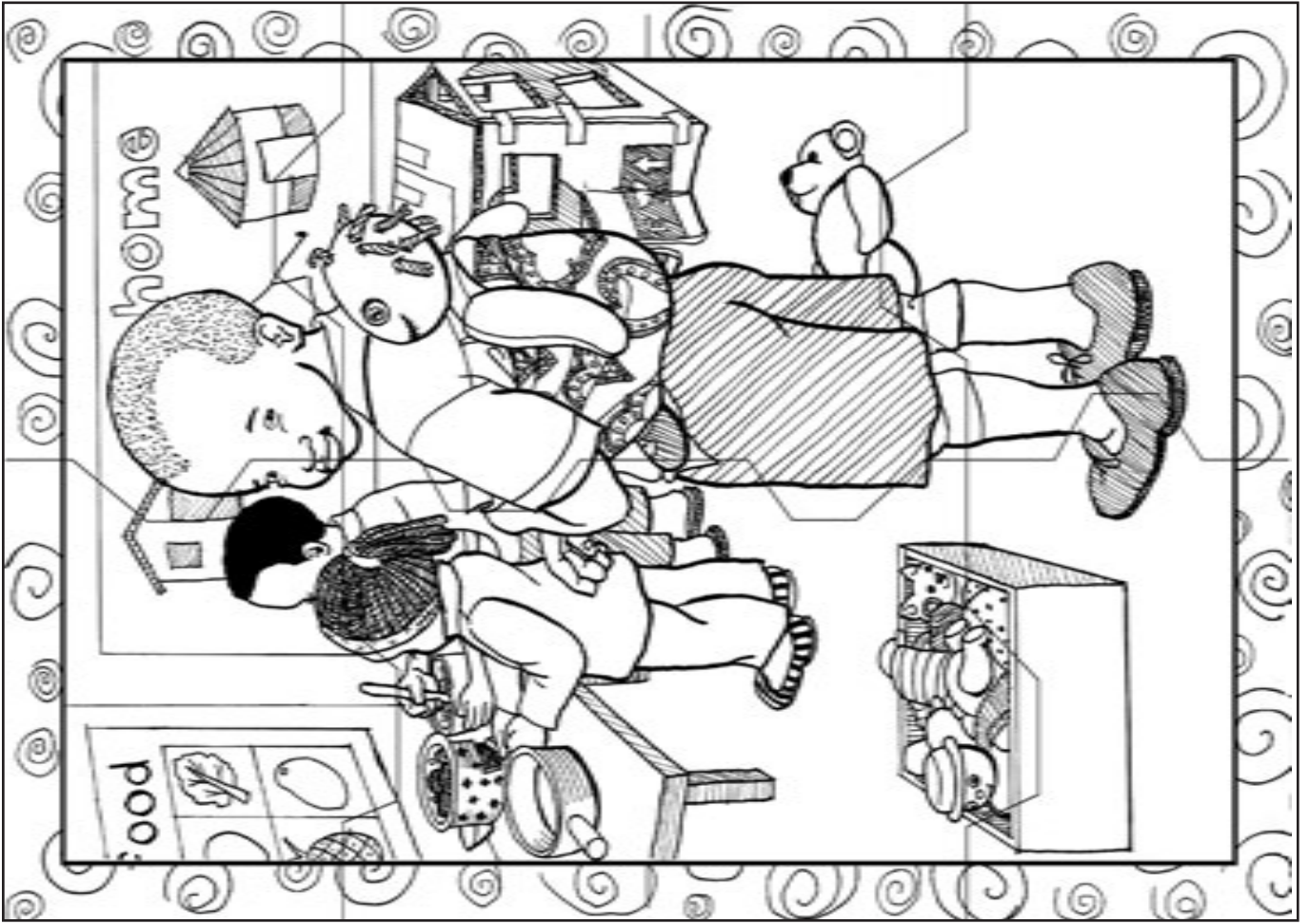






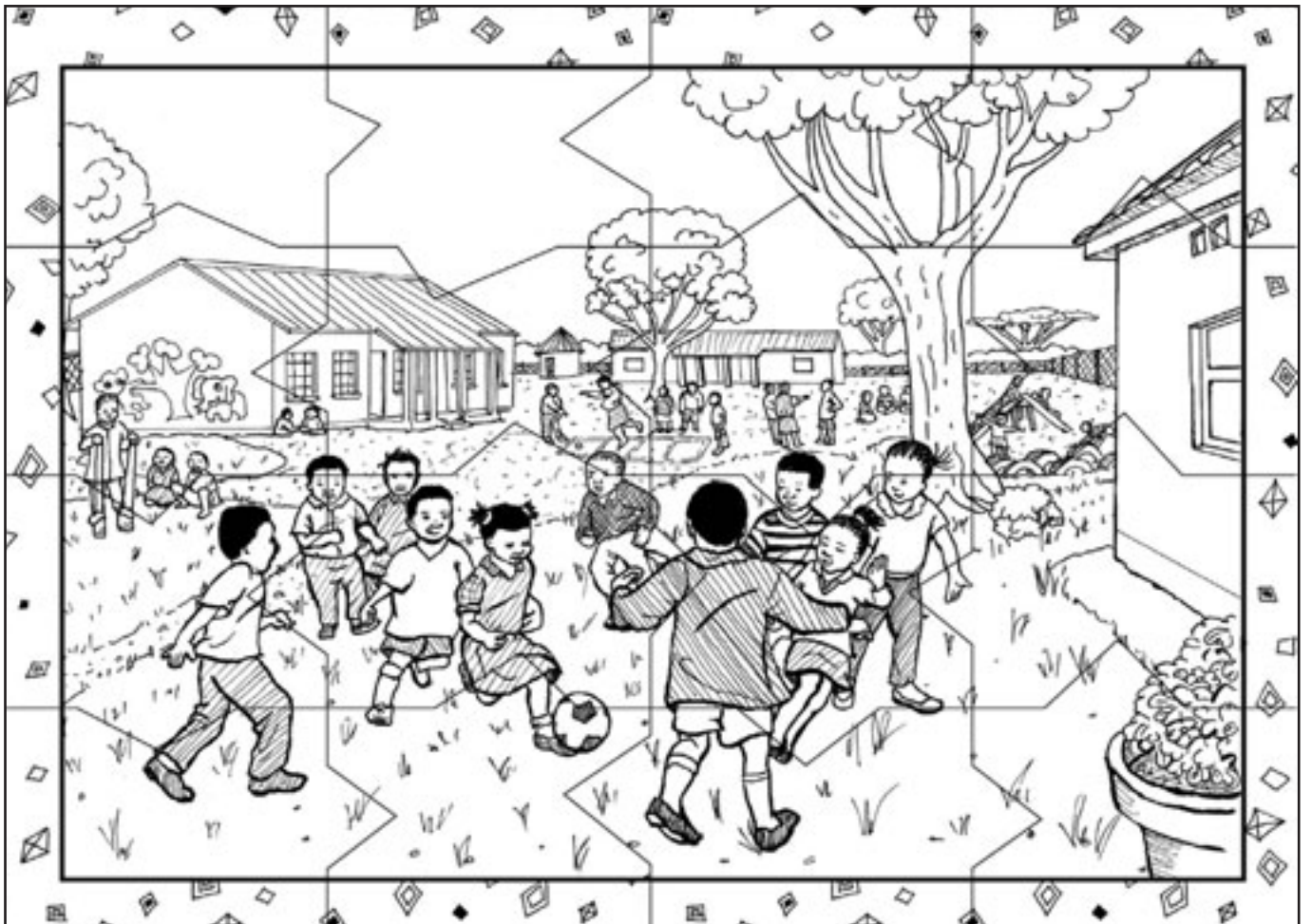
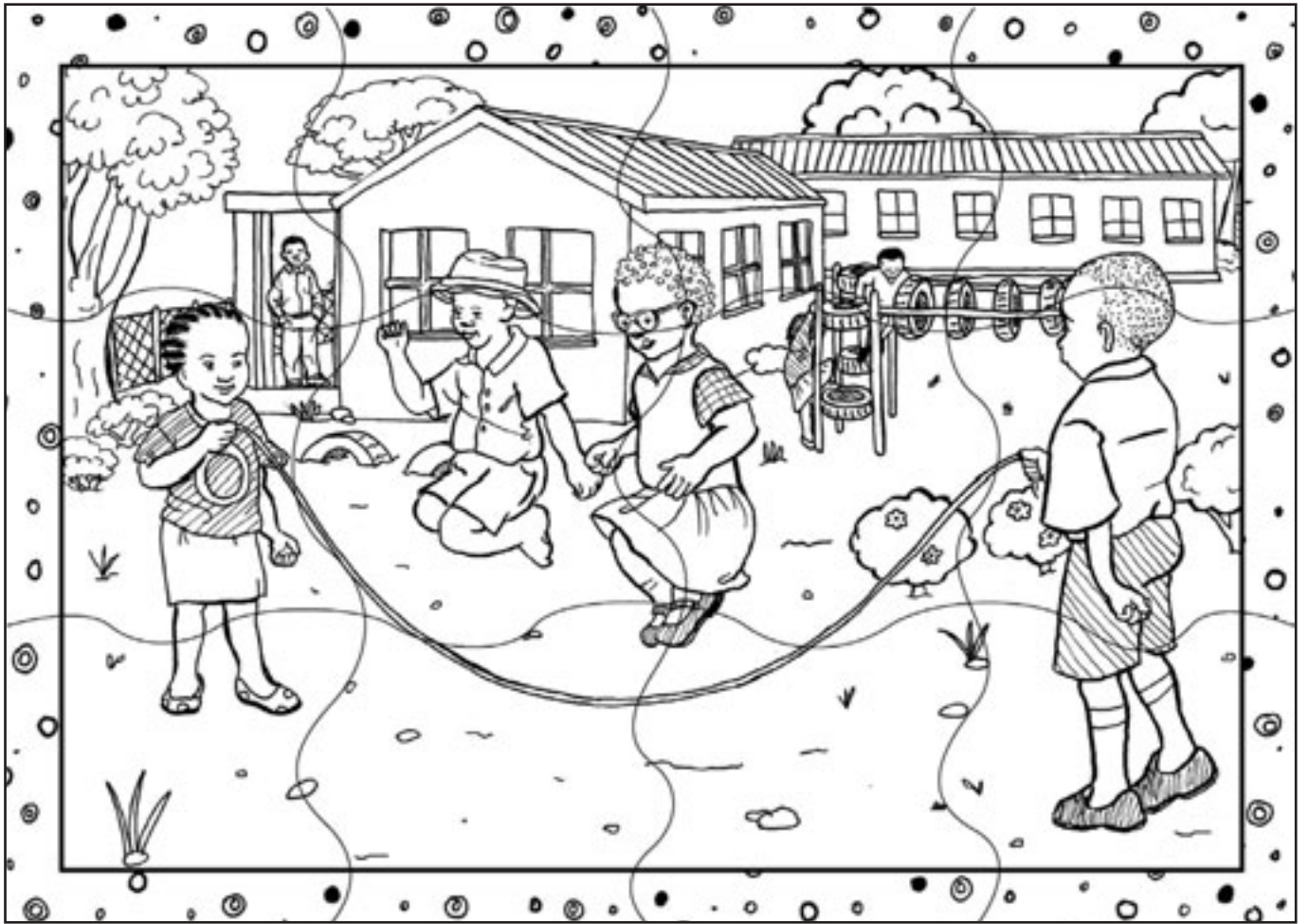














### 4.3. Professions memory game

A memory game is a card game that can be played in a group of two to five learners. In this memory game, learners have to match pairs of female and male professionals. All cards are placed face down on the table. The players have to locate matching cards. On the following pages there are 20 cards making 10 pairs of males and females in the following occupations:

Farmer	Minibus driver
Police officer	Nurse
Cleaner	Carpenter
Cyclist	Clothes designer
Mechanic	Pilot

In this specific memory game, learners see that both men and women can have the same professions (for instance, they see that there can be female carpenters).

#### How to prepare the game

- ◁ Copy or trace the cards or remove them from the toolkit.
- ◁ You may choose to colour the pictures.
- ◁ If you can, laminate all the pictures (using a laminator or by covering the pictures with tape).
- ◁ Cut out the memory cards.

#### How to play memory

To minimise waiting times, the ideal group is a mixed group of four or fewer players. Initially, the teacher will need to guide the game but, once the learners know the rules, they can play independently.

- ◁ Put all cards face down on a table. Arrange them in four rows of four.
- ◁ The first player turns over one card. They must keep the card in the same position within the rows. The player tells the group who is on the picture (for example, a police officer).
- ◁ The same learner turns over another card (again keeping it in the same position) and names the depicted professional.
- ◁ If the pictures on the upturned pair of cards match (for example, a male and a female police officer), the player picks up both cards and keeps them. If the occupations are different (for example, a male police officer

#### Objectives

- ✓ Memory games stimulate learners' spatial orientation by challenging them to remember the location of the cards. Learners practise vocabulary and counting. They learn to wait for their turn, follow rules and play in a group. Because there is only one winner, they also learn how to cope with losing.



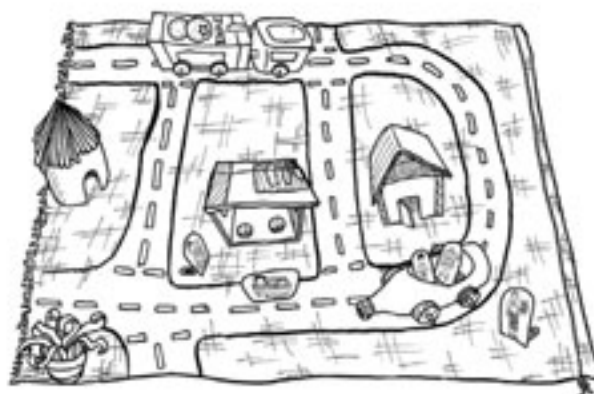
and a female carpenter) then the cards are turned face down again.

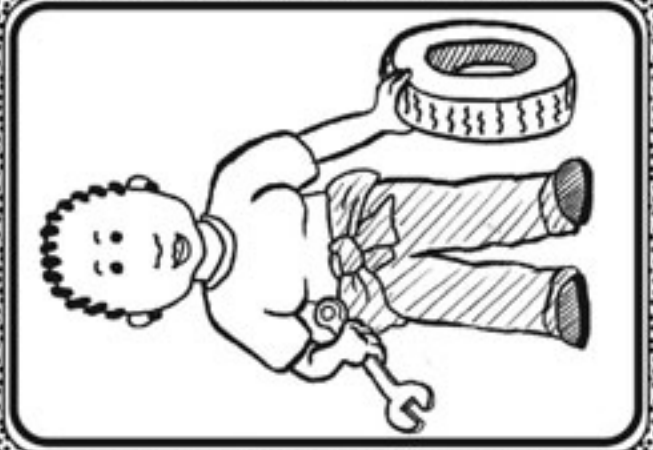
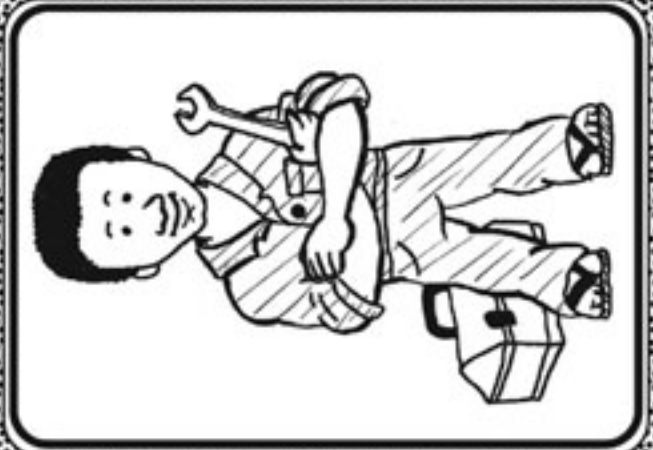
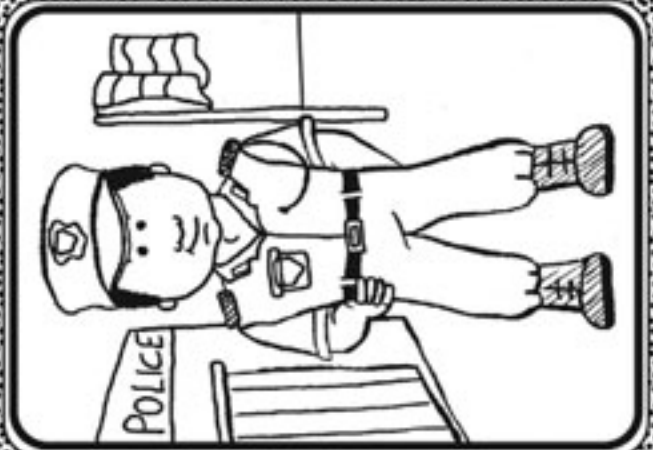
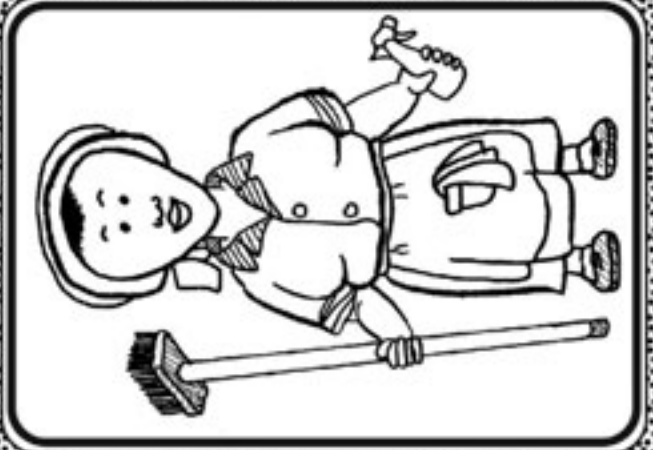
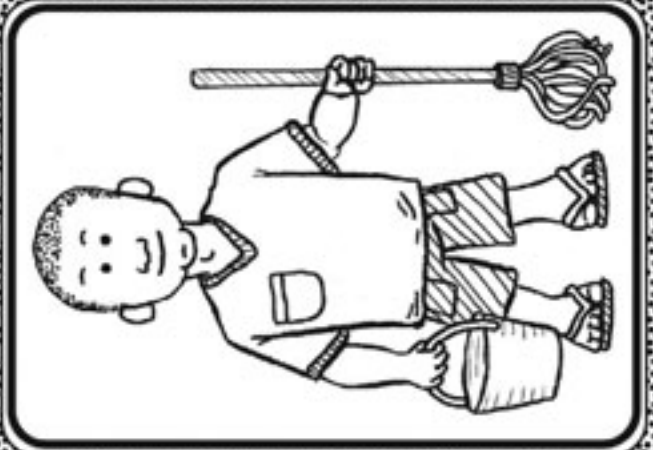
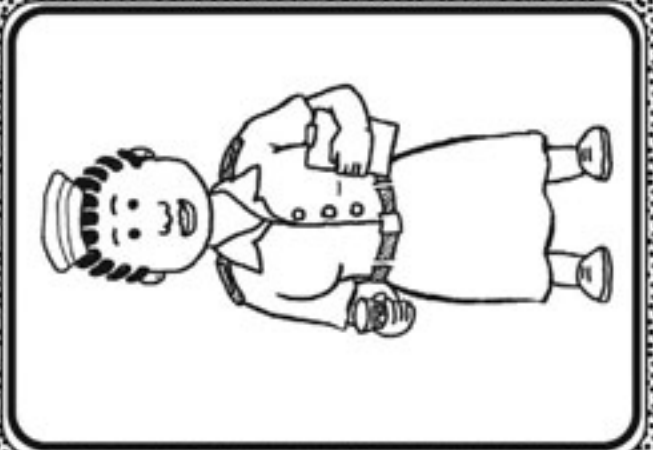
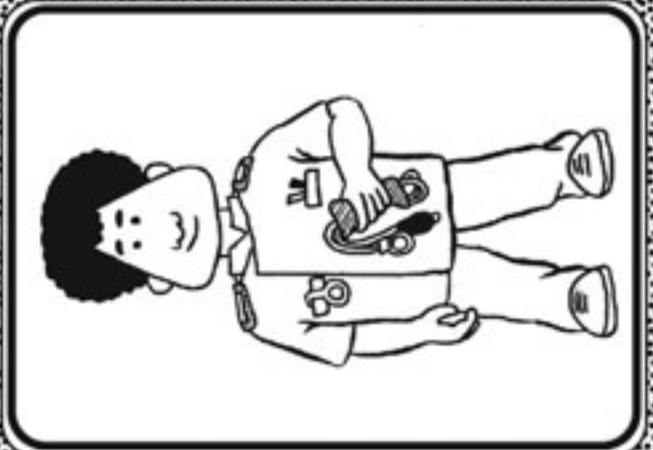
- ◁ All players take turns to turn over two cards and follow the steps above.
- ◁ Learners can only turn over two cards during their turn. While waiting for their turn, they try to remember where certain cards are so that they can win them on their next turn. For example, a player may turn over a police officer and remember where the other police officer was because it was turned over by a previous player during their turn.
- ◁ The game continues until all the cards are gone. Then the learners count how many cards they each have. The one with the most pairs wins the game.

