

# Lantern program Workshops for parents

Promoting egalitarian  
relationships to young  
children



## Lantern program - Workshops for parents

# Promoting egalitarian relationships to young children



### About

This document was designed to help you conduct workshops with the parents who come to your location. This will help you strengthen their abilities in order to create a community that protects young children against sexual violence.

The Lantern program offers a number of workshops you can lead with parents:

- Workshops on everyday sex education
- Workshops on promoting egalitarian relationships to young children

In this document, we present workshops on promoting egalitarian relationships to young children.

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## Workshops on promoting egalitarian relationships to young children

Here are two structured workshops about gender stereotypes, diversity and identifying ways to promote egalitarian relationships to young children.

**Workshop 1:** *Do I see my child the same way whether I have a girl or a boy?*

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**Workshop 2:** *Everyday actions to foster egalitarian relationships*

### Structure



## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Structured workshops

# 1

***Do I see my child the same way whether I have a girl or a boy?***

### **SECRET** topics addressed in this workshop:

**S** peaking about sexuality while telling children about...

**E** galitarian relationships between girls and boys

**E** motions, **T** houghts and self-esteem

### Steps

# 1

#### Presenting the photos

- Present the photos of children shown on sheets 1.1A and 1.1B.
- Ask parents to write down three adjectives they would use for each photo from the following list: big, small, sturdy, dainty, strong, cute, solid, fragile, energetic, calm, beautiful, gentle, mischievous, misbehaving, kind.

# 2

#### Full group

- Ask parents to raise their hands and name what adjectives they attributed to the children with girl names, and then do the same with the boys.
- Then announce that in fact it's the reverse: the photos with girl names are of boys, and the photos with boy names are of girls.
- Ask the following questions: Would you have used the same adjectives? Do you think that your belief that you were referring to a girl or to a boy influenced your choice of words?

# 3

#### Explanation

- Continue by presenting a summary of the following content to parents.

### Workshop

### structure

#### Length:

40 minutes

#### Objective:

*This workshop educates parents about the gender-related socialization process and helps them understand the possibility that some of their parenting choices may be gendered (meaning they're different depending on whether they're aimed at a girl or a boy), even involuntarily.*

#### Material:

- Whiteboard or flipchart
- Markers
- Sheets 1.1A and 1.1B

## Takeaway

Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas we have about people based on their gender. For example, I may think that because my daughter is a girl, she is fragile or timid, or must like dance; or because my son is a boy, he's turbulent, his anger is normal, and I should teach him not to cry.

In society, many sources—such as advertising, television, toys and clothes—convey gender stereotypes, including these kinds of messages. By means of repetition, these preconceived ideas become the norms of what we expect of girls and boys, and limit their options and choices, for instance when it comes to choosing activities, sports or a profession. This leads to discrimination, because it has impacts on career choice, self-esteem, salary and more. It also places limitations on people's interests and aptitudes. In reality, regardless of whether someone is a girl or a boy, we can like all kinds of things.

When we talk about equality between the sexes for young children, it essentially means that young children should be treated, stimulated and strengthened in the same way, without making any sex-based or gender-based distinctions. This seems simple at first, and many people believe they should treat girls and boys the same way, but in practice, young children, even before birth, are treated differently based on their sex and conditioned to conform to gender roles. For example, parents decorate their child's bedroom in blue or pink, buy them clo-

thes based on their sex, and may even imagine the future activities they might engage in together based on whether they're a girl or a boy. When the baby is born, they describe them differently based on whether they're a girl or a boy, hold them differently and even interpret their crying differently based on sex.

It's important to start treating children in an egalitarian way in early childhood, because young children learn very quickly. Children's brains are like sponges, and starting at age 2 or 3, we can already see the presence of gender stereotypes among children. For example, children may laugh at a child who doesn't behave according to gender-based expectations; a group of children may reject a child who wants to join in but who is not of the same sex; children say things such as "boys don't cry," "girls don't run as fast as boys," and so on.

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Structured workshops

### Steps

4

#### Key message

- Promoting egalitarian relationships from the youngest possible age helps children develop to their full potential. In fact, promoting egalitarian relationships means limiting children's exposure to gender stereotypes and offering them a diverse range of games and activities that work against stereotypes and reductive understandings of girls and boys.

5

#### Conclusion or video

- As a conclusion, show parents the short video about promoting egalitarian relationships.
- Close the workshop by saying that promoting egalitarian relationships has a range of positive impacts. A child who grows up in an egalitarian environment...
  - Knows that girls and boys can work together in every way, which leads them to develop healthy relationships and, later, romantic relationships that are respectful and free of violence.
  - Knows there are thousands of different ways to be and to express their personality, which helps them approach others with openness and tolerance regardless of sex.
  - Will be more likely to choose their activities based on their interests and desires rather than based on stereotyped expectations.
  - Will acquire a diverse range of skills: a girl who is considered equal to boys will be stronger, more fearless and more independent, while a boy who is considered equal to girls will have stronger social and language skills.

