FACT SHEET

INCLUSIVE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

Books are an incredible tool. It's through books and stories that children are exposed to new social concepts – diversity, kindness, acceptance and inclusion. Diverse stories with diverse characters are what helps support children's understanding that there's no one single way to be.

People come in different shapes and sizes, different genders, different abilities. That all sorts of people can perform all sorts of roles and occupations, and that there's no one way to be a family.

Reading sparks curiosity and stimulates imagination. The more diverse characters and stories children are exposed to in the books that they have access to the more opportunities they are given to be curious and imagine the ways they might be able to exist in the world, and the ways that other people can exist. There are some wonderful books out there that can broaden children's worldview, or allow children to see themselves reflected in what they read.

OVERHEARD IN THE LIBRARY

If you're hearing comments from parents or caregivers in the library, seize the opportunity to gently educate!

"Put that book back - it's not for you"
"Oh, actually we recommend that book for his age group - it has some great messages about being yourself, and finding out what you enjoy!"

"We love seeing kids make their own choices about books – and if it doesn't turn out to be the right book for you, you can always return it and grab something else instead"

> *Books open doors to new ideas, teaching children that there's no one single way to be.*

HAVE A CHAT

If you're sharing a book during storytime, particularly with older children, and you're coming across outdated gender stereotypes or relationship dynamics, use the book as an opportunity for a discussion. We will never encourage banning a book, but we do encourage you to have a **CHAT:**

C **Check in**
Check in with the children about the story. What just happened? How do they feel about it? You could guide a discussion with questions like, "do you think it was fair that the girl had to stay behind while the boy went on an adventure?" "Was it ok when the boy was told to stop crying?" "What do we say to our friends when they're upset?"

H **Have a discussion straight away,** while the story is fresh in their minds

A **Approach with curiosity**
Be curious rather than critical: "I noticed that the princess didn't really get to do anything in the story. What do you think about that? I wonder how she felt? How might the story have been different if she had joined in the adventure?"

T **Try a different book next!**
Be intentional in your choice - make the next book you pick up and read together something that contains more positive messages and reinforces your service's values around gender equality, respect and individuality.