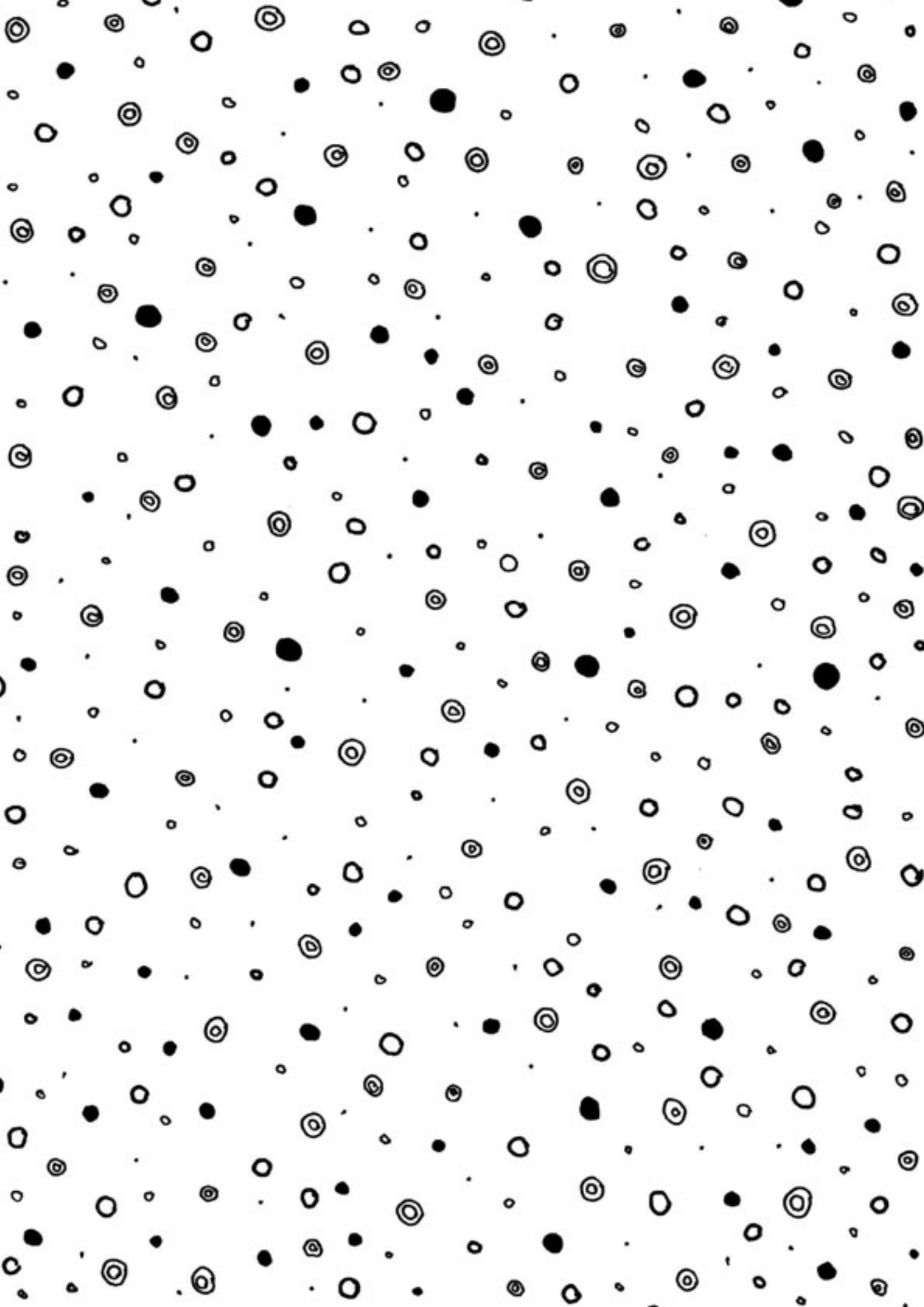


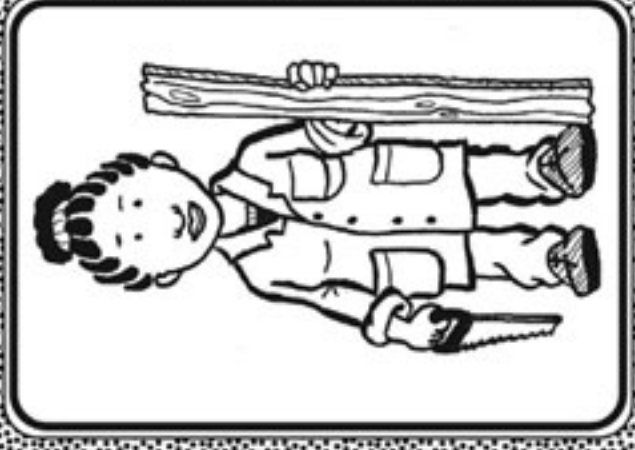
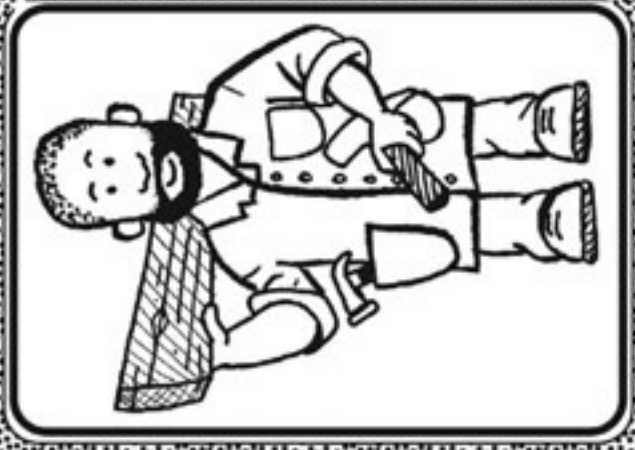
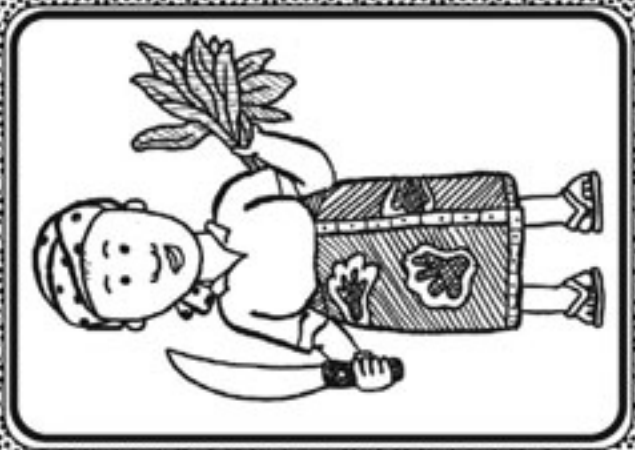
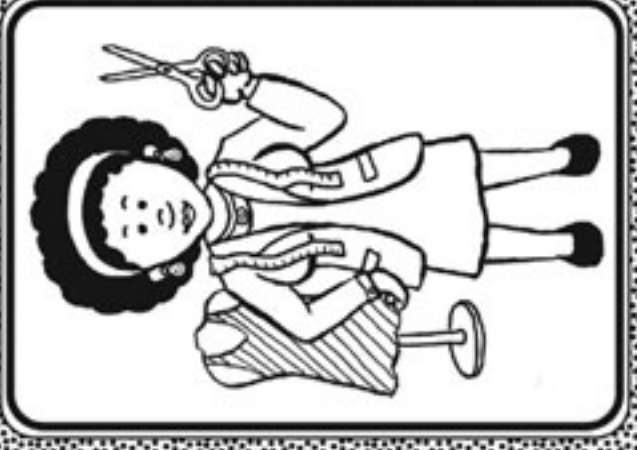
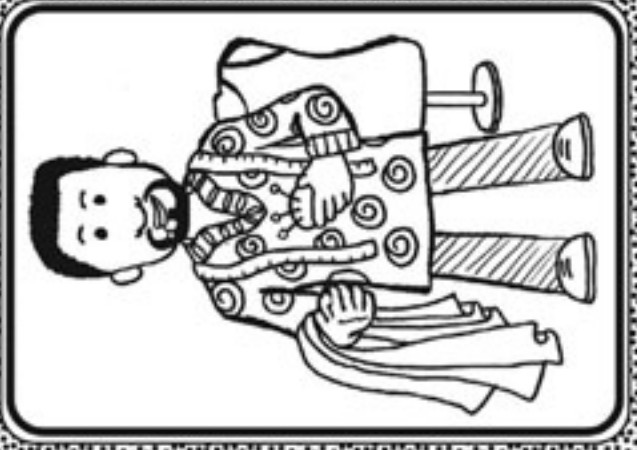
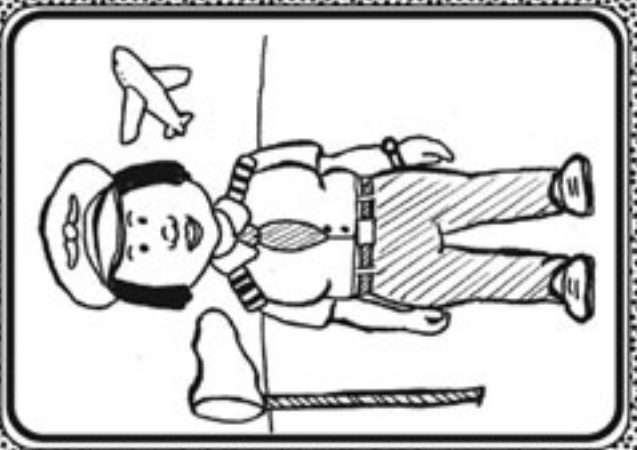
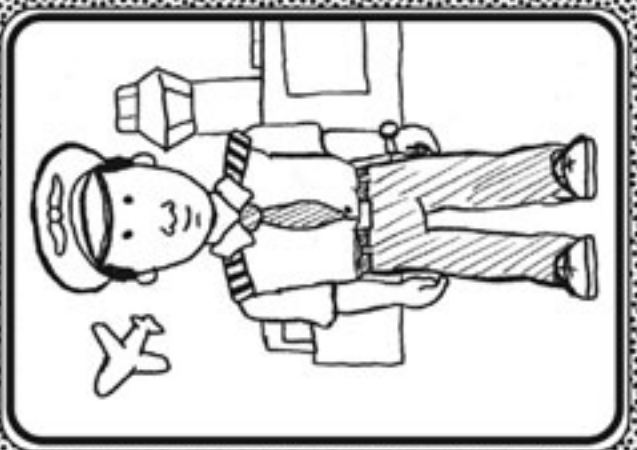
**Alternative activities with these cards**

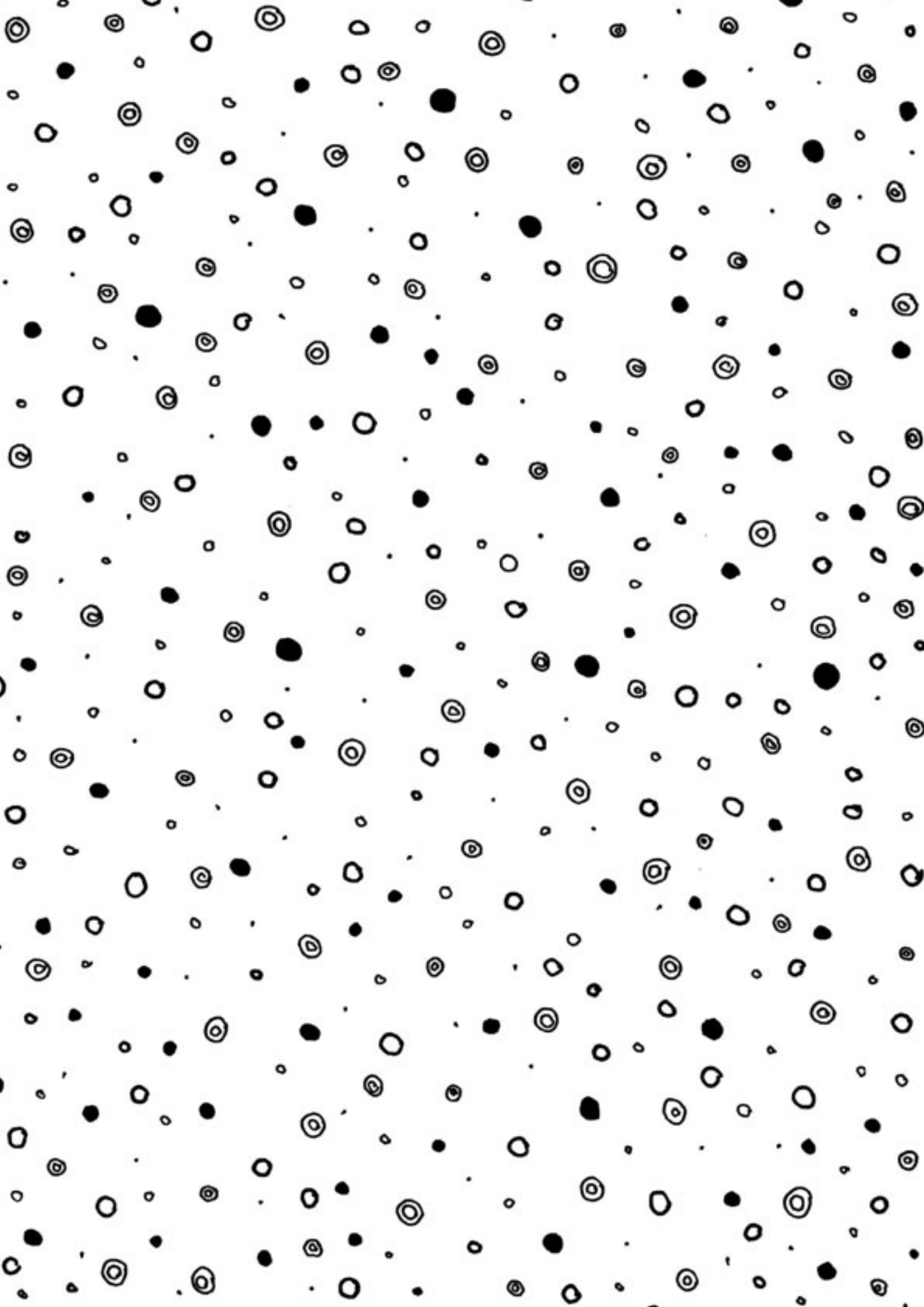
- ◁ Tape cards onto bent paperclips and use them as puppets.
- ◁ Paint a road map on a sack. Place some cardboard houses and cars (they can be made out of cartons or bottles) on the map. The learners could animate the paperclip puppets in this small world.



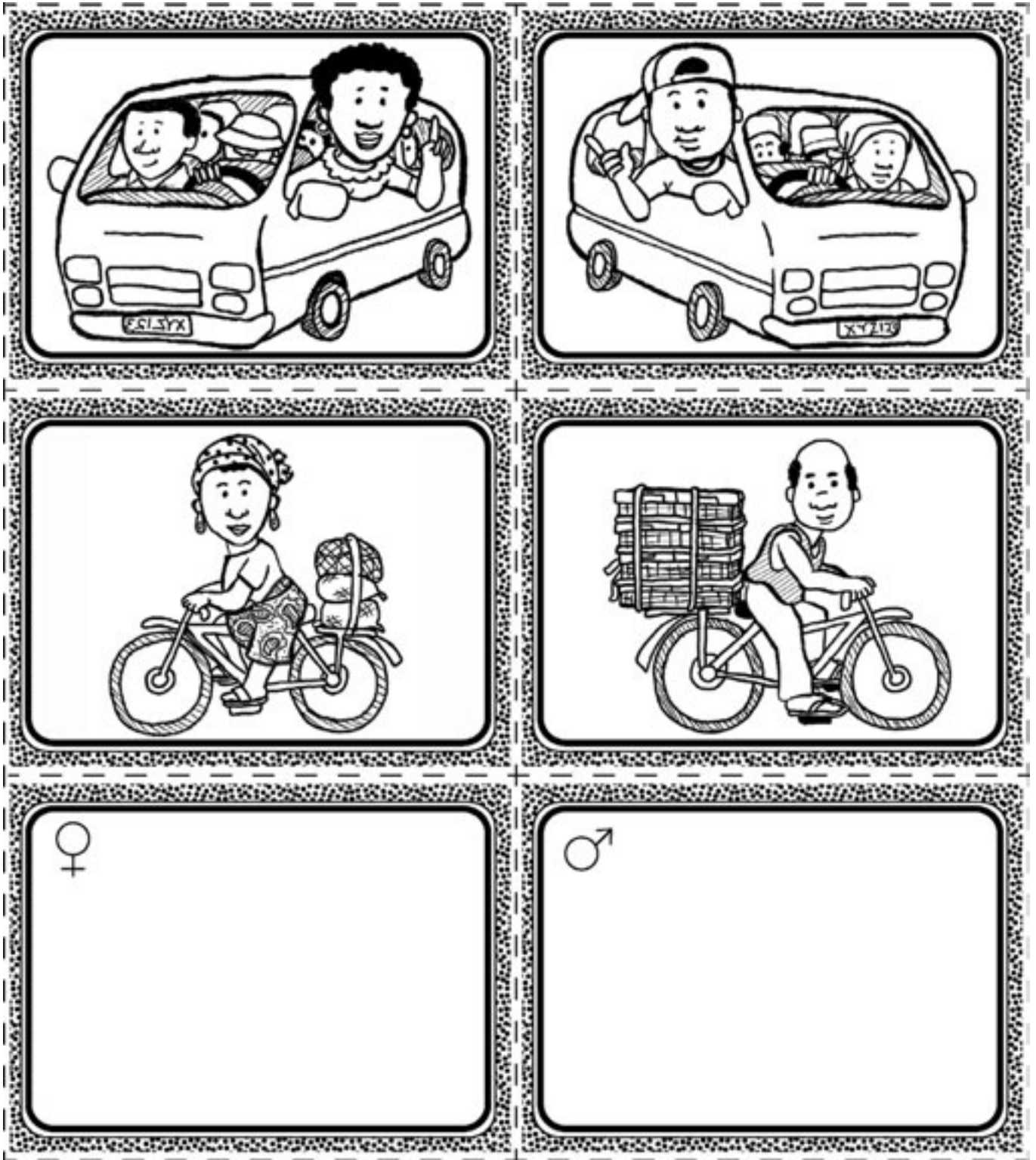




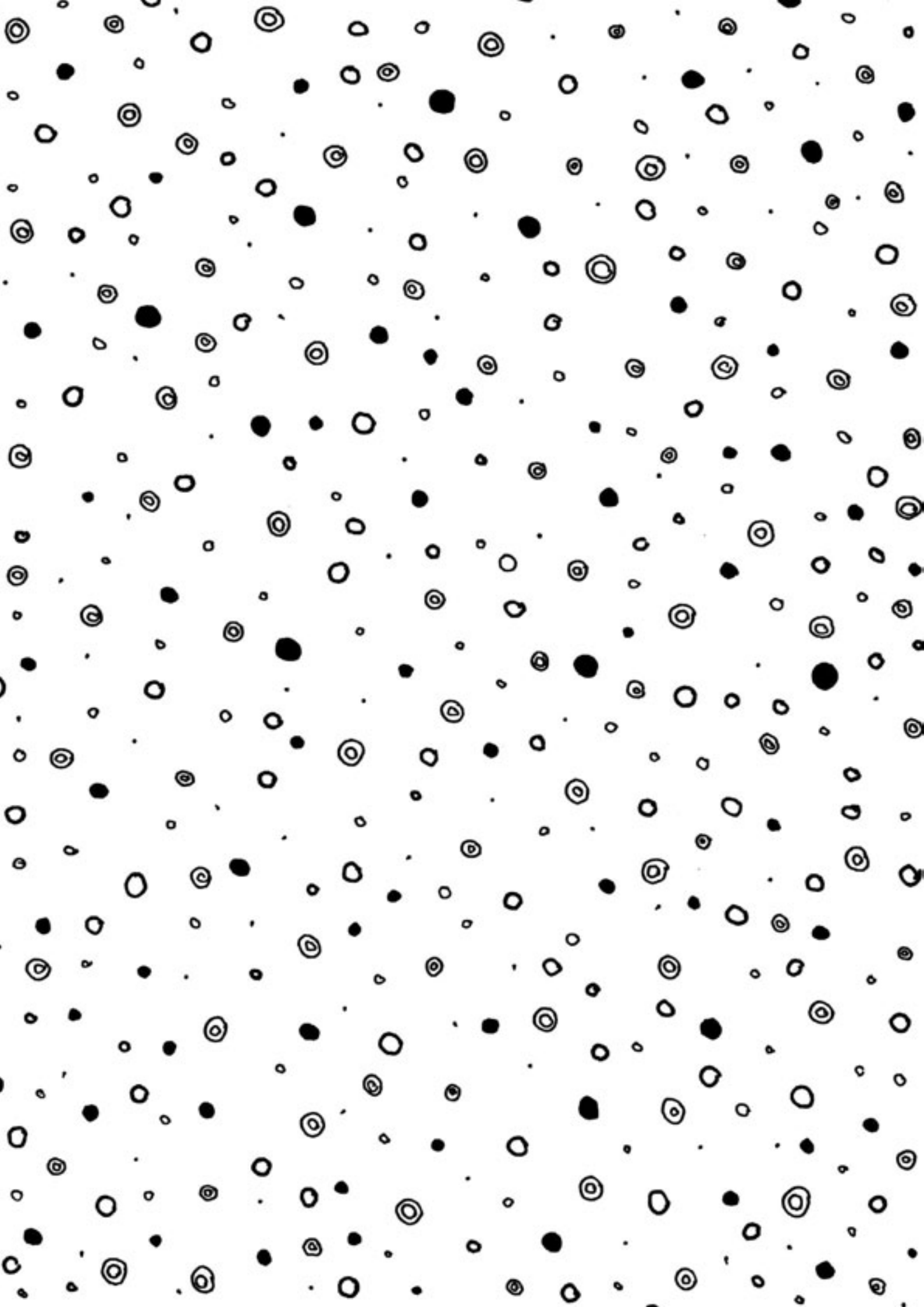








You can draw your own pair of stereotype-busting professionals in the blank cards above. Use a profession that, in the school community, is considered to be only for men or only for women. (You could also copy the blank cards to make more.)



## 4.4. Bingo

This game can be played individually or in a group of between two and six learners. Learners try to match pictures on a bingo card with pictures on separate squares, placing a token on the matching pictures on their bingo card. Each learner tries to be the first to cover all the pictures on his or her bingo card.

There are six bingo cards, each with a random selection of six pictures out of a set of 20. There are 20 loose picture squares that match the pictures on the cards. Each learner needs objects or tokens to cover the pictures on the bingo cards.

There are 20 different pictures:

A boy doing dishes	A male nurse for the elderly
A boy playing with a doll	A man doing braids
A girl climbing a tree	A man cooking
A girl dressing up	A woman fishing
A female lorry driver	A man knitting
A female mechanic	A male nanny
A female pilot	Boys and girls skipping
A female taxi driver	Cars for dolls
A male manicurist	Girls and boys playing football
A woman doing carpentry	Girls playing with a ball

### Objectives

- ✓ Playing bingo helps learners to learn the vocabulary associated with the pictures and practise using it. Furthermore, they learn to wait for their turn, to follow rules, to match pictures, to play in a group and, because there is only one winner, to cope with losing. In this particular bingo game, learners will see that men and women, and boys and girls, can have the same jobs and do the same things.

### How to prepare this game

- ◁ Copy or trace the cards and pictures, or cut them out.
- ◁ Colour the pictures if you wish.
- ◁ Laminate all the pictures using a laminator or by covering the pictures with tape.
- ◁ Cut out the bingo cards.
- ◁ Cut out the separate picture squares.
- ◁ Collect 36 small items from your environment, like stones and bottle caps, which learners can use as tokens to cover the pictures.