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

### Structured workshops

# 2

## Everyday actions to foster egalitarian relationships

### SECRET topics addressed in this workshop:

- S**peaking about sexuality while telling children about...
- E**galitarian relationships between girls and boys
- C**lues about sexual violence and self-protection skills
- E**motions, **T**houghts and self-esteem

### Steps

# 1

#### Discussion

- Ask parents what, in their opinion, would be the best times to promote egalitarian relationships to their children.
- After the discussion, specify that this needs to happen in everyday life, through multiple actions. Also say that, because young children's brains are like sponges, even at the age of 2 or 3 we can see the presence of gender stereotypes within their actions. Like anything else that's constructed from birth, if we want to change it, we need to start as early as possible. The longer you wait, the harder it will be. It's just like learning a language: the older you get, the harder it is to pick up a second language.

### Workshop

### structure

#### Length:

40 minutes

#### Objective:

*This workshop helps parents better understand how they can promote equality between girls and boys in their everyday lives.*

#### Material:

- Whiteboard or flipchart
- Markers
- Sheets 2.1A, 2.1B, 2.2 and 2.3

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Structured workshops

### Steps

2

#### Association game

- Hand out sheets 2.1A and 2.1B and ask parents to relate each action to its impact. You can decide to hand out only one of the grids, to vary the grids among the parents, or to use both grids for everyone. You can also project the sheets onto a wall or board and conduct the exercise with the full group, asking people to raise their hands.

3

#### Full group

- Using the answer sheet for sheet 2.2, correct parents' answers as needed, and add examples of everyday actions that foster egalitarian relationships using the content provided in sheet 2.3.
- Hand out sheet 2.3 to parents as a checklist they can take home.

4

#### Conclusion

- Gender stereotypes existed before we were born and will live on after we're gone. The messages they convey are reductive. Stereotypes are effective in transmitting the message because they're very often repeated on television, through clothing, in our relationships and more. So, as soon as we can make a difference, it's important to interrupt the chain of repetition as often as possible. The keyword to remember here is **DIVERSITY**.

### *Be careful with free choice!*

Many parents offer their children activities and toys only related to their temperament or their interests of the moment. For example, if my daughter likes a princess film, I'll buy her toys, costumes and accessories, all related to this interest. However, a human being's interests vary over the phases of their lives and based on the experiences they have. Limiting choices prevents your child from developing to their full potential, while varying choices opens doors to a multitude of possibilities. Not only can their interests be passing, but they are heavily conditioned by the positive or negative reinforcement the child gets from the people around them.

With that in mind:

- Don't forget that children want to please, and they have been taught since they were babies what areas of interest are "feminine" and "masculine."
- They will more easily choose what they know and recognize.

As such, it's important to accompany your young child in their choices to encourage them to try a range of activities.

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

### Reading suggestions



#### You as me

**Authors:** May Sansregret and Geneviève Beaupré, 2018

**Topics:** The rights and options available to all children, regardless of their biological sex.

**Teaching strategy:** Illustrated story.



#### Marvin Disappeared

**Authors:** Rhéa Dufresne and Geneviève Després, 2018

**Topic:** Gender stereotypes.

**Teaching strategy:** Illustrated story and discussion ideas.



#### Artsy boys and smelly girls

**Author:** Élise Gravel, 2018

**Topics:** The rights and options available to all children, regardless of their biological sex.

**Teaching strategy:** Illustrated story.

Promoting egalitarian relationships

## Facilitation supports for workshops

### Support sheets

#### 1.1A — Photos of girls



Chloe



Amelia



Elodie

Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Facilitation supports for workshops

Support sheets

**1.1B** — Photos of boys



Logan



Travis



Alexis

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Facilitation supports for workshops

### Support sheets



## 2.1A — Action association grid

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>1</b> I choose children's books that feature both heroines and heroes.   | ● | ● | <b>A</b> My child knows that girls and boys can tackle the same challenges and accomplish great things.                |
| <b>2</b> I emphasize the similarities between girls and boys rather than their differences.                       | ● | ● | <b>B</b> My child discovers new skills, regardless of their sex.   |
| <b>3</b> I encourage and accompany my child in doing activities they're not used to doing.                        | ● | ● | <b>C</b> My child knows that girls and boys alike have great qualities that allow us to work together.                 |
| <b>4</b> I question my child when they state a stereotype, such as "She likes princesses because she's a girl."   | ● | ● | <b>D</b> My child develops their critical thinking and learns to ask questions.  |
| <b>5</b> I make sure that my child's books and games reflect diversity: skin colours, lifestyles, body diversity. | ● | ● | <b>E</b> My child discovers that there are thousands of different ways to be, and sees themselves in different models. |