### How to play bingo

To minimise waiting times, the ideal group size is six players or fewer. You will need to guide this type of game to start with but, once the learners are used to it, they can play independently.

- ◁ Give each learner a bingo card.
- ◁ Stack the picture squares face down in the centre of the table. A tray with the small tokens (such as bottle tops or stones) you have collected is placed next to the stack.



- ◁ The first player takes a picture square from the stack, says what is on the card and shows it to the group.
- ◁ All players who have the matching picture on their bingo card cover that picture with a token from the tray. The used square is put aside.
- ◁ Then the next player takes a picture square and the process repeats itself: the picture card is described, shown to peers, matching pictures are covered and the picture card is put aside
- ◁ Players continue taking turns until all the pictures on a learner's bingo card are covered with tokens. When this happens, the learner shouts, 'BINGO!' That child is the winner of the game. There may be more than one winner as some bingo cards have similar pictures.
- ◁ After the first learner has won, you can choose to continue playing the game until there are no picture cards left.



### **Alternative activities with these cards**

The small picture squares and the bingo cards may also be used by an individual learner as a matching activity. The learner puts the loose pictures on the correct pictures on the bingo card.

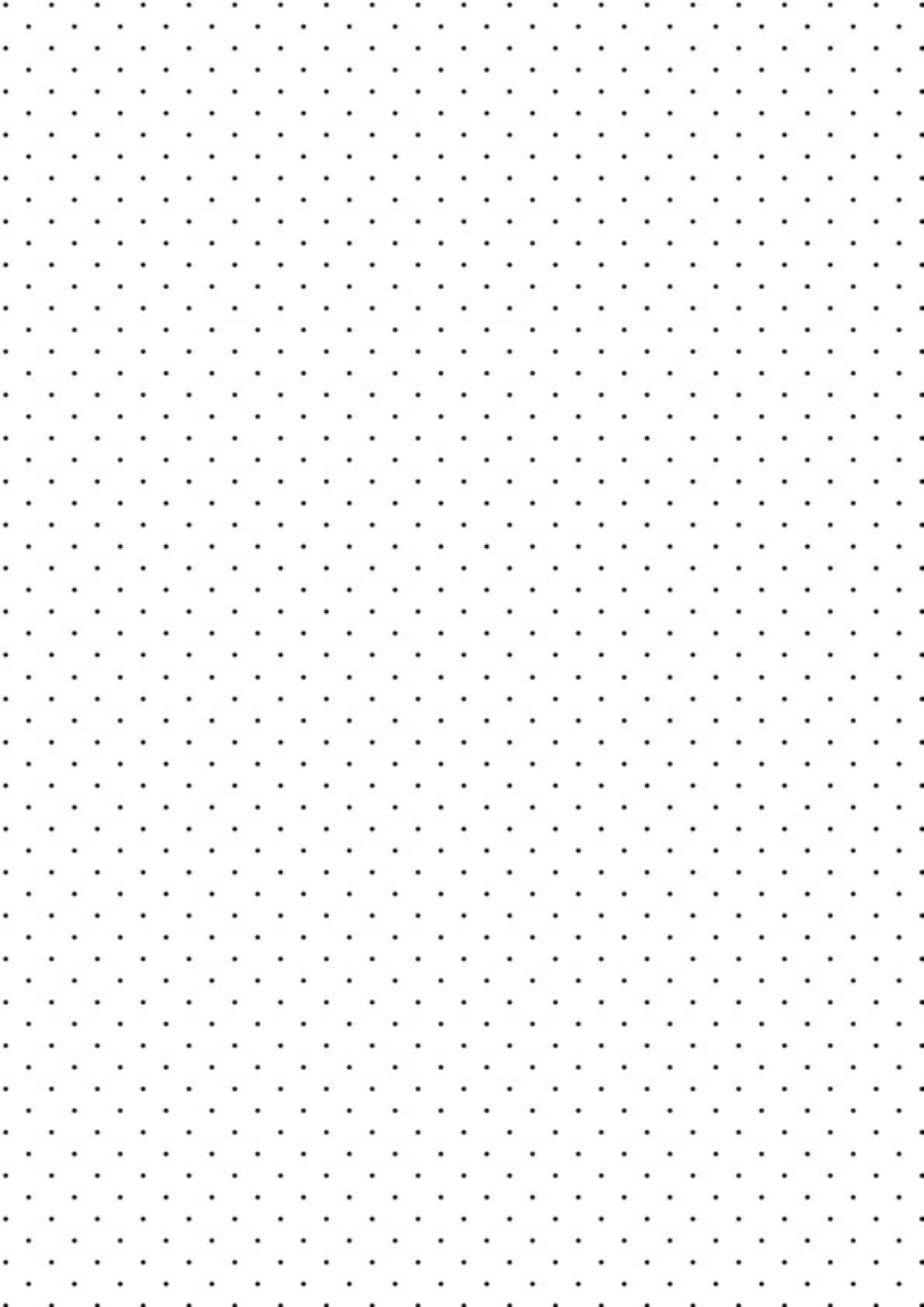


# bingo



# bingo



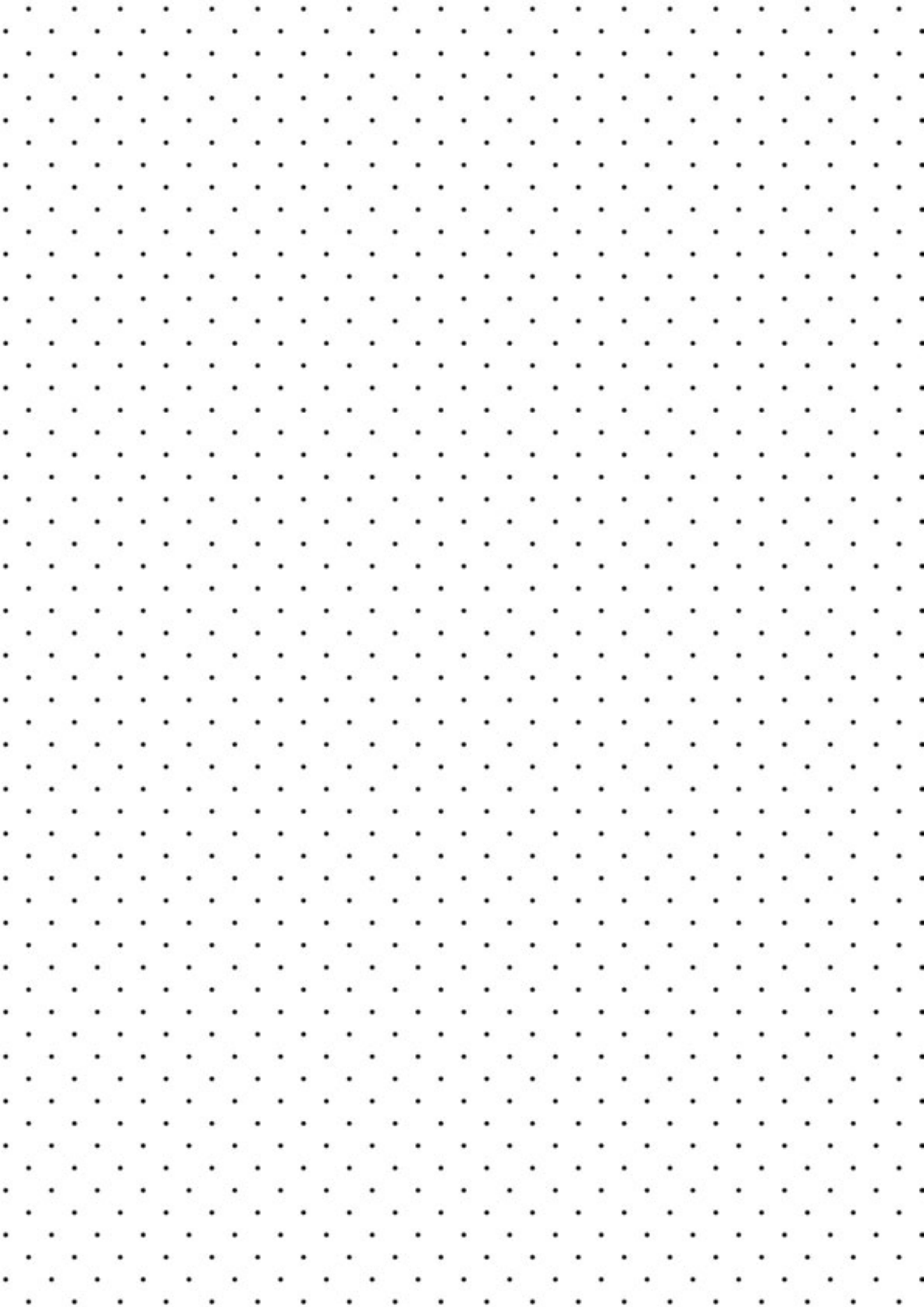


# bingo



# bingo





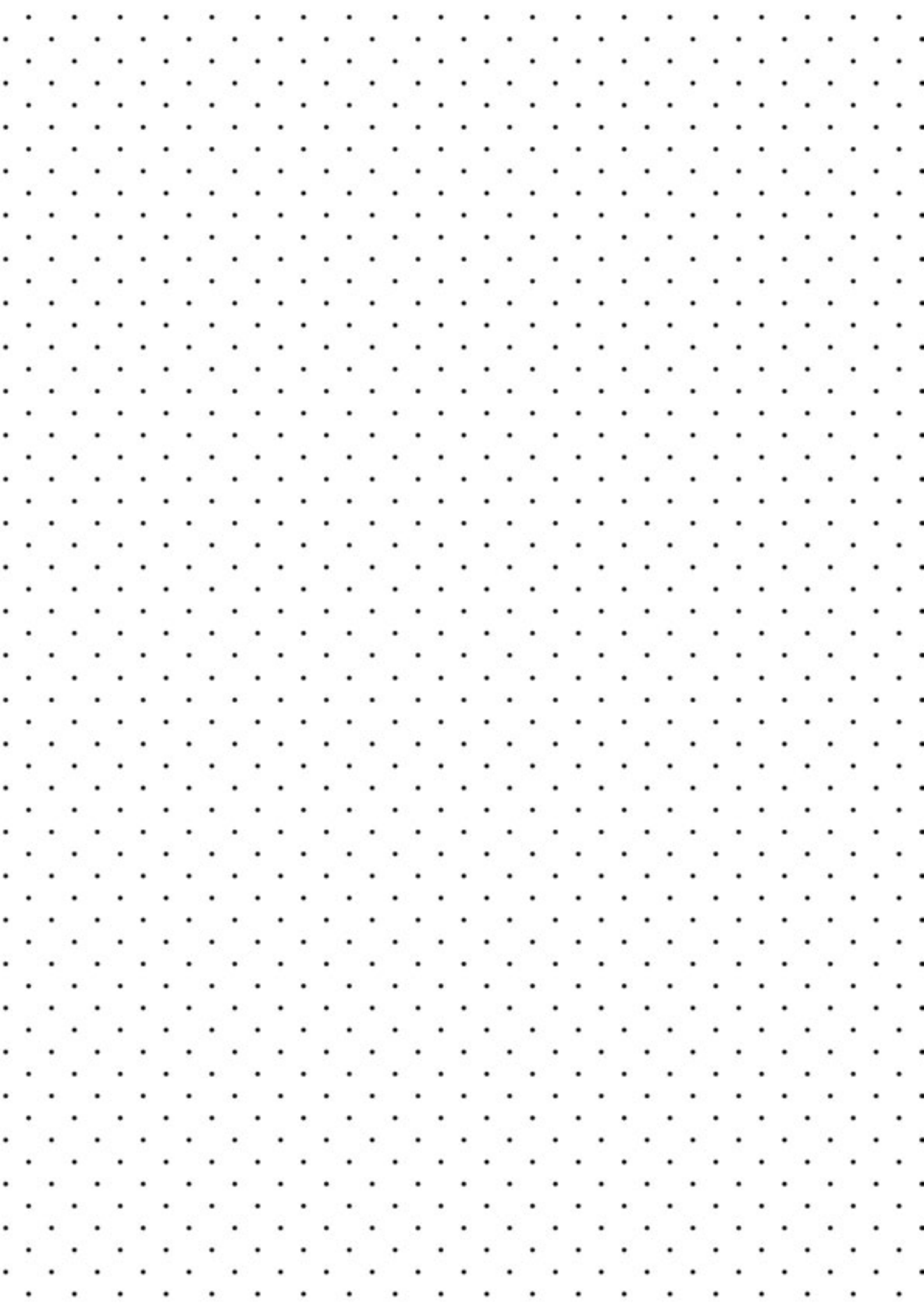


**bingo**



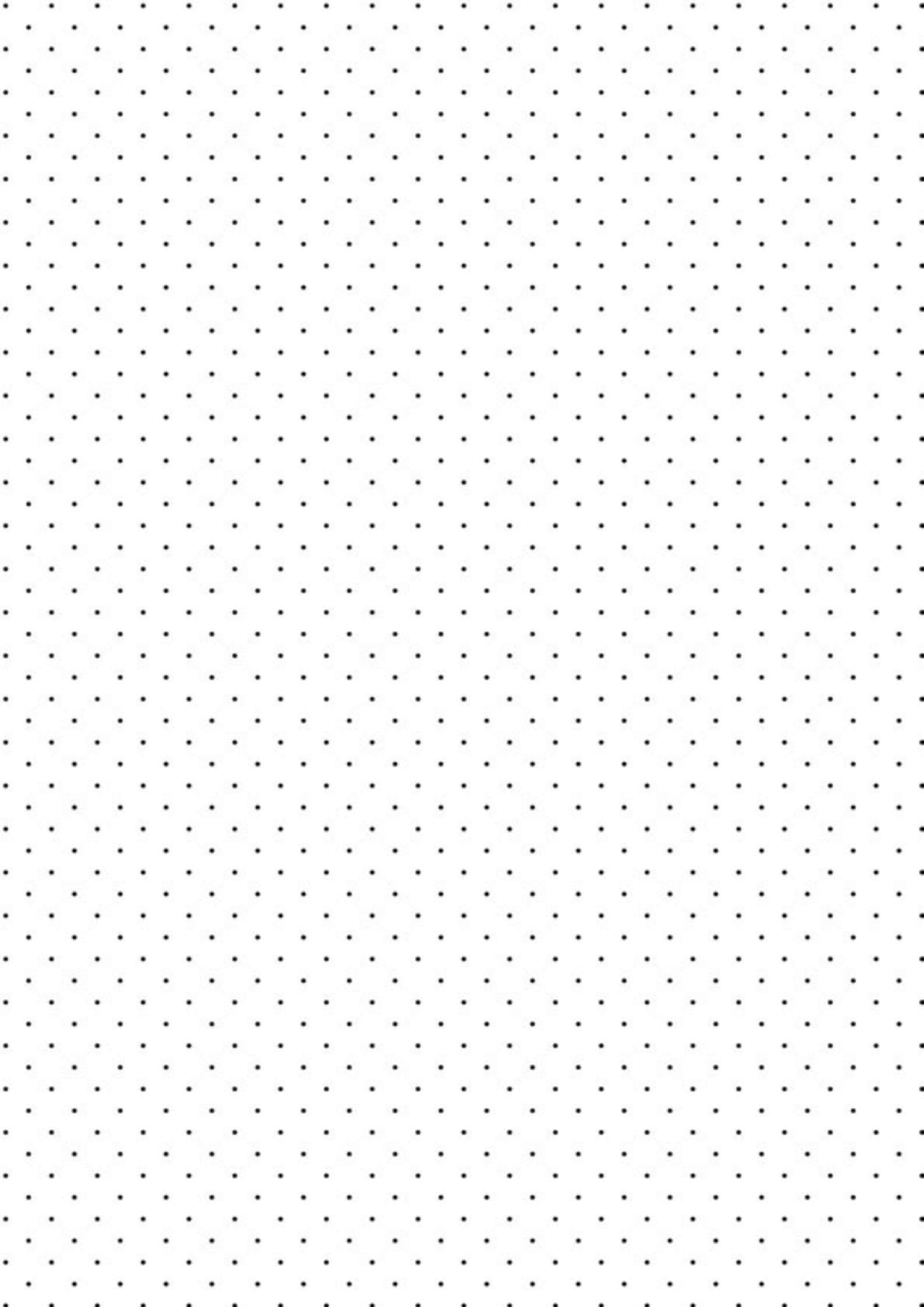
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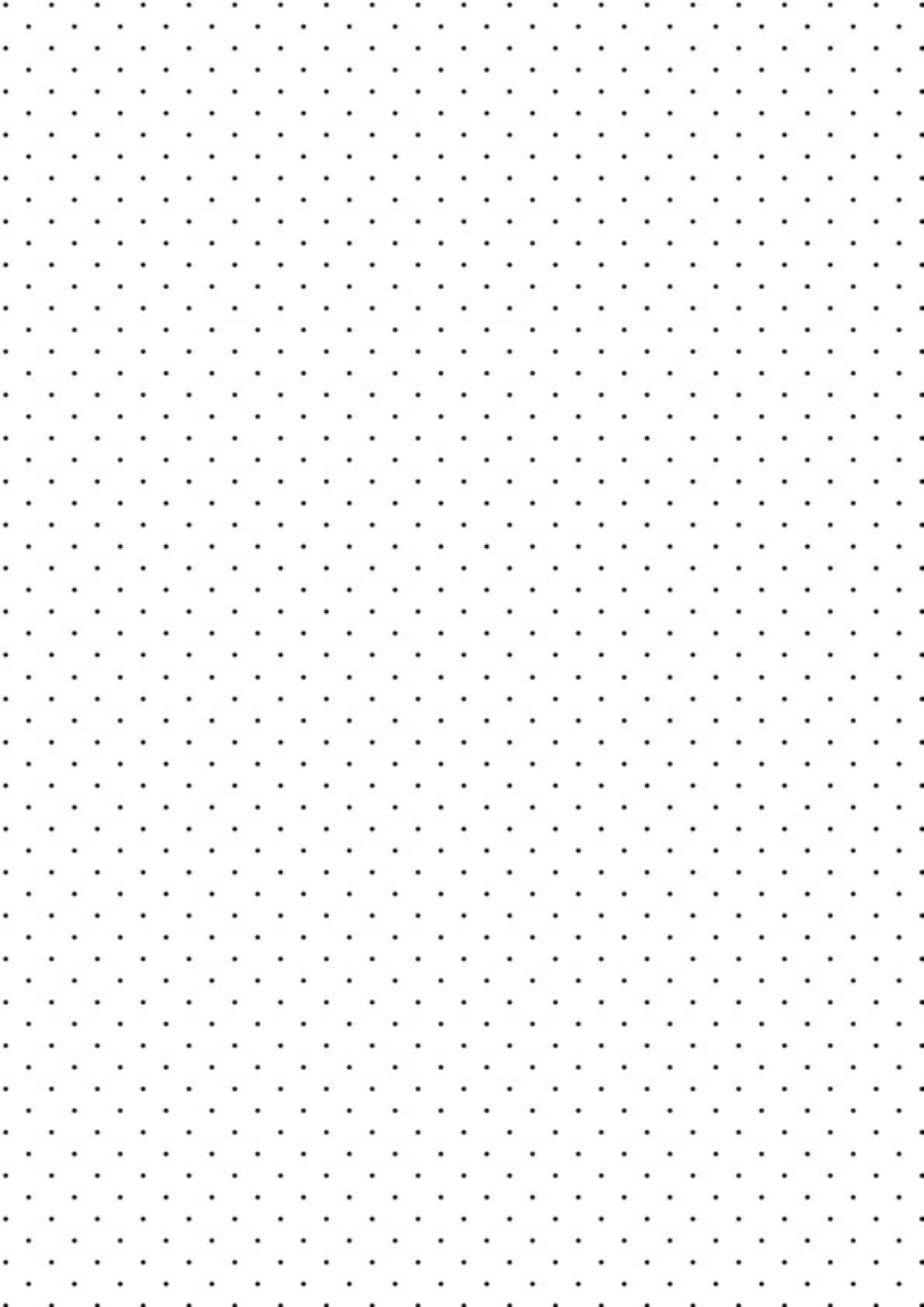


These are the bingo pictures. Cut them into separate squares.









## 4.5. Picture book: Thandi and Tendai and the Shiny Stone

A picture book with a story about Tendai and Thandi has been included as an annex to this chapter. Depending on the level of your learners, you can read the short version of the story (the regular print, leaving out the print in italics) or the long version (the regular print plus the print in italics). Read the story while showing the pictures to the class.

### Additional activities to deepen learning

- ◁ Encourage learners to act out the story. Emphasise that the boy, Tendai, is afraid and cries when Thandi calls him a coward. You can also let a girl play the role of Tendai and a boy the role of Thandi.
- ◁ Have a circle conversation about what learners are afraid of. Ask the learners whether they think it is good to be afraid of these things because they are dangerous (as in the cave in the story, which may have some sort of animal in it) or if this is something of which there is no need to be afraid (like standing in front of the class to give an answer).
- ◁ Let the learners draw two pictures of themselves and their best friend.
  - One picture should be about doing something that they both enjoy and like doing together. The other picture should be of themselves doing one activity and their friend doing a different activity.
  - Explain that friends can sometimes enjoy the same things, but it is also fine to like different things.
- ◁ The illustrations in the story are a good example of pictures that challenge stereotypes, as described in Section 2.5.2 on pictures and stories. Help your learners to engage with the gender-sensitive illustrations in the story by retelling the story with the pictures separated:
  - Photocopy the story, keeping each page separate.
  - Give each learner a picture.
  - Ask the learners to put the pictures in the right order.
- ◁ Leave the story pictures in the reading area, if you have one in your class, and allow learners to 'read' (retell by using pictures) the story to their friends.
- ◁ Encourage the learners to spot the recurring elements in each picture. There is a hat, a football, a bird and a thong sandal (flip-flop) in every picture.

### Objectives

- ✓ Stories are very useful in class, not only for building literacy skills and creating a love of language but also for furthering emotional development and learners' gender sensitivity. This picture book challenges some stereotypes in its storyline, wording and illustrations.



### Reminder

Make sure you translate the story into whatever language you speak with the children in your class. You could also change the names of Thandi and Tendai to names common in your area. This will make the story more attractive and recognisable to your learners.



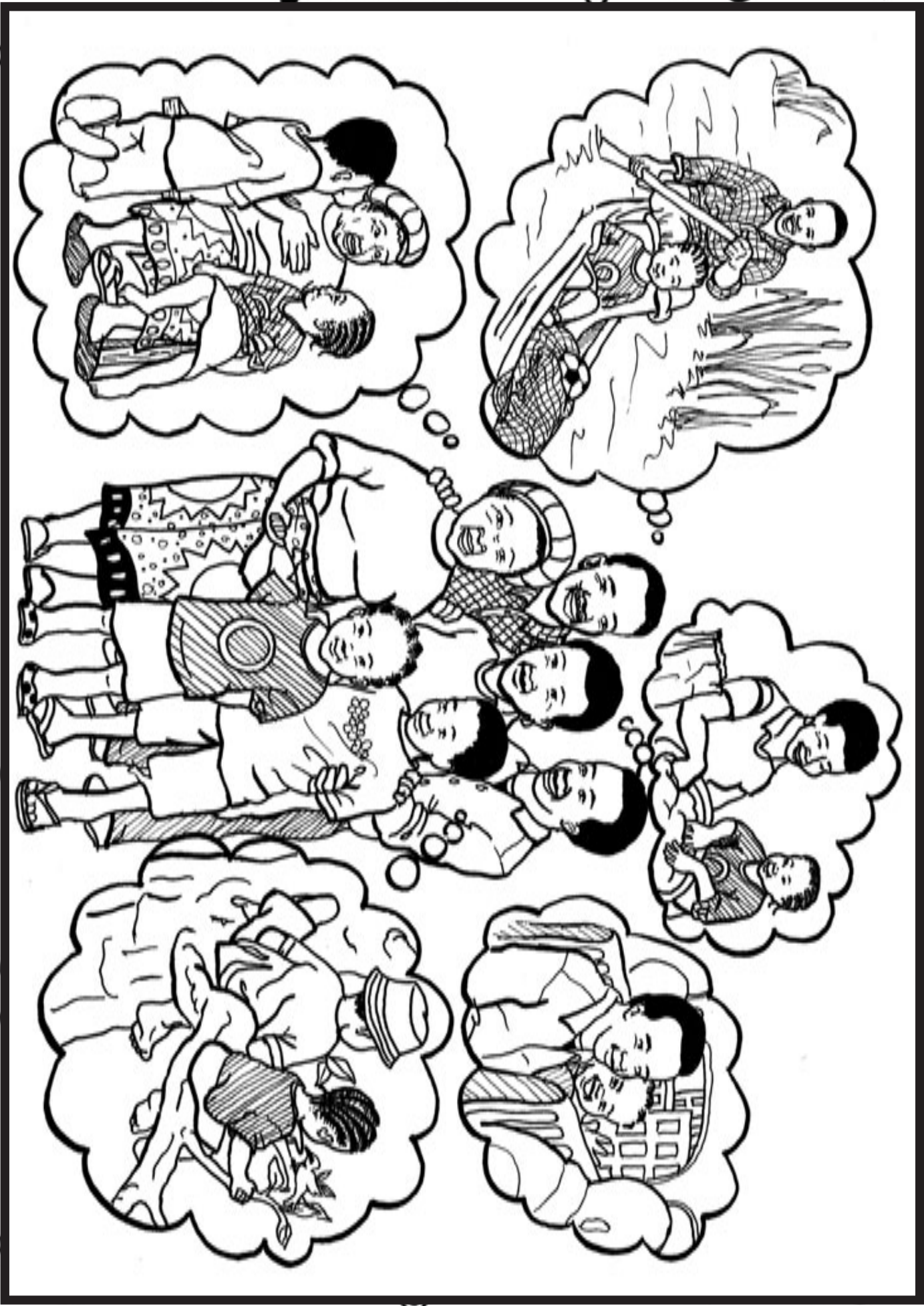




# Thandi and Tendai and the Shiny Stone



Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education  
Annex to Chapter 4: Activities to Engage Your Learners on Gender





This is Thandi. She is the youngest in the family and everyone loves her.

Thandi enjoys fishing trips with her father. ***They sing together while Thandi helps to repair the nets and spot the big bream fish.*** Thandi enjoys baking sweet bread with her mother. ***She likes staring into the flames and shaping wild animals like elephants, lions and hippos out of the dough.***

During Thandi's school holidays, her oldest brother sometimes takes her to town, where he is studying to be a nurse. They travel by bus on busy highways and go to bustling markets that have strange fruits.

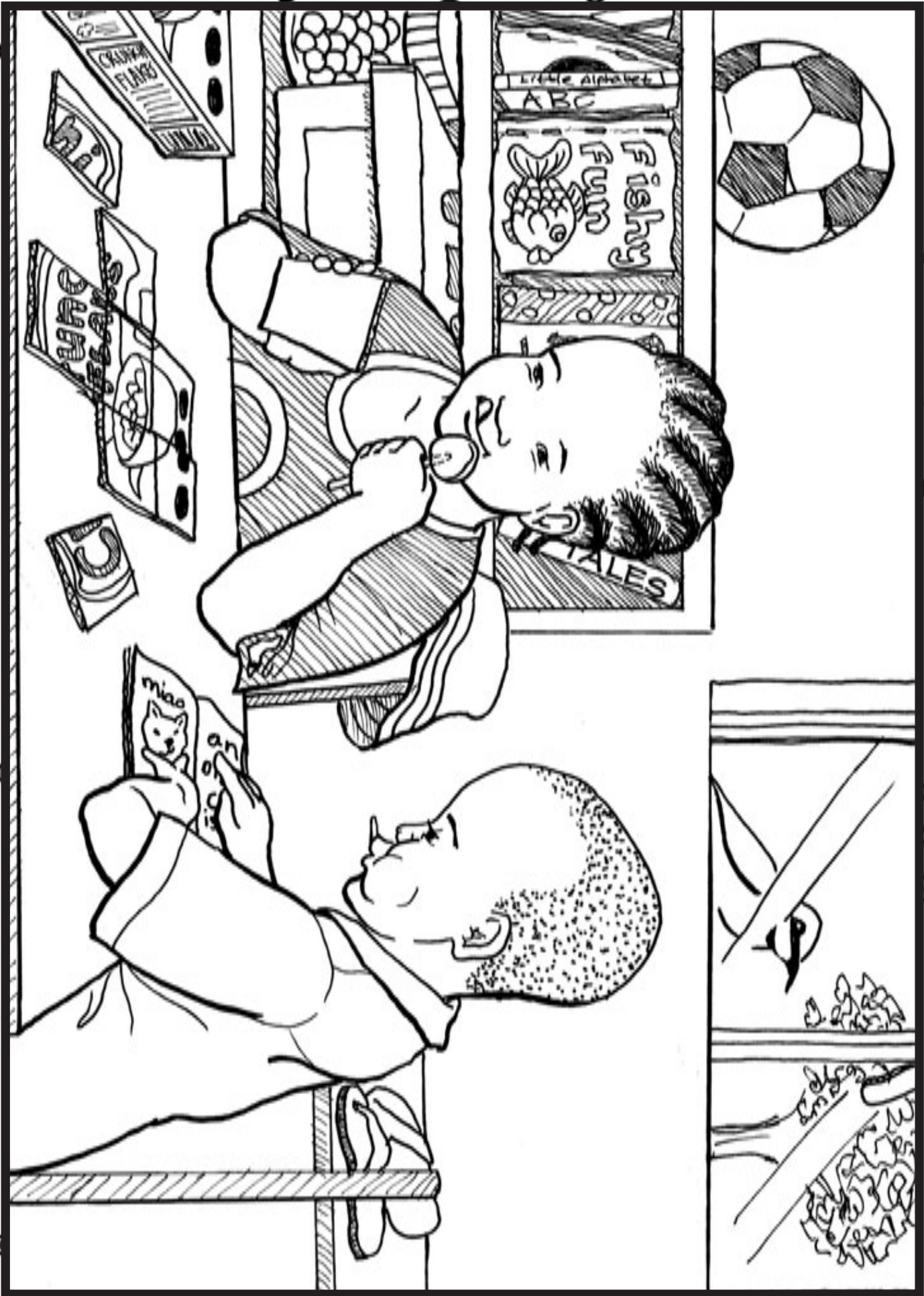
Thandi and her middle brother often climb trees. ***Then they sit on the branches together. Sometimes they surprise the people passing underneath the tree by shouting, 'BOOO!' They also try to spot fish eagles, weaver birds with their pretty nests and other birds. Occasionally, when they stay out late, they look at the stars from high up in the tree.***

Thandi's grandma loves telling her stories about all the exciting things that happened to her when she was young, like the time she fell into the river or the time she saw a mother crocodile carrying a recently hatched baby crocodile to the water.

Thandi and her family live by the river.

### ***Questions teachers can ask***

- ◁ What do you like doing with your mother? Father? Brother? Sister? Follow up by asking if they can do the same activity with someone else (even someone of the opposite sex). Can fathers also bake bread? Can mothers also go fishing?
- ◁ Who likes going to the city? What do you like about it?
- ◁ Who likes climbing trees? What do you like about it?
- ◁ Ask a child who does not like these activities why they do not like them. Perhaps ask this question of a learner whom you would expect to be scared of a particular activity and see whether they admit to being afraid.
- ◁ Ask who would be afraid to climb the highest tree near school or to get into a fishing boat. Introducing the idea of fear at this stage fits well with the story.





This is Tendai. He is Thandi's best friend.

***Their mothers are family friends. Tendai and Thandi met when they were very young. Even back then, they would play together and, when one of them cried, so would the other.***

Tendai and Thandi have lots of things in common. They both love lollipops, making puzzles, learning about letters and playing football. They live near each other, they pray together, they are in the same class at school and they both like their teacher, Mr Simon.

### ***Questions teachers can ask***

- ◁ Who is your friend?
- ◁ What do you both like?
- ◁ Why are you friends?
- ◁ Do you have to like exactly the same things as your friend or can you sometimes be different?
- ◁ Ask boys if they also have a friend who is a girl, and vice versa. Ask both friends what they like doing.





But Tendai and Thandi are also very different at times.

Thandi likes running down the hill fast, but Tendai likes to be careful.

Tendai often loses and forgets his school books while **Thandi is very tidy**. Thandi likes coming up in front of the class but Tendai gets shy and turns quiet when the teacher asks him to answer. **Tendai quickly finishes the work in his book while Thandi needs more time.**

Thandi likes loud music and dancing, while Tendai prefers to quietly draw on his own.

Tendai thinks cockroaches, millipedes and all other bugs are creepy and disgusting, but Thandi likes to pick them up and look at them carefully.

### **Questions teachers can ask**

- ▽ Draw learners' attention to the different pictures and ask learners how they think Tendai feels.
- ▽ Do you think Tendai feels happy or scared?
- ▽ Does Tendai feel confident or shy?
- ▽ Ask the learners themselves how they feel about going downhill, standing in front of the class, creepy crawlies like cockroaches, etc.
- ▽ Ask if any of the learners dislike or are afraid of doing any of those things.
- ▽ Ask which things make learners afraid.







One Monday, when Tendai and Thandi are walking home from school, they pass a cave they have never noticed before. *The cave's entrance has always been blocked by a big bush, but now the leaves of the bush are gone. They have been eaten by a goat and Tendai and Thandi can clearly see an opening leading into a dark tunnel.* Thandi immediately feels excited.

'Look, it's a cave! Perhaps there is gold inside,' she says. 'Let's check it out.'

Tendai feels worried and he looks down as he quietly says, 'But then my uniform will get dirty.'

'Well,' pleads Thandi, 'we could quickly rinse our clothes at the river afterwards.'

'Ehhh ... I don't want that,' says Tendai, 'besides, I am sure there are lots of creepy creatures inside the cave or perhaps even worse ...'

'Come on,' interrupts Thandi, slightly annoyed. 'Let's go in!'

'We really should go home,' Tendai tries once more. 'Mum will have cooked for us.'

'You are no fun at all!' snaps Thandi. 'Ever since I have known you, you have always been a weakling. You are afraid to answer questions in class; you are afraid of the big kids; you are afraid of running down hills; you are even afraid of millipedes!' Thandi is furious now. 'You ...,' she says slowly, pursing her lips and pointing at Tendai, 'are one big scaredy pants!'

Tendai looks very upset before he runs away to hide the tears in his eyes.

### **Questions teachers can ask**

- ◁ Is it a good idea to go into the cave?  
Why?  
Why not?
- ◁ Why is Tendai crying?
- ◁ What are some of the things Thandi says? Are some of them true?
- ◁ Thandi calls Tendai a scaredy pants. What does that mean?
- ◁ Is it a nice thing to say?
- ◁ Is she being a good friend to Tendai?
- ◁ How does Thandi feel?
- ◁ How does Tendai feel?





As Thandi walks towards the entrance of the cave, she begins to feel bad about the mean things she has just said. ***She sits down on a tree stump.***

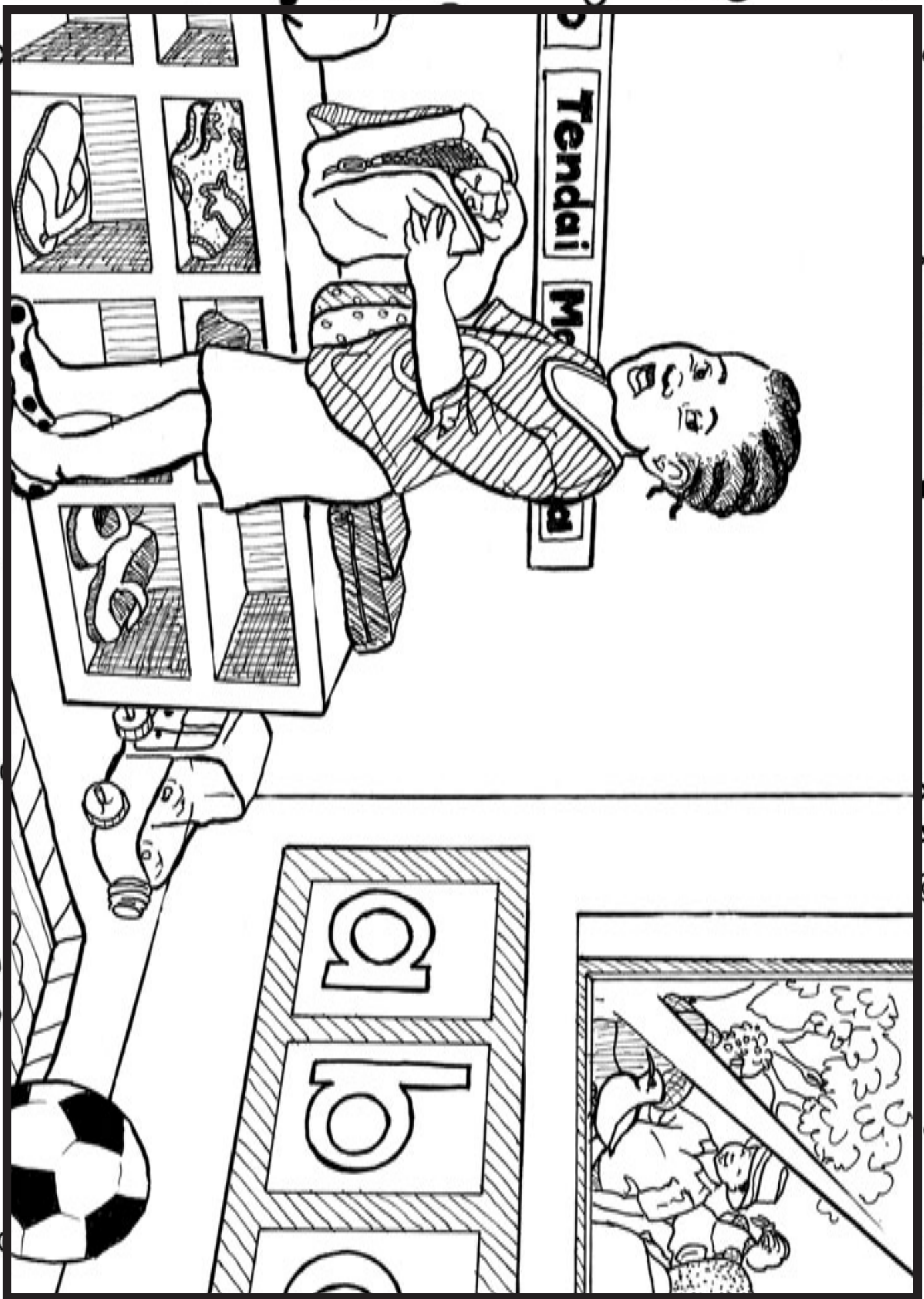
***'How could I have said that?' she thinks. 'Surely, Tendai won't want to be my friend any more.' She looks back and sees that Tendai is still running. He is far off in the distance by now and Thandi will not be able to catch up with him even if she tries.***

Thandi has upset her best friend when he was telling the truth! It isn't a good idea to go into that cave. What if there is a snake inside? ***Thandi feels horribly sorry by now but she has no one to blame but herself.***

Then she sees something sparkle in the sunlight under the bush by the entry of the cave. That's how she gets the idea about how to apologise to Tendai.

### ***Questions teachers can ask***

- ◊ How does Thandi feel now?
- ◊ Why does she feel this way?
- ◊ ***Where is Tendai?***
- ◊ What should Thandi do?
- ◊ Is Tendai really a scaredy pants?
- ◊ Does Thandi go into the cave?  
Why not?  
What does she do?
- ◊ What gives her an idea?
- ◊ What could the idea be?





The next day, Tuesday, Thandi goes to Tendai's home so that they can walk to school together. His mother **is rushing to catch the bus which takes her to her job in the city. She hurriedly** tells Thandi that Tendai **was in a bad mood that morning and wanted to walk to school by himself. He** left quite a while ago.

Tendai's father is boiling water for tea and asks Thandi **if she also wants a cup. He tells her Tendai was quiet all evening the previous night and he asks Thandi** if she knows what is going on. Thandi looks embarrassed and says she **thinks she understands and** needs to get to school. She almost runs to school but still arrives a bit late. **Mr Simon has already started the lesson** and so she can't talk to Tendai immediately.

When all the learners are going out for break, Thandi slips something small into Tendai's school bag **without anyone noticing.**

For the rest of the school day, Tendai avoids Thandi. **Every time she tries to speak to him, he looks the other way. When it is time to walk home, Tendai leaves before Thandi can join him.** Thandi feels very alone, even when her other friends are chatting with her. She misses her best friend.

### **Questions teachers can ask**

- ◁ Has Tendai told his parents what happened?
- ◁ **Where is Tendai's mother going?**
- ◁ **How did Tendai feel in the morning?**
- ◁ What is Tendai's father doing?  
Who boils the water for tea at your home?
- ◁ Has Tendai forgotten what happened the day before?
- ◁ Why are Tendai and Thandi not walking to **and from** school together?
- ◁ How does Thandi feel at the end of the school day?
- ◁ What do you think Thandi has put in Tendai's school bag?
- ◁ What would you do to make up with a friend after a fight?

Dear Tendai  
 Sorry for sayin u scary pans  
 Yu Were wait about The  
 car I was rong  
 I hop we can  
 be frends agen.

i Find a little stOne I  
 think it is ~~especial~~  
 seshal. It may be a  
 Kurij stone.  
 u Can skweez it when you  
 scared and then May be  
 You wont feel afraid  
 anymore

gore frend  
 Thandi





Tendai misses chatting with Thandi as he walks home from school. ***He misses playing Catch the Ball on the playground with her and misses reading stories with her.***

When he arrives home, he opens his bag to take out his notebook to draw. He hopes drawing will make him feel better. ***He draws himself as a small, sad hippo. Charging towards the hippo, with big tusks and flapping ears, is an angry elephant. Tendai looks at his drawing and decides it hasn't made him feel better at all, so he closes his notebook. He wants to put it back into his schoolbag.*** But, wait ... what is that?

At the bottom of his schoolbag, he sees a package wrapped up in a note. On the front, it says 'TENDAI' in large, curly letters. He carefully opens the package and finds a small, sparkly little stone.

The note has been written carefully. This is what it says:

*Dear Tendai,*

*Sorry fo saying u scary pants. You were rait about The cav I was rong. I hop we can be friends agen.*

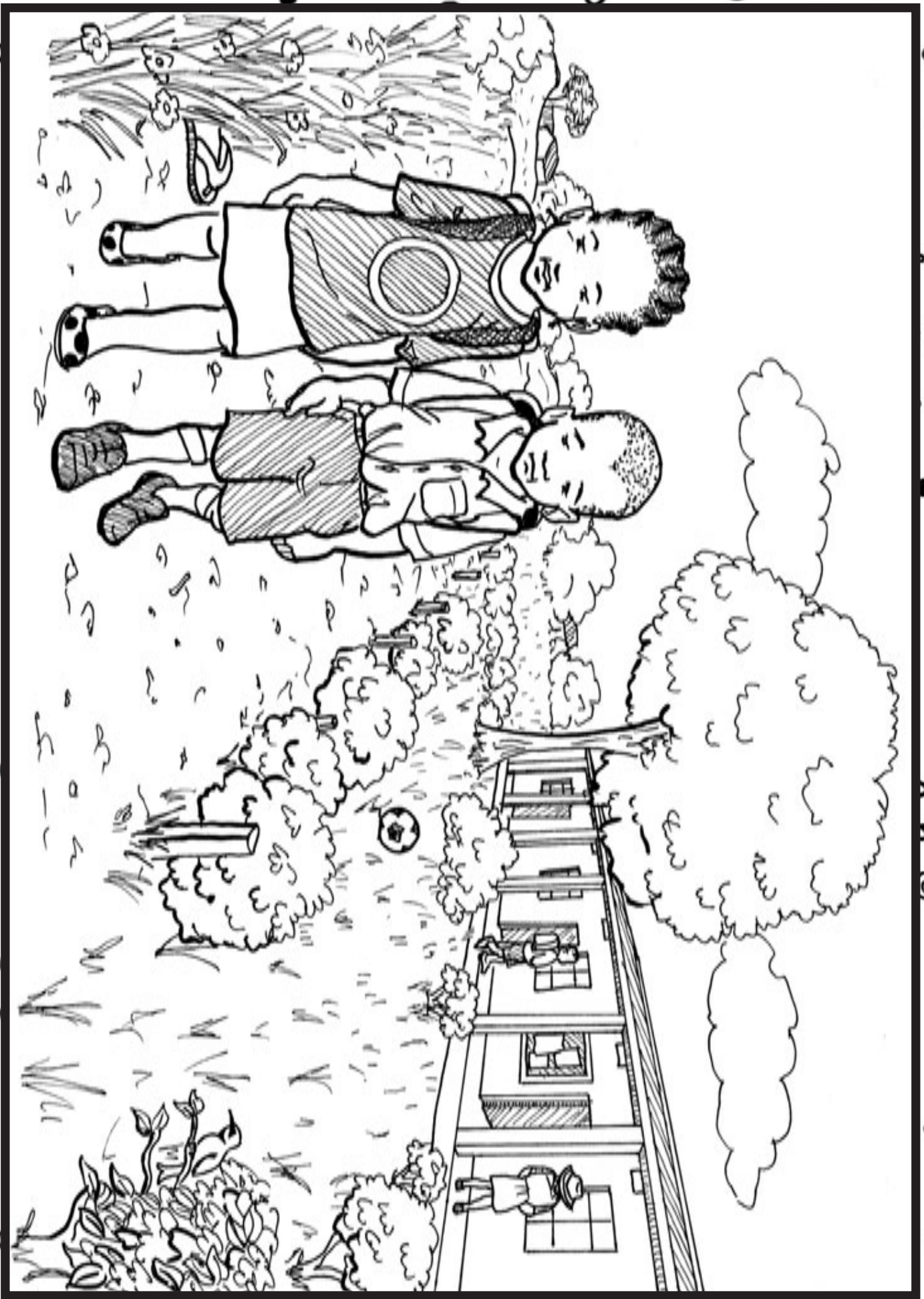
*i Find a little stOne. I think it is espesheaf speshal. It may be a kurrij stone.*

*You can Skweez it when U are scared and then May be You won't feel afraid anymore.*

Tendai smiles as he holds the little stone in his hand.