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Facilitation supports for workshops

### Support sheets



## 2.1B — Action association grid

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>1</b> I suggest activities that help my child develop a diverse range of skills.                             | ● | ● | <b>A</b> My child discovers all the emotions and learns to manage them.                           |
| <b>2</b> I value the women in my life for their skills and the men in my life for their empathy or sensitivity. | ● | ● | <b>B</b> My child discovers new skills, regardless of their sex.                                  |
| <b>3</b> I help my child express their full range of emotions, both positive and negative.                      | ● | ● | <b>C</b> As they build their identity, my child is inspired by these non-stereotyped models.      |
| <b>4</b> I suggest that my child dress in a wide range of colours.  | ● | ● | <b>D</b> My child learns that regardless of their sex, they can like cooking or construction.     |
| <b>5</b> I choose games for my child that don't reproduce stereotypes (at least not too much).                  | ● | ● | <b>E</b> My child learns not to systematically associate pink or blue with one sex in particular. |

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Facilitation supports for workshops

### Support sheets

## 2.2 — Answers for the action association grids

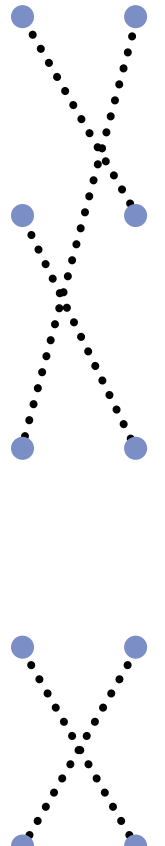
- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>1</b> I choose children's books that feature both heroines and heroes.   |  | <b>A</b> My child knows that girls and boys can tackle the same challenges and accomplish great things.                |
| <b>2</b> I emphasize the similarities between girls and boys rather than their differences.                       |  | <b>B</b> My child discovers new skills, regardless of their sex.   |
| <b>3</b> I encourage and accompany my child in doing activities they're not used to doing.                        |  | <b>C</b> My child knows that girls and boys alike have great qualities that allow us to work together.                 |
| <b>4</b> I question my child when they state a stereotype, such as "She likes princesses because she's a girl."   |  | <b>D</b> My child develops their critical thinking and learns to ask questions.  |
| <b>5</b> I make sure that my child's books and games reflect diversity: skin colours, lifestyles, body diversity. |  | <b>E</b> My child discovers that there are thousands of different ways to be, and sees themselves in different models. |

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Facilitation supports for workshops

### Support sheets

## 2.2 – Answers for the action association grids (continued)

- 
- 1** I suggest activities that help my child develop a diverse range of skills.
- 2** I value the women in my life for their skills and the men in my life for their empathy or sensitivity.
- 3** I help my child express their full range of emotions, both positive and negative.
- 4** I suggest that my child dress in a wide range of colours.
- 5** I choose games for my child that don't reproduce stereotypes (at least not too much).
- A** My child discovers all the emotions and learns to manage them.
- B** My child discovers new skills, regardless of their sex.
- C** As they build their identity, my child is inspired by these non-stereotyped models.
- D** My child learns that regardless of their sex, they can like cooking or construction.
- E** My child learns not to systematically associate pink or blue with one sex in particular.

## Promoting egalitarian relationships

# Facilitation supports for workshops

### Support sheets

## 2.3 — Everyday actions to foster egalitarian relationships

- **Let** children explore all aspects of their personalities by suggesting various activities to them, regardless of sex.
- **Encourage** children to develop their qualities even if they're not typically associated with their sex.
- **Encourage** both boys and girls to recognize their emotions and express them in words.
- **Settle** conflicts fairly and respectfully by asking both boys and girls to make compromises.
- **Ask** both boys and girls to put away their things and support them in the same way as they perform tasks.
- **Avoid** sentences that convey stereotypes, such as: "Are you sweeping the floor just like mommy?" "Big boys don't cry."
- **Encourage** girls and boys to play together. Point out the things they have in common and the fun they have together.
- **Intervene** when children promote stereotypes among themselves, such as "That's a girl movie!"
- **Be** a model by being respectful and maintaining egalitarian relationships with people of the opposite sex.
- **Promote** various family models in your speech, your activities and your materials so that all children can see themselves reflected.
- **Foster** open-mindedness, respect and tolerance among children by celebrating various kinds of differences.