### ***Questions teachers can ask***

- ◊ How does Tendai feel about not talking or playing with Thandi?
- ◊ ***What does he want to do to make himself feel better?***
- ◊ ***What does he draw?***
- ◊ ***Who's the elephant?***
- ◊ What happens when he opens his bag?
- ◊ Who put the package in his bag?
- ◊ What does the note say?
- ◊ Where do you think Thandi found the stone?
- ◊ How can the sparkling stone help Tendai?
- ◊ How does Tendai feel after he reads the note?







On Wednesday, Thandi feels tired. ***She hasn't slept well.*** Her mother says ***she needs to get ready quickly because*** Tendai is waiting for her outside to walk to school.

She can hardly believe it, but there he is. Both ***are staring at their feet and*** feel shy. Even during their walk, they don't speak much.

Just before they arrive at school Thandi finally ***finds the courage and*** says, 'Sorry, Tendai for calling you a scaredy pants and making you sad,' ***but she doesn't dare to look him in the eyes during her apology.*** Then she scuttles off to greet her other friends on the playground.

### ***Questions teachers could ask***

- ◁ How does Tendai surprise Thandi the next day?
- ◁ Why are they not chatting as much as usual when they walk to school?
- ◁ What does Thandi say to Tendai just before they arrive?
- ◁ Is it easy for her to say that?
- ◁ Is it good of her to apologise or was it not needed?
- ◁ ***Does Thandi look at Tendai when she apologises?***
- ◁ Do you find it easy to apologise?
- ◁ Is it important to apologise when you have done something wrong?





During Morning Circle, Thandi can't believe her eyes: Tendai raises his hand to answer a question! But, just as quickly as he raised his hand, he lowers it again **while biting his lip**.

During the lesson on the sound 'sh', Tendai finds the courage to raise his hand **higher this time** and he does not put it back down **either**. Teacher Simon is also a bit surprised and calls on him.

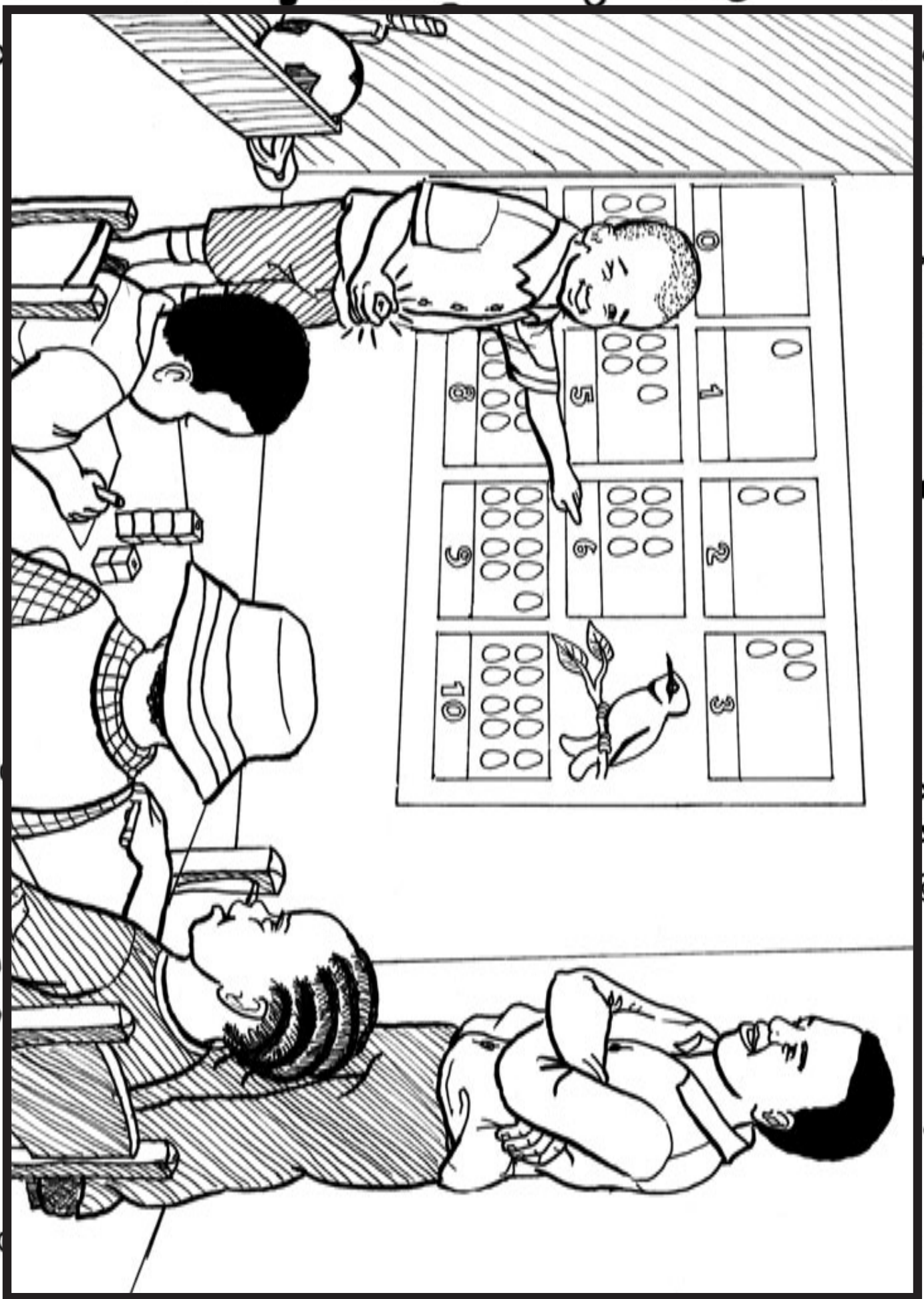
'Tendai, do you know a word with "sh"?' he asks, smiling at him encouragingly. **By now all the other learners are also looking at him.**

'Yy-yess, Mister', stammers Tendai shyly and **then he swallows and** gets the word out: 'Ssshhhhh ... shy.'

'Good example, Tendai!' says the teacher. Tendai looks embarrassed and lowers his head. Thandi can just see the smile on his face before he looks down.

### **Questions teachers can ask**

- ◇ What happens during morning circle?
- ◇ What is different between the first time and the second time Tendai raises his hand?
- ◇ Before, Tendai would be quiet when his teacher asked him a question. What is different now?
- ◇ How does Tendai feel after answering the question?  
Why is he smiling?



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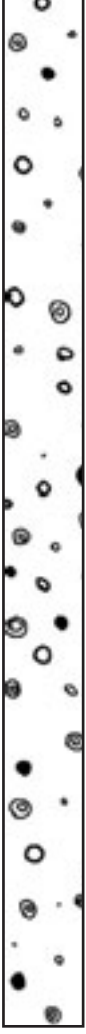
2  
0000

6  
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3  
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10  
00000000





During Counting lesson, Tendai raises his hand for the third time that day, a little more confidently this time.

‘Yes, Tendai, how much is  $4 + 2$ ?’ asks Teacher Simon.

‘6’, answers Tendai proudly, in a clear voice.

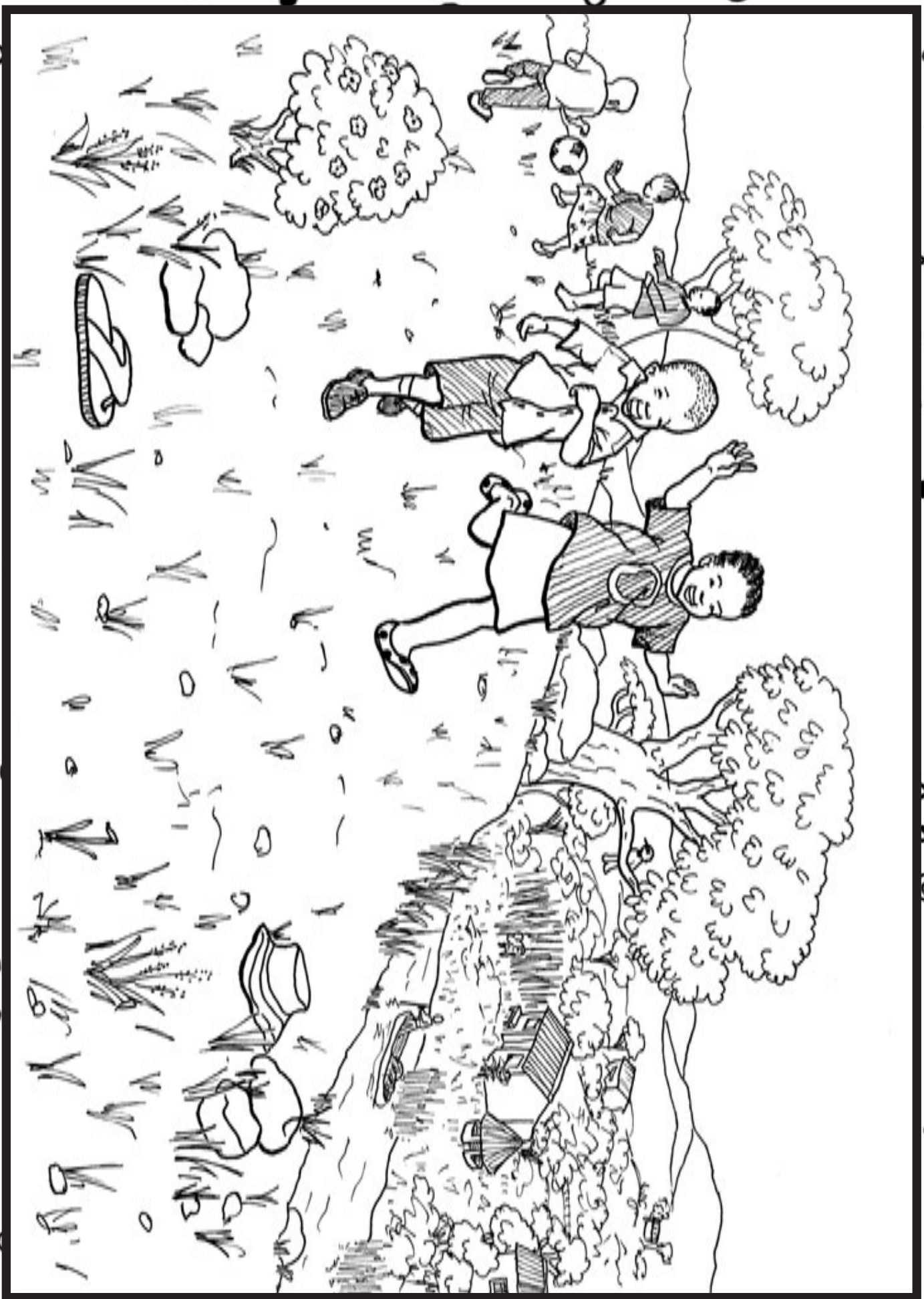
‘That is correct,’ says the teacher. ‘Would you like to show your friends the right number on the chart?’

Tendai nods **and hardly hesitates before getting up from his spot. He takes a deep breath** and then steps to the front to point out number 6 to his friends.

‘Right again,’ says Mr Simon. ‘Clap for him!’ As everyone claps for Tendai, he smiles broadly and winks at Thandi from the front of the class. Their eyes meet and then he opens his fist, so Thandi can see the small sparkling stone he has clenched inside.

### **Questions teachers can ask**

- ◁ What is different the third time Tendai raises his hand?
- ◁ Why is he not as shy this time?
- ◁ Why does he wink at Thandi?
- ◁ Is he still angry with Thandi?
- ◁ What do you do when you feel shy?





Tendai and Thandi are once more the best of friends.

Every day now, Tendai tries something new. One day, he goes up, together with Thandi, to join the big boys in playing football, the next day he runs downhill for the last bit and the day after that he stays close to Thandi when she is inspecting a hairy caterpillar, rather than walking away.

Tendai becomes almost as daring as Thandi, but he stays sensible about dangerous things. Thandi now agrees with him when he says they should be careful or not do something. Thandi begins to draw more often and Tendai occasionally likes to dance. They have even more fun together than ever before.



### ***Questions teachers can ask***

- ◁ Who has helped Tendai become more daring?
- ◁ Which other things may Tendai start doing?
- ◁ Do you think Tendai will always need the stone to give him courage?
- ◁ Why do they have more fun now?





## Chapter 5: The Go Gender Go Game for Teachers and School Leaders

Go Gender Go can be played among ECE teachers from the same school or from different schools. It can also be played with a mix of teachers, school leaders and parents.

This game will help to familiarise you with the toolkit in an interactive and fun way. It was designed to spark interest in and deepen understanding of the content of the toolkit.

The game can be played without first reading the full toolkit. The questions are related to specific sections of the toolkit and references to those sections are included with the questions.

### Objective

- ✓ The aim of Go Gender Go is not so much to win the game but to reflect on and discuss the questions and learn together.



### 5.1. Guidelines for playing the interactive game

Be the first player or team to reach the finish by answering questions. The game takes at least an hour and a half to play, depending on the number of players (the more the players, the longer the game).

#### Needed to play

Go Gender Go can be played with 2–6 players or teams. You need:

- ◁ The game board (find it at the end of this chapter)
- ◁ Chapters 1–3 of this toolkit
- ◁ Pictures related to the questions (find them in this chapter)
- ◁ Question cards for 6 different categories (find them in this chapter)
- ◁ A dice. If you do not have a dice you can:
  - use six small pieces of card with the numbers 1–6 written on them, placed face down on the table. On their turn, players pick a card with their eyes closed;
  - alternatively, use the template supplied in this chapter to make your own dice.
- ◁ A distinct small object or counter for each team or player (a bottle top, a stone, a button, etc.)

#### Set-up

The game board has a path with a start, numbered spaces and a finish. Each space has a circle with a symbol representing a category of questions. The categories are:



General Gender



Teaching Process



Environment



Materials



Interactions



School Leadership

- ◁ Cut out the two halves of the game board and glue them together. Stick the board onto stiff card.
- ◁ Stick a sheet of question cards onto stiff card. Stick the card backing sheet onto the back of the card, making sure it is the right category, or write the category name on the back of the card. Cut out the cards. Sort them into stacks according to category and place them next to the game board.
- ◁ Select your counter (for example, a bottle top) and place it on the start.
- ◁ Decide who goes first. The next person to take a turn is the person on your left. Continue clockwise.

## Playing the game

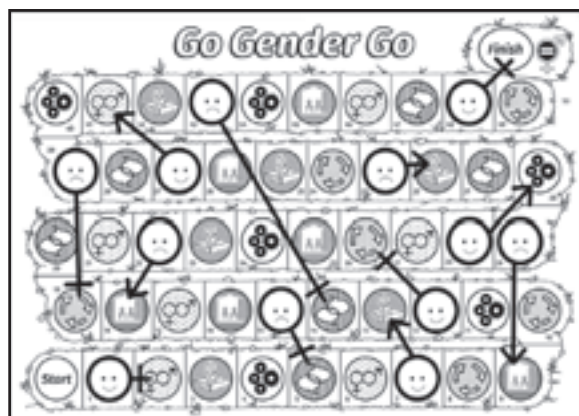
On your turn:

- ◁ Roll the dice. Move your counter the exact number of spaces shown on the dice. Any number of counters may occupy the same space at the same time.
- ◁ Some of the circles have a male or female symbol that connects to another space. If you land on such a circle, move to where the arrow or the cross takes you. The sad face takes you backwards. The happy face moves you forwards.
- ◁ When you land on a space, pick a card from the corresponding category, read the question out loud and try to answer it. Be careful not to read the answers. Not all cards have answers but all have references to related sections in the toolkit.
- ◁ Then discussion can start.
  - If you answered the question well, put the question card back at the bottom of the stack. On your next turn, you can roll the dice and move forward.
  - If your answer wasn't satisfactory, refer to the relevant section of the toolkit. You will not roll the dice or move forward on your next turn. Instead, answer a question of the same category.
  - If you are not sure about the quality of your answer, your fellow players or the other teams can decide whether or not it was good enough.
- ◁ It is now the turn of the player or the team on your left.

## Note

- ◁ You do not have to roll the exact number to land on the finish. For example, if you roll a five and need to move only three spaces, you stop at the finish and forget about the extra two.
- ◁ Any number of counters may occupy the same space at the same time.
- ◁ There is often no right or wrong answer to the question. Sometimes the card gives a possible answer. All cards also refer you to where you can find relevant information in the toolkit.
- ◁ Trying or guessing is better than not answering at all. You probably know a lot more than you think you do, so take a guess!

ENJOY PLAYING!



## 5.2. Alternative uses for the Go Gender Go question cards

### Quiz

The question cards can also be used for a quiz to be answered in teams without the game board. This allows you to work with a larger group of teachers.

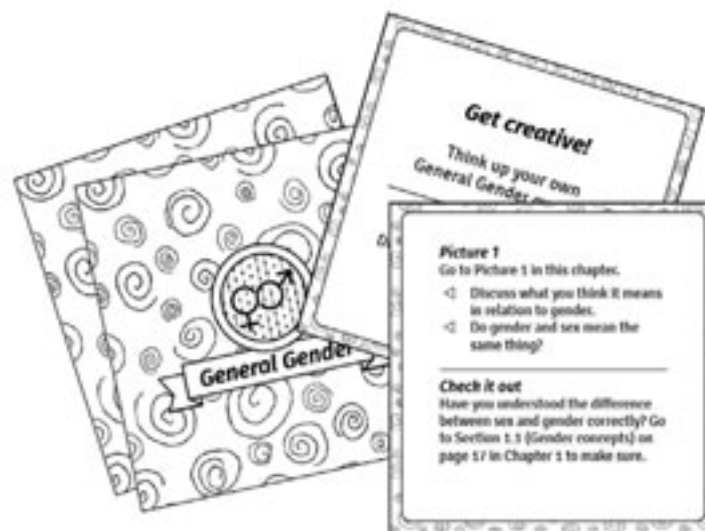
### Icebreaker

Selected questions can be handed out to participants. The participants can then be asked to walk around and pair up. In pairs, they can discuss their two questions before walking around again to pair up with someone else. This activity allows participants to start getting to know each other.

### Whole-group activity

- ◁ Participants stand in a circle in front of their chairs. To start, the facilitator selects one of the participants by drawing a name or pointing at random at someone.
- ◁ The selected participant is asked the first question on the stack. After answering, the participant nudges a person on his or her right or left. The person who has been nudged is out and needs to sit down. However, if the selected participant does not answer, he or she is out and needs to sit down – no nudging allowed!
- ◁ The facilitator keeps asking questions until there is only one participant left standing.
- ◁ Alternatively, the people who have gone out select the participants and ask the questions. They could also act as a jury who decides whether an answer is acceptable or not.

Use your own imagination and invent different activities with the question cards to fit your context.

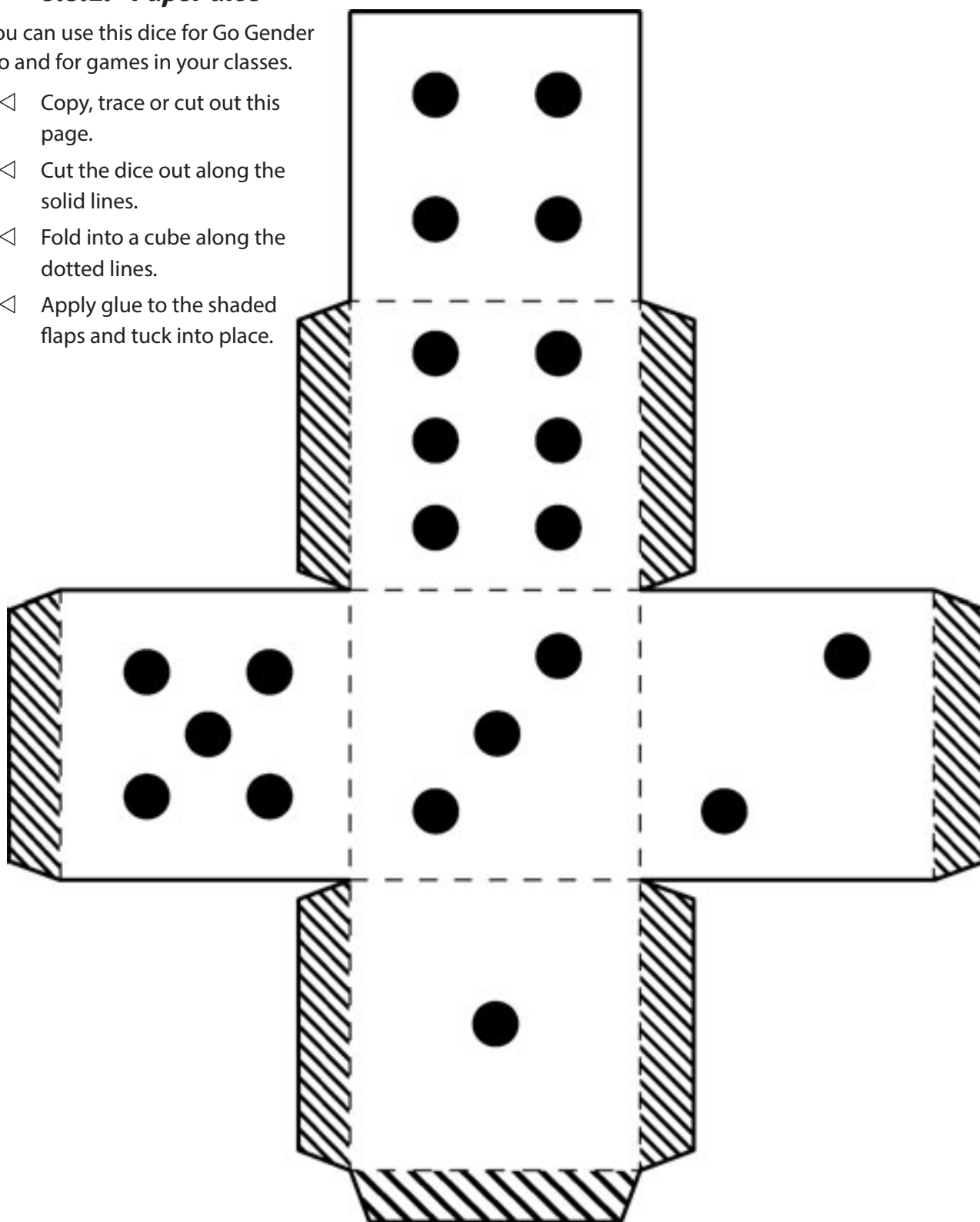


### 5.3. Resources for Go Gender Go

#### 5.3.1. Paper dice

You can use this dice for Go Gender Go and for games in your classes.

- ◁ Copy, trace or cut out this page.
- ◁ Cut the dice out along the solid lines.
- ◁ Fold into a cube along the dotted lines.
- ◁ Apply glue to the shaded flaps and tuck into place.



### 5.3.2. Pictures for the Go Gender Go questions

Picture 1



<http://briexbaby.blogspot.com/2012/02/history-of-glam-1950s-natural.html>

Picture 2



<https://www.thoughtco.com/gender-definition-3026335>

Picture 3



<http://www.historybyzim.com/2013/07/odd-ads-of-the-past-pep-vitamins/>

Picture 4



<http://briexbaby.blogspot.com/2012/02/history-of-glam-1950s-natural.html>

Picture 5

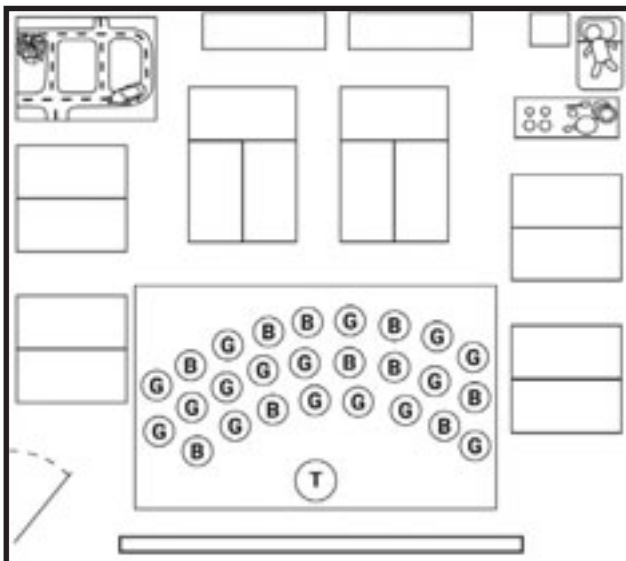


<http://thepsychreport.com/society/how-can-organizations-promote-gender-equality-iris-bohnet-on-what-works/>

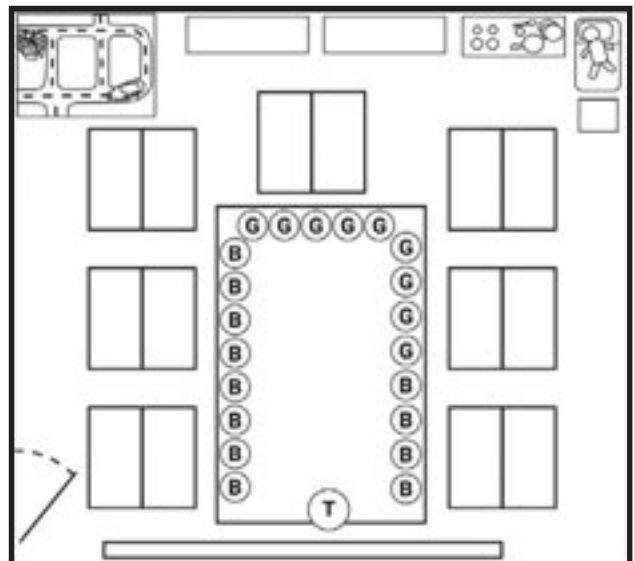
Picture 6



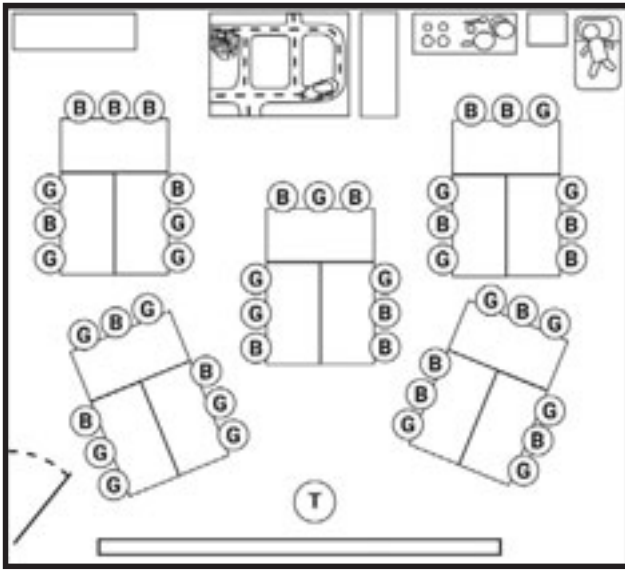
Picture 7



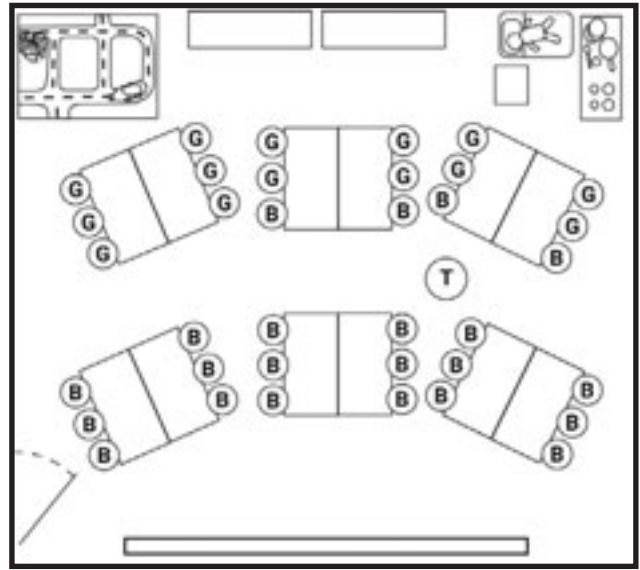
Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10



Picture 11

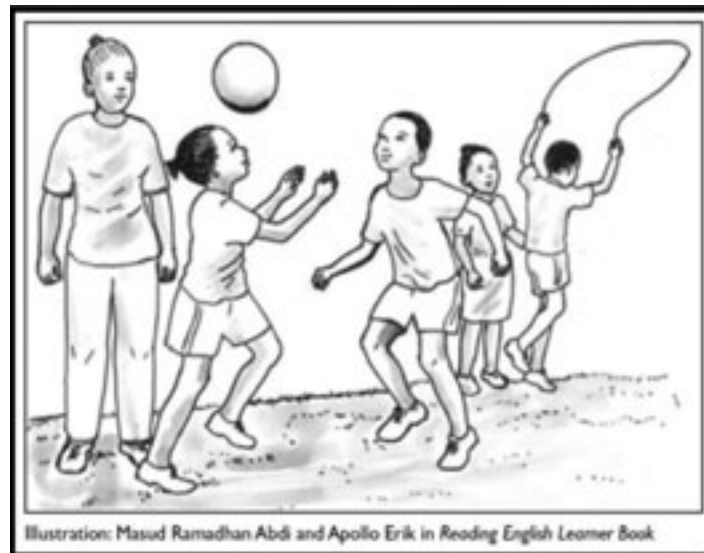


Illustration: Masud Ramadhan Abdi and Apollo Erik in Reading English Learner Book

Picture 12



Illustration: USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Program

Picture 13



Picture 14



Picture 15



STONE SOUP © 2011 Jan Eliot. Reprinted with permission of ANDREWS MCMEEL SYNDICATION. All rights reserved.



Picture 16

**Arnold's classroom observation**

Arnold was an ECE teacher in a primary school in Ndola. During a workshop on gender-responsive pedagogy, he was asked to reflect about the play materials and other learning materials he used in his class, and about whether the activities were equally accessible to girls and boys. He concluded that boys and girls could access all the activities but that there was one play activity in which girls showed no interest whatsoever. Only the older boys were using the construction play materials regularly. Girls could play with them, if they wanted to, but Arnold had always supposed that the girls simply had no interest in construction.

After the workshop, Arnold continued to think about the construction play activity. He decided to closely monitor that area over a period of two weeks. Twice a day, he observed the construction play activity for 10 minutes and take notes on which children were using the construction materials and how they were playing. During one of these observations, he saw how four-year-old Bertha watched several five-year-old boys who were building a car with blocks. After a short while, Bertha sat down beside the boys and started taking building blocks from the box and putting them together. When one of the older boys saw what she was doing, he said harshly, 'Go away, building is for boys, not for girls!' Consequently, Bertha dropped the blocks and left the construction play activity.

Picture 17

**Class observation notes:  
teacher-learner interaction.**

- ★ I noticed that the teacher gave lots of individual attention to all learners as he walked around the room; he spent a little more time with girls but not significantly more.
- ★ When the teacher asked questions, he called on boys a little more frequently than girls but there was not a big difference. There was one boy who was very eager and fast and who dominated class attention a little.
- ★ The teacher's body language and tone seemed the same with all learners.
- ★ The teacher gave 21 compliments, mostly using the learners' names. However, five compliments were stereotyped. The teacher said, 'Good girl,' three times and, 'Clever boy,' twice.

### Picture 18



#### **5.3.3. Go Gender Go question cards**

You will find the question cards for the game on the following pages. The question categories are laid out in this order:

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. General Gender   | 4. Materials         |
| 2. Teaching Process | 5. Interaction       |
| 3. Environment      | 6. School Leadership |

Each set of cards has a backing sheet identifying the card category – either use the backing sheets or write the relevant category on the back of each card.

## General Gender

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own  
General Gender question.

---

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the  
next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own  
General Gender question.

---

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the  
next card on the pile.

Which aspects of teaching and  
learning ensure equal opportunities  
for all learners, regardless of their  
sex?

---

#### **Check it out**

In Section 1.4 (Gender-responsive  
pedagogy) on page 4 of Chapter  
1, there is a diagram that shows  
different aspects of teaching and  
learning in which teachers can ensure  
equal opportunities for all learners.

Explain your understanding of 'gender  
stereotype'.

Think about gender stereotypes  
prevalent in your community and share  
examples.

---

#### **Check it out**

See the definition of gender stereotype  
in Section 1.1 (Gender concepts), page  
1, Chapter 1.

Explain what you think gender-  
responsive pedagogy (GRP) means.

Why is it important for teachers to use  
GRP with young learners?

---

#### **Check it out**

- ◁ Find a definition of GRP in Section  
1.4, page 4, Chapter 1.
- ◁ Go to Section 2.1.1, page 9,  
Chapter 2, to find out why it is  
important to use GRP with young  
learners.

#### **Picture 1**

Go to Picture 1 in Chapter 5.

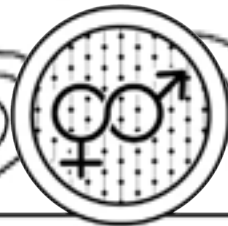
- ◁ Discuss what you think it means  
in relation to gender.
  - ◁ Do gender and sex mean the  
same thing?
- 

#### **Check it out**

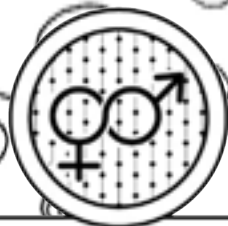
Have you understood the difference  
between sex and gender correctly?  
Go to Section 1.1 (Gender concepts),  
page 1, Chapter 1, to make sure.



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**

**Picture 2**

Find Picture 2 in Chapter 5. It shows the covers of two children’s books.

- ◁ Discuss what you see.
- ◁ What message do you think the books give to boys and girls?

\_\_\_\_\_

The book covers promote gender stereotypes: boys are expected to be clever, girls are expected to look beautiful. This is particularly harmful to girls, who may not explore their full potential and may have low expectations for themselves.

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

You can read about

- ◁ Gender stereotypes in Section 1.1 (Gender concepts), page 1, Chapter 1.
- ◁ Gender bias in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

**Picture 3**

Find Picture 3 in Chapter 5. This is an advertisement dating back to the 1930s.

How do you think boys and girls, men and women were influenced by this advertisement?

\_\_\_\_\_

The advertisement promotes gender stereotypes: it creates the impression that the wife has to work hard at cooking, cleaning and dusting, and housework makes her more attractive. Such advertisements suggest that household chores are for women only. Many modern advertisements still use gender stereotypes.

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

For information on gender biases, see Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

Society does not always have the same expectations of men and women or of boys and girls.

- ◁ Can you think of an example in your own community?
- ◁ Do you think it is good or bad to have different expectations of men and women or of boys and girls?

**Check it out**

For explanations of gender biases and how they can affect boys and girls, go to Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

**Picture 4**

Find Picture 4 in Chapter 5. This shows two advertisements dating back to 1949 and 1959.

How do you think boys and girls, men and women were influenced by these advertisements?

\_\_\_\_\_

The advertisements promote gender stereotypes: the husbands go out to work while the wives stay home to cook for their husbands. Both create the impression that men are the main providers in the household while household chores are for women only. The images suggest that a woman has to do the cooking. Many modern advertisements still use gender stereotypes.

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

For information on gender biases, read Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

Think of examples where women or men are treated differently in your community or your area.

Are these examples of gender discrimination?

**Check it out**

Find out about gender in the African context in Section 1.3, page 4, Chapter 1.

Women, especially women in positions of power, can be inspiring role models to others. They can promote gender equality in their communities.

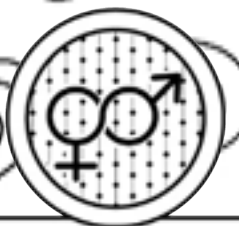
- ◁ Think of examples of women in positions of power in your country or your community.
- ◁ Are there things they have done to support their fellow women?

**Check it out**

Read about gender in the African context in Section 1.3, page 4, Chapter 1.



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**

Name two negative cultural practices that hinder the equal advancement of men and women in your community.

Brainstorm how you can challenge them with your learners.

**Check it out**

Find information on challenging gender stereotypes throughout Chapter 2.

In particular, read about gender bias in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

Explain your understanding of 'gender roles' and how they differ from 'sex roles'.

Share some examples.

Only women can cook = gender role  
Only women can bear children = sex role.  
(both men and women can cook).

**Examples**

**Check it out**

You can find definitions of gender roles and sex roles in Section 1.1 (Gender concepts), page 1, Chapter 1.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important human rights treaty. A core principle of this convention is non-discrimination.

How does gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) contribute to the implementation of the non-discrimination principle of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

By applying gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) you ensure that you do not discriminate against children according to gender.

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

- ▷ Find a definition of gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) in Section 1.4, page 4, Chapter 1.
- ▷ Information on international commitments related to gender can be found in Section 1.2, page 3, Chapter 1.

Explain your understanding of 'gender-based discrimination'.

Think of an example of gender-based discrimination in your community or country.

One important example of gender-based discrimination in many countries is women's salaries. Women are often paid less than men for the same work.

**Example**

**Check it out**

- ▷ Read the definition of gender-based discrimination in Section 1.1 (Gender concepts) on page 3, Chapter 1.
- ▷ For information about gender in the African context, go to section 1.3, page 4, Chapter 1.

Do you think gender equality is part of the United Nations' Global Sustainable Development Goals of 2015?

There are three critical education targets that refer to gender equality in education in the Sustainable Development Goals. One of these is specifically about early childhood education (ECE).

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

You can read more on international commitments related to gender in Section 1.2, page 3, Chapter 1.

Why is gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) important in early education?

**Check it out**

You can find information on the importance of GRP in ECE in Section 2.1.1, page 9, Chapter 2.



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



For each of the following statements, decide whether the differences between male and female are because of gender or sex. You need to get two out of three correct.

1. Women give birth to babies; men don't.
2. Girls are gentle; boys are tough.
3. Boys do better in science and maths; girls do better in art and literature.

Answers  
1: sex  
2: gender

### Check it out

You will find definitions of sex and gender in Section 1.1 (Gender concepts), page 1, Chapter 1.

### Picture 5

Look at Picture 5 in Chapter 5. This is a piece of graffiti or street art from Australia.

- ▷ Describe what you see.
- ▷ Do you recognise this in your own setting?
- ▷ Do you think it is good or bad to use different language to address young boys and girls?

Possible answer  
Gender bias often starts when children are still very young and can affect their learning outcomes and their future.

### Check it out

There is more information in Section 2.1.2 on gender biases, page 10, Chapter 2.

*The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognising how we are. Imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individual selves, if we didn't have the weight of gender expectations.*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
Award-winning Nigerian novelist

Have you ever felt that the expectations related to your gender have prevented you from doing something you wanted to do?

### Check it out

To read about gender biases, go to Section 2.1.2 page 10, Chapter 2.

*A world of happier men and happier women who are truer to themselves. And this is how to start: We must raise our daughters differently. We must also raise our sons differently.*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
Award-winning Nigerian novelist

- ▷ Do you agree with this statement?
- ▷ Share some examples of ways in which you can change your interactions with your learners to help them become truer and happier adults.

### Check it out

There are many examples of gender-responsive interactions in the toolkit. You can start with the hints and tips in Section 2.1.2 on gender biases, page 11, Chapter 2.

What is meant by 'gender equity'? Choose the correct definition:

1. An unfair difference in the way women and men, girls and boys are treated
2. The process of being fair to women, men, boys and girls. To ensure fairness, measures must often be taken to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field.
3. The physical, legal, social or cultural separation of people according to their sexes

Answer  
Definition 2.

### Check it out

You can find the definition of gender equity in Section 1.1 (Gender concepts), page 2, Chapter 1.

What is meant by 'gender bias'? Choose the correct definition:

1. The equal participation of women or girls and men or boys in all spheres of society, including school and work.
2. An unfair difference in the way women and men, girls and boys are treated.
3. The physical, legal, social or cultural separation of people according to their sexes.

Answer  
Definition 2.

### Check it out

You can find the definition of gender bias in Section 1.1 (Gender concepts), page 2, Chapter 1.



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**



**General Gender**

## Teaching Process

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Teaching Process question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Teaching Process question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

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### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Teaching Process question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

*Planning a lesson takes up enough time as it is. I do not have time to pay extra attention to gender while planning.*

Discuss this statement.

- ◁ Do you agree with it?
- ◁ Explain why you agree or disagree.

---

*Possible answer*  
If you always think about gender and thus take it into account from the very start, it does not involve extra work – after a while, it will become a habit

#### **Check it out**

Read the hints and tips on lesson planning in Section 2.2, page 12, Chapter 2.

When you plan activities for your class, are there activities you consider suitable only for boys or only for girls?

Do you plan specific activities for girls or for boys?

#### **Check it out**

Read about planning activities that both girls and boys will enjoy throughout Chapter 2. For example, see Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.

How can you plan your lessons to encourage the equal participation of boys and girls?

---

*Possible answer*  
Groupwork is a good way to encourage equal participation but there are also many more, for example, making sure equal numbers of boys and girls answer questions and providing mixed independent learning in play areas.

#### **Check it out**

There are tips for encouraging equal participation throughout Chapter 2, for example:

- ◁ 2.4.1 (Classroom seating arrangements and group work)
- ◁ 2.6.1 (Teacher-learner interactions)
- ◁ 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas)



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**

Think of some gender-sensitive lesson ideas on the topic: 'People who help us in our community' or choose a similar topic in line with your official curriculum or with what you have planned to teach.

**Tip**

These people could be doctors, police officers, nurses, teachers, soldiers, market stallholders, pastors, shopkeepers, security guards, etc.

---

*Possible answer*  
When teaching about the community, make it clear to your learners (also using posters and other images) that all jobs can be carried out by men as well as women. Women can be doctors, men can be nurses, and so on.

**Check it out**

For information on planning gender-sensitive lessons, see Section 2.2, page 12, Chapter 2.

Come up with some teaching ideas on the topic: 'Responsibilities in the home' or choose a similar topic, in line with your official curriculum or with what you have planned to teach.

Make sure your lesson ideas are gender sensitive.

---

*Possible answer*  
When teaching about responsibilities, make it clear to your learners (also using posters and other images) that both women and men or boys and girls can take up the same roles or tasks. Men can cook and sweep, women can go out to work while their husbands take care of the children, and so on.

**Check it out**

Section 2.2 on lesson planning, page 12, Chapter 2, has some hints and tips for teaching about roles in the home.

Girls should be given easy numeracy exercises while boys should be given more challenging operations.

- ◁ Do you think this statement is true?
- ◁ If your answer is yes, explain why.

---

**Check it out**

There is information on bias in teaching in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

Sing a traditional song that is not gender sensitive (for example, one that doesn't praise or belittle men or women).

How can you change your beliefs, attitudes and practices to ensure that you give both girls and boys equal opportunities to learn?

---

**Check it out**

You can find information on what you can do to address gender bias in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

Think of three practical ways to divide learners into groups and consider the benefits and disadvantages of each type of grouping.

---

**Check it out**

- ◁ You will find hints and tips on grouping learners to allow all to participate equally in the box in Section 2.4.1 (Classroom seating arrangements and group work) on page 15, Chapter 2.
- ◁ Hints on dividing learners into groups are found in Section 2.3 (Lesson delivery) on page 14, Chapter 2.

Reflect on the seating arrangements in your class. Do they allow all learners, boys and girls, to participate equally in class?

---

**Check it out**

Read about seating arrangements in Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**

Share with one another proverbs or sayings that praise or belittle masculinity or femininity.

How can you change your beliefs, attitudes and practices to ensure that you give both girls and boys equal opportunities to learn?

---

### **Check it out**

Information on what you can do to change biases is available in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

*On the playground at our school, the ball is usually used by boys for playing football whereas the ropes are mostly used by girls for skipping.*

If this is your school:

- ◁ What can you plan to change these patterns?
  - ◁ Think about what you can do to encourage girls to take part in activities 'for boys', and vice versa.
- 

### **Check it out**

See Section 2.4 on the teaching and learning environment, page 14, Chapter 2, for guidance on what you can do. Pay particular attention to 2.4.2 (Indoor and outdoor learning through play) and 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas).

Share with one another customary practices that support male power and belittle females (perhaps those related to areas of learning).

How can you change your beliefs, attitudes and practices to ensure that you give both girls and boys equal opportunities?

---

### **Check it out**

Information on challenging gender bias can be found in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

Think of three questions you could ask your learners to find out what it means to them to be a boy, man, woman or girl. They should be questions that reveal learners' attitudes to gender roles and stereotypes.

---

### **Check it out**

Find some sample questions in the hints and tips for Section 2.7 on assessment, page 31, Chapter 2.

### **Role-play**

You are a teacher. You have called a meeting to talk about healthy snack options for children, in line with the theme day 'Healthy Friday'. In fact, you also want to inform parents that girls have the same nutritional needs as boys.

- ◁ Have some colleagues pretend to be parents. Role-play the conversation with the parents.
  - ◁ Discuss how the parent talk went. Focus on what you liked about it and what you would do differently.
- 

### **Check it out**

For information on supporting positive eating patterns, go to Section 2.8.4 on nutrition, page 36, Chapter 2.

### **Role-play**

You are a teacher. You have called a meeting with a mother. You want to talk about her son, who is in your class and who asked why girls use the bathroom differently. You would like to find an answer and names for body parts that are acceptable for the parent and do not instil shame.

- ◁ Ask a colleague to play the mother and act out the conversation with her
  - ◁ Discuss how the parent talk went. Focus on what you liked about it and what you would do differently.
- 

### **Check it out**

Find out how to deal with tricky questions like this in Section 2.8.2 on sexual behaviour, page 33, Chapter 2.



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



Share with your colleagues one way you can help your learners in class, both boys and girls, to express their emotions and cope with them.

---

**Check it out**

You will find information on helping learners manage their emotions in Section 2.8.5 on expressing emotions, page 37, Chapter 2.

Give three examples of behaviour that may indicate a learner is a victim of abuse.

What can you do in such a situation?

---

**Check it out**

For information on signs of abuse see Section 2.8.3 (Abuse), page 35, Chapter 2.

Research has shown that children do not learn when they do not feel safe. Corporal punishment has a strong negative effect on learning. Rewards can increase well-being and motivation, resulting in better learning outcomes.

Explain the importance of positive, gender-sensitive reward systems and give examples of rewards.

---

**Check it out**

For information on gender-responsive classroom management, see the relevant subsection under 2.8.3 (Abuse), page 36, Chapter 2.

What would you do if you suspected one of your learners was a victim of abuse?

---

**Check it out**

- ◁ For information on what to do in cases of abuse, see 2.8.3 (Abuse), page 35, Chapter 2.
- ◁ Find out about referral pathways in Section 3.8.2 (School-related gender-based violence), page 56, Chapter 3.

Is it true that boys should eat more than girls?

If your answer is yes, why?

---

**Check it out**

You can read about nutrition and gender in Section 2.8.4, page 36, Chapter 2.

Discuss which words you can use with learners in class to name private body parts without being inappropriate.

Also discuss suitable situations or times for naming these parts and using the words.

---

**Check it out**

You will find information in Section 2.8 (Health, nutrition, well-being and gender in the ECE classroom), Chapter 2, and more specifically in:

- ◁ 2.8.1 (Basic knowledge of the human body and self-awareness), page 32, Chapter 2.
- ◁ 2.8.3 (Abuse), page 35, Chapter 2.



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**



**Teaching Process**

## Environment

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Environment question.

**Not feeling inspired?**  
Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Environment question.

**Not feeling inspired?**  
Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Environment question.

**Not feeling inspired?**  
Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

Think of at least four gender-neutral, low-cost materials that could be used in a construction area. Explain why they are gender neutral.

---

#### **Check it out**

- ◁ Go to Section 2.5 (Play and other learning materials), page 20, Chapter 2, for information on gender-neutral toys.
- ◁ There are also some ideas on play areas in Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.

Think about how your classroom is arranged.

- ◁ Do most play areas invite all learners to play together?
  - ◁ If not, what arrangement could encourage both boys and girls to play in the different areas?
- 

#### **Check it out**

For ideas and information on the arrangement of play areas, see Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.

Describe (or, if you prefer, roughly sketch) one play area or activities on tables in your classroom.

- ◁ How can you make this area or activity attractive to all the learners?
- ◁ How can you ensure that both girls and boys enjoy playing in the area or with the activity?

#### **Example**

If you have play areas set up with toys like pots, pans and dolls, do not refer to them with names like 'the doll area' as they may attract fewer boys.

---

#### **Check it out**

Read about play areas and gender in Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**

You make the following observation in your class:

*Thandi always plays with the dolls, pots and pans. Tendai has decided and shouts out that only boys are allowed to play with construction materials.*

- ◁ What do you think about this situation? Is this a problem?
- ◁ If you do think it's a problem, how would you deal with a situation like this?
- ◁ How can you stimulate all learners to try all play activities in order to ensure balanced development?

---

### Check it out

Find out about ensuring that all learners engage in a range of activities in 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.

### Picture 6

Go to picture 6 in Chapter 5.

- ◁ What do you think of this picture of a school playground?
- ◁ How can you encourage all learners to play together and share space in the playground?

---

**Possible answers**

There are 4 boys and 3 girls playing football and they are taking up all the space on the playground. (Other girls and a few boys seem to be squeezed into a corner.) In a situation like this the teacher could intervene and limit the space the children playing football are using (perhaps by making a border with some hedges) so other learners are no longer forced to the sides of the playground.

### Check it out

Find information on indoor and outdoor learning through play in Section 2.4.2, page 16, Chapter 2.

Which seating arrangements can help stimulate all learners, even the shy ones, to participate during whole-group activities?

---

### Check it out

Read about classroom seating arrangements in Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.

What are some of the benefits or challenges of using groupwork? Consider different group compositions.

---

**Possible answers**

Challenges: the teacher needs good class and group management skills; the teacher needs to be very well prepared.

Benefits: all learners are learning; boys and girls can mix more easily.

### Check it out

More information on grouping can be found in Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.

Think of at least three gender-neutral, low-cost materials that could be used in a play area.

---

**Possible answer**

In the pretend play area there could be items like a box converted into a pretend TV, a laptop drawn on a piece of folded cardboard, a mobile phone made of mud or clay, an old police hat, plates and cutlery, empty and clean food packages, a brazier made out of a tin can and a cardboard box car in which the learners can sit.

### Check it out

- ◁ You will find information on gender-sensitive play and learning materials in Section 2.5, page 20, Chapter 2.
- ◁ Read about play areas and gender in Section 2.4.3, page 18, Chapter 2.

### Reflect

Reflect on how your classroom is arranged.

- ◁ Does the set-up invite all the learners to participate?
  - ◁ If it does not, what arrangement would encourage both boys and girls to participate?
- 

### Check it out

Read about seating arrangements in Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**

**Picture 7**

Look at Picture 7 in Chapter 5. Discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of the seating arrangement in relation to gender responsiveness.

---

*Possible answer*  
The group is mixed and everyone can see the teacher, even when the teacher sits at the learners' eye level. This set-up, all together in a central area, is quite engaging and makes it easy to involve all learners. This could be great for storytelling. However, this seating arrangement is less suited for peer interaction as the children face the teacher rather than one another.

**Check it out**

For information on seating arrangements see Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.

**Picture 8**

Look at picture 8 in Chapter 5. Discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of the seating arrangement in relation to gender responsiveness.

---

*Possible answer*  
Everyone can see the teacher, even when the teacher sits at the learners' eye level. This set-up, sitting in a semi-circle in a central area, is quite engaging and allows you to involve all learners. It also stimulates peer interaction as the children can see one another well. However, in this case, the group is not mixed and all the girls sit toward the back, which may increase their shyness and reduce their involvement.

**Check it out**

For information on seating arrangements see Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.

**Picture 9**

Look at picture 9 in Chapter 5. Discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of the seating arrangement in relation to gender responsiveness.

---

*Possible answer*  
This seating arrangement is quite nice – girls and boys are mixed and everyone can see the teacher. The learners' involvement could be further increased if the teacher walks around. The arrangement is not suited to whole-class peer interaction as the children of different groups wouldn't see each other well. However, this set-up could work very well for groupwork, group peer interaction and activities on tables.

**Check it out**

You will find information on seating arrangements in Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.

**Picture 10**

Look at picture 10 in Chapter 5. Discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of the seating arrangement in relation to gender responsiveness.

---

*Possible answer*  
This seating arrangement separates boys and girls almost entirely, with the girls being at the back, which would disadvantage them. Learners' involvement could be increased if the teacher walks around. The arrangement is not suited to whole-class peer interaction as the children of different groups wouldn't see each other well. However, if the girls and boys sit mixed, this set-up could work very well for groupwork, group peer interaction and activities on tables.

**Check it out**

Read about seating arrangements in Section 2.4.1, page 14, Chapter 2.

Do you agree that boys and girls have the same need to be physically active?

How does this affect your classroom activity planning?

**Check it out**

Find information on indoor and outdoor learning through play in Section 2.4.2, page 16, Chapter 2.

List two or more activities played only or mostly by boys.

- ◁ Can both sexes do these activities?
- ◁ What can you do to make these activities more attractive to girls and to make sure all learners engage in a wide range of activities?

**Check it out**

For information on engaging children in a wide range of activities see Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



List two or more activities played only or mostly by girls.

- ◁ Can both sexes do these activities?
- ◁ What can you do to make these activities more attractive to boys and to make sure all learners engage in a wide range of activities?

---

### **Check it out**

For information on engaging children in a wide range of activities see Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.

*During outside play, you notice one group of learners takes up all the play space and forces other learners away.*

What do you do?

---

### **Check it out**

Find information in Section 2.4.2 (Indoor and outdoor learning through play), page 16, Chapter 2.

Think of how the children in your class engage in pretend play.

- ◁ Do you think the stories and roles of boys and girls during pretend play are different?
- ◁ How do they differ?
- ◁ How can you tackle the gender stereotypes of the roles?

---

### **Check it out**

You will find information on pretend play in a separate box in Section 2.4.2 (Indoor and outdoor learning through play), page 18, Chapter 2.

Name two approaches you can use to ensure your learners engage with most of the materials you have in your class to develop a range of skills.

---

### **Check it out**

For hints, tips and approaches on engaging children in a wide range of activities, independent of their sex, see Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.

Do you think that where you place materials in the classroom matters?

Give an example of how the placing of play materials influences whether girls or boys play with them in your classroom.

---

Reorganising play materials can inspire new games and encourage learners to mingle. For example, the shop play area could sometimes be placed near the construction materials and then 'sell' cardboard hardware tools to attract different learners.

**Possible answer**

---

### **Check it out**

Find information on encouraging learners to use different materials in Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.

What can you occasionally do to introduce learners to different materials from those they normally choose?

- 
- ▷ You could do the following once in a while:
    - ▷ Plan a whole class activity with these materials.
    - ▷ Have the learners rotate between activities rather than choose.
    - ▷ Organise boys-only or girls-only time with some materials.

**Possible answer**

---

### **Check it out**

Find additional information on encouraging learners to engage with different materials in Section 2.4.3 (Independent learning using play areas), page 18, Chapter 2.



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**



**Environment**

## Materials

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own  
Materials question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the  
next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own  
Materials question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the  
next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own  
Materials question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the  
next card on the pile.

If you have materials that portray  
stereotypes of men and women, what can  
you do to use them in a gender-sensitive  
manner?

\_\_\_\_\_

By questioning or challenging the  
stereotypes. For example, by asking  
whether a man can take on the role of the  
woman in the picture.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Possible answer**

#### **Check it out**

Read about play and other learning  
materials in Section 2.5, page 20,  
Chapter 2.

#### **Picture 11**

Look at Picture 11 in Chapter 5.

- ◁ If you found this picture in a story book,  
would you evaluate it as being gender  
sensitive?
- ◁ Discuss the reasons for your evaluation.

\_\_\_\_\_

Male and female characters should appear in  
teaching and learning materials with almost  
equal frequency and they should be carrying  
out similar activities, as is the case in  
this image.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Possible answer**

#### **Check it out**

Find information on pictures and stories in  
Section 2.5.2, page 21, Chapter 2.

#### **Picture 12**

Look at picture 12 in Chapter 5.

- ◁ If you found this picture in a story book,  
would you evaluate it as being gender  
sensitive?
- ◁ Discuss the reasons for your evaluation.

\_\_\_\_\_

Male and female characters should appear in  
teaching and learning materials with almost  
equal frequency and they should be carrying out  
similar activities, as is the case in this image.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Possible answer**

#### **Check it out**

Read about pictures and stories in Section 2.5.2,  
page 21, Chapter 2.



**Materials**



**Materials**



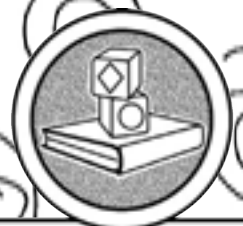
**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**

Choose a story book that is popular in your class. Look at the pictures and the story.

Discuss what is or is not gender sensitive in this book.

### Check it out

Find information on pictures and stories in Section 2.5.2, page 21, Chapter 2.

### Picture 13

Identify the gender stereotypes in Picture 13 in Chapter 5. If you came across these stereotypes while reading a story in your class, how would you make it more gender responsive?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Possible answer*

You can challenge the stereotypes in the picture.

- ▷ What is the woman/man doing?
- ▷ What are the boys/girls doing?
- ▷ Can boys also wash clothes? Who helps by doing that?
- ▷ Can girls play football? Which girls in class like that?
- ▷ Whose mother reads the newspaper? Whose father sometimes sweeps?

If answers to these questions remain stereotypical, give examples from your personal life or the local environment.

### Check it out

Find information on pictures and stories in Section 2.5.2, page 21, Chapter 2.

*In some countries, more than half the illustrations in textbooks depicted only males, while only 6% showed just females.*

*In the mathematics books used in primary schools, men dominated activities related to commercial, occupational and marketing situations.*

Global Educational Monitoring Report,  
08 March 2016

Do gender biases in textbooks influence girls' ambitions? How?

### Check it out

There is information on gender-insensitive materials in Section 2.5.2 (Pictures and stories), page 21, Chapter 2.

### Review

Take any book from your classroom and identify all pictures that portray gender stereotypes.

### Check it out

You will find information on pictures and stories in Section 2.5.2, page 21, Chapter 2.

How gender sensitive are the storybooks and images you use in your class?

If they are not, how can you handle these materials to avoid stereotyping?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Possible answer*

When using materials that are not gender sensitive, you can question or challenge the stereotypes that are depicted. For example, you can ask learners whether a man can take on the role of the woman in the picture.

### Check it out

For information on pictures and stories, see Section 2.5.2, page 21, Chapter 2.

*Children's storybooks reflect society. We as teachers have to make sure that children are aware of the stereotypes in storybooks and talk with them about male and female stereotypes.*

What do you think about this statement? Do you agree or disagree with it? Explain why.

\_\_\_\_\_

*Possible answer*

By challenging stereotypes children learn that, while there is nothing wrong with taking up a more stereotypical role, they can also take on a different role if they want to and if they feel it suits them. This sets the tone for equal opportunities.

### Check it out

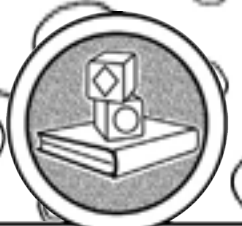
Read about pictures and stories in Section 2.5.2 on page 21, Chapter 2.



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**

Thandi says she wants to be a doctor when she grows up. Tendai says that Thandi won't have time for that because she will have to look after her children.

How would you react if this conversation happened in your class?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- ▷ Tendai's ideas should be questioned and challenged! You could ask him why he thinks that and propose that you find out together if only women should look after children.
- ▷ Ask the opinions of other children in class.
- ▷ Point out that you are a woman with children) are working and that your children are looked after by someone else when you are teaching.
- ▷ If possible, give an example of a father in your community who is very involved in looking after his children.
- Children could also be asked if they have seen female doctors and what their experience was.

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

Read about learner-learner interactions in Section 2.6.2, page 27, Chapter 2.

What kind of activities could you use to discuss gender in your class? List two activities.

**Check it out**

You can find activities and ideas for activities with learners in Chapter 4. They will help you to discuss gender with your learners.

Do you know people in your community who have taken on a non-stereotypical role in society?

**Examples**

- A father who takes care of the baby
- A female tractor driver

How would you talk about these people with your class?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- ▷ Take a picture or pictures of them and show it to your class.
- ▷ Invite them to come and visit the class.
- ▷ Plan a field trip to see them at work.
- It may be fun to talk about the professions of these people and not mention their sex until the learners meet them or until you present the picture(s).

**Possible answers**

**Check it out**

There are hints and tips for challenging stereotypes throughout Chapter 2.

**Reflect**

Reflect on the toys that parents give boys and girls.

- ▷ Do these reinforce stereotypes?
- ▷ Give two examples of toys that parents provide for boys and two examples of toys they give girls.

**Check it out**

You will find information on play and other learning materials in Section 2.5, page 20, Chapter 2.

**Picture 14**

Look at the poster in Picture 14, Chapter 5. Discuss how this poster could be improved to be more gender responsive.

\_\_\_\_\_

The chart could be more gender responsive if, for example, there were also female leaders depicted (a male chief and a female chief, a female magistrate, and so on). It would be more balanced if there was a young boy bowing to an elderly lady as well as the young girl bowing to an elderly man.

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

You will find information on pictures and stories in Section 2.5.2, page 21, Chapter 2.

**Review**

Choose one teaching material to review (a textbook, a puzzle, a poster, etc.).

Assign this material a grade for gender sensitivity:

- 1 = Free of gender biases
- 2 = Only a few gender biases
- 3 = An average number of gender biases
- 4 = Quite a lot of gender biases
- 5 = Extremely gender biased

Ask your colleagues to grade the material too. Do they agree with your grading?

**Check it out**

Read about pictures and stories in Section 2.5.2 on page 21, Chapter 2.



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



Roughly sketch a picture of learners playing on the school playground.

- ◁ Look at the picture and discuss:
  - What are the girls and boys doing?
  - If the girls are not doing what the boys are doing, why are they not?
- ◁ Now draw the playground, keeping gender-responsive concepts in mind.

---

**Check it out**

For information on indoor and outdoor learning through play, see Section 2.4.2, page 16, Chapter 2.

What kinds of gender-sensitive materials would you like in your classroom? List three and explain why you would like to have them.

---

**Check it out**

You will find information on play and other learning materials in Section 2.5, page 20, Chapter 2.

**Picture 15**

Discuss the cartoon strip (Picture 15) in Chapter 5.

- ◁ Do you let all your learners play with a variety of materials?
- ◁ Why is this important for gender?

---

Boys and girls both benefit from experimenting and playing with a wide range of materials. Gender should not limit the experiences they have in school.

**Possible answer**

---

**Check it out**

Read about play and other learning materials in Section 2.5, page 20, Chapter 2.

Do you provide the same books for all your children or do you give girls specific books and boys other books? Explain why.

---

**Check it out**

You will find information on play and other learning materials in Section 2.5, page 20, Chapter 2.

List two gender-insensitive materials you have in your classroom.

Now brainstorm ideas for using these materials in a gender-responsive manner or for how you could change the materials to make them more gender responsive.

---

**Check it out**

You will find information on play and other learning materials in Section 2.5, page 20, Chapter 2.

**Reflect**

- ◁ Do you think images reinforce stereotypes?
- ◁ Why do you or do you not think so?
- ◁ What can you do about it?

---

Images can reinforce stereotypes. Scan the pictures in your books for stereotypes and challenge the stereotypes with your learners.

**Possible answers**

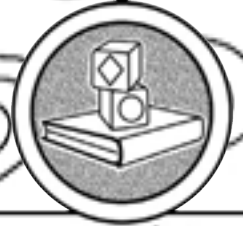
---

**Check it out**

For information on pictures and stories see Section 2.5.2, page 21, Chapter 2.



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**



**Materials**

## Interaction

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Interaction question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Interaction question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own Interaction question.

#### **Not feeling inspired?**

Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

Think of a situation where you, as a teacher, behave differently towards girls and boys.

If you never treat girls and boys differently, how do you manage to avoid doing so?

There should be no difference in how you address learners, which tasks you assign them, which activities and materials you suggest to a boy or to a girl, how you learners are seated, and so on.

#### **Possible answer**

#### **Check it out**

You will find hints on tips on creating equal opportunities for all learners throughout Chapter 2.

Compliments are best given for an accomplishment and phrased specifically to the child rather than to their gender.

How would you praise a boy or girl without referring to their gender?

'Tendai, you kick the ball very skilfully.'  
'Thanki, you have a wonderful eye for detail in this drawing.'

#### **Possible answers**

#### **Check it out**

Read more about teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.

#### **Reflect**

- ◁ Which words are commonly used to praise girls and boys in your community or in your class? How are they different for girls and for boys?
- ◁ What could the impact of this language be on boys and on girls? (How do you think using these terms affects boys and girls?)

#### **Check it out**

You will find information on teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**

**Picture 16: Classroom observation**

Read the description of Arnold's class observation in Chapter 5.

What could Arnold have done to prevent this situation?

- Possible answers**
- ▷ Arnold could have organised a 'girls-only' time in the construction play area.
  - ▷ He could have placed materials that were appealing to girls together with the blocks.
  - ▷ He could have assigned the learners a task that intrigues both girls and boys (for example, asking learners to use the blocks to build a house for themselves).

**Check it out**

Find information on independent learning using play areas in Section 2.4.3, page 18, Chapter 2.

*If you find a boy who is playing in the pretend play area, pretending to cook, you should stop him and tell him to go and play in another play area.*

- ▷ Do you agree with this advice?
- ▷ Why do you or do you not agree?

*If you stop this boy and tell him to play in a different play area, he is likely to think that tasks like cooking are not for boys or men.*

**Possible answer**

**Check it out**

Read about how to encourage learners who cross gender barriers in Section 2.6.2 (Learner-learner interactions), page 27, Chapter 2.

- ▷ Are there ways in which children use non-verbal communication with one another?
- ▷ What can you do in class to ensure non-verbal communication is gender sensitive? Give one example.

*You can set a good example by not discriminating between boys and girls in your body language or your treatment.*

**Possible answer to the second question**

**Check it out**

Read about interactions and language use in Section 2.6, page 24, Chapter 2.

- ▷ Give an example of non-verbal communication between teachers and children.
- ▷ What is the impact of using different non-verbal communication for girls and for boys?

**Check it out**

You can find information on teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.

Sing a traditional song or recite a proverb that praises men and undermines women.

Do you feel traditional customs influence the way you treat girls and boys in the classroom? Discuss this with your colleagues.

**Check it out**

For information on

- ▷ Teacher-learner interactions, go to Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.
- ▷ Gender biases, go to Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.

Share a proverb or a song that praises masculinity and undermines femininity.

Could traditional customs influence the way girls and boys treat one another in class? Explain your answer.

**Check it out**

Find information on

- ▷ Learner-learner interactions in Section 2.6.2 on page 27, Chapter 2.
- ▷ Gender biases in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**

Think about your opinions of femininity and masculinity.

Do these ideas influence how you, as a teacher, interact with your learners? (Would you, for instance, tell a girl not to climb trees because it is not ladylike?)

### Check it out

You will find information on

- ◁ Addressing gender biases in Section 2.1.2, page 10, Chapter 2.
- ◁ Teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.

- ◁ Do you think intense teasing between boys and girls in the classroom is good?
- ◁ How can you, as a teacher, address this?

*Possible answer*  
You can introduce a rule like 'we are all friends' to discourage teasing.

### Check it out

For information on responses to teasing look at

- ◁ Teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.
- ◁ Learner-learner interactions in Section 2.6.2, page 27, Chapter 2.

### Role-play

Two colleagues pretend to be male learners in your class. You are their teacher.

*One of the boys is cooking in the pretend area and the other boy starts laughing at him: 'Cooking is for girls! Are you a girl?'*

- ◁ Role-play how you, as the teacher, respond.
- ◁ Discuss the teacher reaction in the role-play. What was good and what could have been done better?

### Check it out

Go to Section 2.6, page 24, Chapter 2, for information on interactions and language use. Look at:

- ◁ Teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.
- ◁ Learner-learner interactions in Section 2.6.2, page 27, Chapter 2.

### Role-play

You are the teacher and your colleagues are some of your learners.

*Today, you are introducing a new rule in your class: 'We are all friends.' This rule is needed because sometimes boys don't want to sit next to a girl in the circle. This is hurtful to the girl.*

- ◁ Role-play how you introduce this rule.
- ◁ Discuss what went well and what could have been done better.

### Check it out

Read about interactions and language use in Section 2.6.

Look at:

- ◁ Teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.
- ◁ Learner-learner interactions in Section 2.6.2, page 27, Chapter 2.

### Role-play

*On the playground you hear a colleague say, 'Boys don't cry,' to a boy who fell and has been hurt. You have just attended the training on gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP).*

Act out a conversation with your colleague.

What advice do you give him about the language you use with the learners?

### Check it out

Find information on teacher-teacher interactions in Section 2.6.3, page 29, Chapter 2.

Does your culture allow boys to show the same emotion as girls? Do you know that not being able to talk about emotions can lead to aggression at a later stage?

Name one emotion that boys are not allowed to express in your culture.

### Check it out

Read how to help learners express and manage emotions in Section 2.8.5, page 37, Chapter 2.



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



### Role-play

Act out a conversation with a colleague. You are the teacher and your colleague is the father of a boy in your class.

*In your class, you hear Tendai say, 'Girls can't count,' so you immediately ask Tendai why he is saying this. Tendai answers that his father has told him, 'Boys are better at sums than girls.'*

You then decide to have a talk with the father. Act out how you discuss this with Tendai's father.

Mention how this attitude can negatively impact girls' confidence in doing sums.

### Check it out

For information on teacher-parent interactions, see Section 2.6.4, page 30, Chapter 2.

Think of two arguments you would use in a parent-teacher meeting with all parents on the importance of promoting positive gender relations among boys and girls.

**Possible answers**

- ▷ Positive gender relations can include self-confidence of all learners, girls
- ▷ Positive gender relations promote the reduce incidents of gender-based discrimination and violence.

### Check it out

Read about teacher-parent interactions in Section 2.6.4, page 30, Chapter 2.

Studies have shown that boys and girls, even at preschool age, prefer to mix with their own sex. How can you encourage interaction between learners, especially learners of the opposite sex?

**Possible answers**

- ▷ Create mixed groups.
- ▷ Plan for opportunities for learners to do activities with each other.
- ▷ Encourage mixed games and activities, for example, having boys and girls build a house for the dolls.

### Check it out

Hints and tips for creating equal opportunities and encouraging mixing can be found throughout Chapter 2.

- ◁ Why is it important to involve parents when you want to create equal opportunities for the learners of your class?
- ◁ How can parents support gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP)?

**Possible answers**

- ▷ Parents often (unconsciously) pass on their beliefs about gender to their children. Evidence points to huge economic gains when girls are educated. Discuss with parents the importance of not differentiating between girls and boys (neither in the toys nor in the play activities offered). It is also important to have the same expectations and chores for boys and girls. Parents can be stimulated to use some of the approaches described in the manual at home.

### Check it out

Read about teacher-parent interactions in Section 2.6.4, page 30, Chapter 2.

Think of two compliments for learners in your class. Make sure to word these compliments in a gender-responsive manner.

**Possible answers**

- ▷ Use their names instead of saying 'good boy' or 'good girl', for example, 'good Tendai' and 'good Thandi'.
- ▷ Use the same words for all learners.
- ▷ Use the same tone for all learners.

### Check it out

Read about teacher-learner interactions in Section 2.6.1, page 24, Chapter 2.

Think of at least one way to ensure no learner is forgotten, including the shyer ones during activities.

Share any system that allows you to track who has participated in an activity or shared their ideas.

### Examples

- ◁ Keep a list of those who have already participated.
- ◁ Tick off names on a list to keep track of those who have and have not participated.

### Check it out

You will find information in Section 2.6 (Interactions and language use), Chapter 2, more specifically in 2.6.1 (Teacher-learner interactions), page 24.



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**



**Interaction**

## School Leadership

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own School Leadership question.

**Not feeling inspired?**  
Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

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**Not feeling inspired?**  
Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

### **Get creative!**

Think up your own School Leadership question.

**Not feeling inspired?**  
Discard this card and take the next card on the pile.

Building trust is central in school leadership and in creating a gender-responsive school environment. Explain why trust is so important.

---

*Possible answer*  
Teachers need a safe and supportive environment to try out new gender-responsive models through trial and error. Giving teachers opportunities to take on responsibility and to try something different, even if it does not work, enhances gender-responsive teaching and learning in schools.

#### **Check it out**

Read about the dimensions of school leadership in Section 3.1, page 46, Chapter 3.

*Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely day dreaming, but vision with action can change the world.*

Nelson Mandela  
South African statesman and freedom fighter

How can you relate this quote with schools developing a gender-responsive vision?

---

*Possible answer*  
A gender-responsive vision should be the guiding principle in planning for action; that is, in planning for policies or monitoring. Having a vision without implementing actions or monitoring will not lead to change.

#### **Check it out**

For information on defining a gender-responsive vision and values, and setting direction, see Section 3.2, page 46, Chapter 3.

Who would you consult when making decisions about gender planning and budgeting in your school?

Is it important for you to consult others?

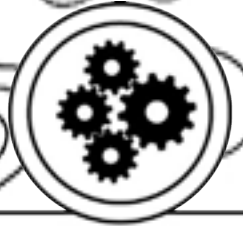
#### **Check it out**

You will find information on

- ▷ Planning and budgeting in Section 3.2.2, page 47, Chapter 3.
- ▷ Using distributed leadership to strengthen gender responsiveness in Section 3.3, page 48, Chapter 3.



**School Leadership**



**School Leadership**



**School Leadership**



**School Leadership**



**School Leadership**



**School Leadership**

Is it necessary to involve parents and the community in making the school more gender sensitive? Discuss how you can involve parents and the community in shaping gender-responsive values and vision for your school.

**Check it out**

Read about

- ▷ Defining a gender-responsive vision and values, and setting direction, in Section 3.2, page 46, Chapter 3.
- ▷ Using distributed leadership to strengthen gender responsiveness in Section 3.3, page 48, Chapter 3.
- ▷ Building gender-responsive relationships within and outside of the school community in Section 3.7, page 54, Chapter 3.

Propose two initiatives you would undertake as a school leader to ensure your school plan and budget are more gender responsive.

**Possible answer**  
 Review the budget to assess whether part is allocated to address the needs of both boys and girls. Review the school plan with learners (boys and girls) to see if they feel it reflects their needs

**Check it out**

For information on gender-responsive budgeting and planning, go to Section 3.2.2, page 47, Chapter 3.

What two big changes you make to your school to make it gender responsive?

Why would you choose these two changes?

- Tip**  
 Changes can relate to
- ▷ vision and values
  - ▷ planning and monitoring
  - ▷ structure of the organisation
  - ▷ enhancing teaching and learning and teacher quality
  - ▷ enriching the curriculum
  - ▷ improving conditions
  - ▷ the relationships inside and outside the school
  - ▷ community
  - ▷ child safety and protection

**Check it out**

Throughout Chapter 3 there are suggestions on how to make schools more gender responsive.

Why is gender-sensitive pedagogy important even in early education?

**Possible answer**  
 Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care and decent work holds benefits for societies and humanity at large. It is in early childhood that learners develop self-awareness and acquire basic values and attitudes. During this time, stereotypes become set and are likely to have a long-lasting impact on how learners perceive their own potential and that of others.

**Check it out**

Find more information on the importance of gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) in Section 2.1, page 9, Chapter 2.

To make the school more gender responsive, brainstorm roles and responsibilities that could be given to:

- ▷ senior teachers, teachers and support staff
- ▷ parents and learners
- ▷ any others you may think of

**Check it out**

Information on restructuring your school to strengthen gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) can be found in Section 3.3, page 48, Chapter 3.

Does gender responsiveness play a role in your school when it comes to appointments of staff? Even if your influence on staff selection is limited, which questions can you ask yourself to reflect on the gender responsiveness of your school's human resource management?

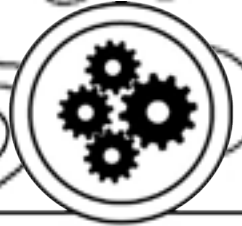
**Possible answers**  
 Is the diversity (gender, age, background, ethnicity, etc.) of our school community reflected in the teaching and support staff? Do both female and male teachers hold positions of responsibility? What can I do to influence staff selection and the allocation of roles?

**Check it out**

You will find information on gender-responsive human resources in Section 3.4.1, page 49, Chapter 3.



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**School Leadership**

How can you, as a school leader, directly help ECE teachers to be more aware of gender stereotypes in early childhood and support the implementation of gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP)?

---

**Check it out**

You can find information on enhancing gender-responsive teaching and learning and strengthening teacher quality in Section 3.4, page 48, Chapter 3.

The curriculum in your school may be predefined and the government may provide your school with some of the teaching and learning materials.

How can you still enrich the existing curriculum to make it more gender responsive?

---

**Check it out**

Read about enriching the curriculum to be more gender responsive in Section 3.5, page 51, Chapter 3.

How can toilets be gender sensitive and age appropriate? Give two examples.

---

- ▷ The youngest learners may be given a step to be comfortable on adult toilet bowls and to reach the water basins.
- ▷ In pit latrines for younger learners, the holes should be smaller to avoid accidental falls.
- ▷ Distance to the ablution facilities is a key factor in ensuring that young learners access the facilities safely and independently.
- ▷ There may be no need for separate toilets at this age, especially if half doors are in place. If the toilets are separate, the signage should be gender sensitive.

**Possible answers**

**Check it out**

Read about improving conditions for gender-responsive teaching and learning in Section 3.6, Chapter 3, especially the part on infrastructure in Section 3.6.1, page 52.

How can you, as a school leader, contribute to ensuring equal, healthy nutrition for the learners in your school?

---

- ▷ School feeding programs should provide nutritious meals to all learners, without bias. For example, girls should be given the same portions as boys.
- ▷ School leaders can encourage teachers to engage parents on healthy food choices.

**Possible answers**

**Check it out**

You can find information on improving conditions for gender-responsive teaching and learning in Section 3.6, Chapter 3, especially the part on nutrition in Section 3.6.2, page 54.

**Picture 17**

You are a school leader who has been observing teacher-learner interaction in the class of one of your teachers. Read 'your' class observation findings in picture 17, Chapter 5.

**Role-play**

- ▷ Role-play your debriefing with the teacher. Compliment his or her efforts and think together about the next step for this teacher in applying gender-responsive pedagogy.
- ▷ Discuss with each other how the talk went. Focus on what you liked and what you would perhaps do differently.

**Check it out**

Find out how to enhance teacher quality in Section 3.4, Chapter 3, especially Section 3.4.2 on teacher professional development, page 49.

**Picture 18**

You are a school leader who has been observing learning activities in the class of one of your teachers. Read 'your' class observation findings in picture 18, Chapter 5.

**Role-play**

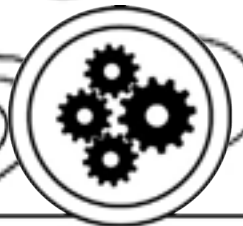
- Role-play your debriefing with the teacher. Compliment his or her efforts and think together about the next step for this teacher in applying gender-responsive pedagogy.
- 2. Discuss with each other how the talk went. Focus on what you liked and what you would perhaps do differently.

**Check it out**

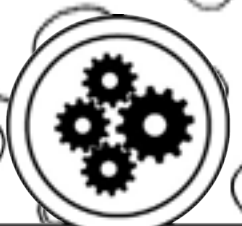
Find out how to enhance teacher quality in Section 3.4, Chapter 3, with special attention to teacher professional development in Section 3.4.2, page 49.



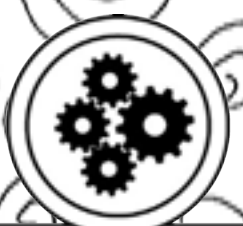
**School Leadership**



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**School Leadership**



As a school leader, identify some common gender stereotypes in your school community or in the wider community.

Think about the effects these stereotypes have and brainstorm how you can sensitise the community about creating equal opportunities for all by being gender responsive.

---

**Check it out**

For information on building gender-responsive relationships within and outside of the school community, see Section 3.7, page 54, Chapter 3.

How can you, as a school leader, contribute to ensuring there is no gender-based corporal punishment in your school?

---

*Possible answer*  
You can strengthen the skills of your staff in classroom management.

**Check it out**

You will find information on corporal punishment in Section 3.8.1, page 55, Chapter 3.

Think about an instance of gender-based violence that happened in your school or in a school you know. Recount what happened and how people responded.

Discuss:

- ▷ What could have been done to prevent it?
- ▷ What could have been done to deal with it?
- ▷ What can be done to prevent this from happening again?

---

**Check it out**

You will find information on child safety and protection, more specifically on school-related gender-based violence in Section 3.8.2, page 55, Chapter 3.

Name three things to consider when reviewing the gender responsiveness of play and other learning materials in a classroom.

---

*Possible answers*

- ▷ Do the pictures on the walls (or in books) show equal numbers of males and females?
- ▷ Are they stereotypical in any way? Do some pictures challenge stereotypes?
- ▷ Do girls and boys in the pictures have equal access to play and other learning materials?

**Check it out**

Read about enhancing teaching quality by observing the use of learning materials in Section 3.4.2 (Teacher professional development), page 50, Chapter 3.

Roughly sketch an outside play area that is gender sensitive and age appropriate. (You can draw on a blackboard, in the soil or on paper.)

Look at the picture and discuss some of the elements that make it gender sensitive and age appropriate.

---

**Check it out**

For information on improving conditions for gender-responsive teaching and learning, more specifically gender-responsive school infrastructure, see Section 3.6.1, page 52, Chapter 3.

What kind of referral systems for victims of violence should be in place in your school?

Make sure to link the system within your school to the government structures that are in place at higher levels.

---

**Check it out**

Read about child safety and protection in Section 3.8, Chapter 3, and about school-related gender-based violence in particular in Section 3.8.2, page 55.




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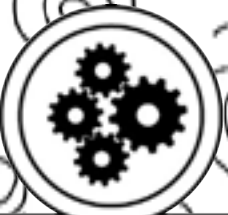
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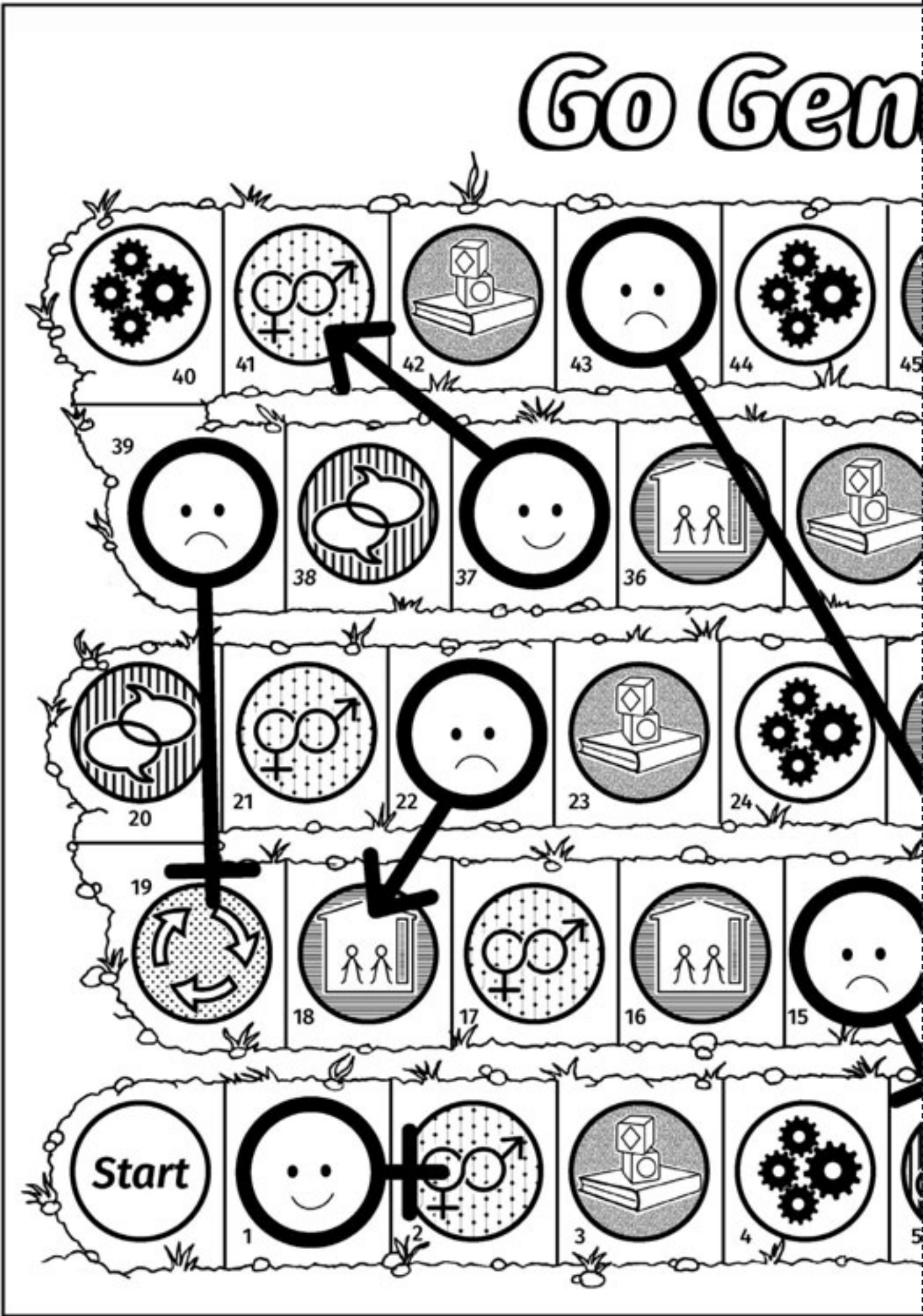
**School Leadership**



#### **5.3.4. *Go Gender Go game board***

Copy or cut out the sheets on the next two pages and glue them together along the join to make the game board.

# Go Gen



Cut this side to the edge of the page. Apply glue to the shaded area and glue the two halves together.

# der Go

Finish

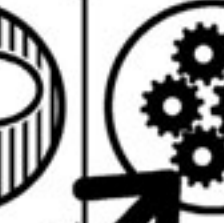
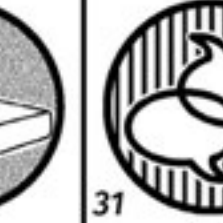
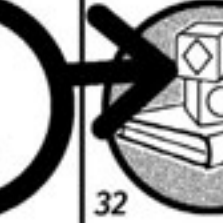
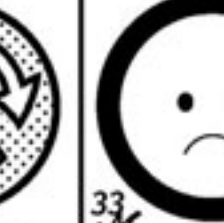


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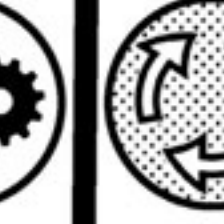
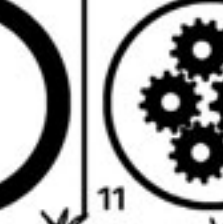
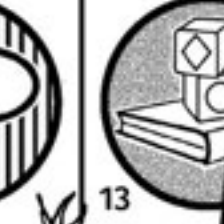
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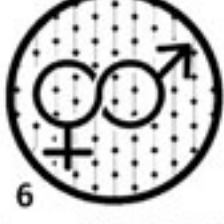
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African education systems today are being challenged to extend opportunities for quality education and training to all learners. Gender-responsive pedagogy responds to the learning needs of all learners in helping them reach their full potential.

**This toolkit targets early childhood education teachers and all other practitioners who deal with younger children. It is a practical guide that can be adapted to any context and the related needs as well as a source of ideas and resources that individual teachers and school leaders can put to immediate use in their classrooms and schools. The toolkit is also a useful resource for researchers, school-parent committees and governing bodies, civil society organisations, community leaders and education policy makers.**

#### Contributors



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