



EXPLORING THE MODERN FAIRY WORLD TOGETHER WITH YOU

*Guide to reading the book series
"Generation Equality - Fairy Tales on Gender Equality"
for teachers, parents, and educators.*





The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is a global champion for women and girls. UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

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FOREWORD

My dear friends,

You might be a parent, a teacher, or someone working in the sphere of education, especially the education of children aged 0-12 years. In the journey of a child's growth, the magical world of books or fairy tales is always attractive and leaves plenty of powerful memories behind. It is the parents, teachers, and caregivers who are the first bridge connecting children to that fairy world. Therefore, it is essential that we equip ourselves with knowledge about reading with young children and about open, multi-dimensional, humane perceptions of topics that are still considered challenging for children, such as gender equality.

In a study entitled "Gender in 20th Century Children's Books", which was built upon nearly 6,000 children's books published between 1900 and 2000 in the U.S., Janice McCabe, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Florida State University et al. found that males are central characters in 57 percent of children's books published each year. Meanwhile, only 31 percent have female central characters. This study also found that 25 percent of books did not contain female characters, though male characters appeared in up to 100 percent of the books. Even in the few books containing female characters, women represent almost no voice or do not speak up. They have no dreams or aspirations. They just sit there waiting for a prince. This is also the typical pattern of the fairy tales that we still read to children. The stereotypes in common fairy tales depict female characters as beautiful, weak, dependent, and focused on tasks such as cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the family. Meanwhile, male characters are often described as having strong, proactive courageous, and commanding personalities.

The book series **"Generation Equality - Fairy Tales on Gender Equality"** compiled by UN Women features a universe of unique characters, depicting a variety of distinctive perspectives and angles on each person's role in society. The picture book set, called **"Generation Equality - The Modern Fairy Tales"** contains vivid and beautiful illustrations and attractive content on gender equality. The stories are the winners of the contest titled Generation Equality: Vietnamese people create modern fairy tales, organized by UN Women, ChildFund Viet Nam and the Embassy of Ireland in 2019. The contest aimed to eliminate harmful gender stereotypes and gender norms existing in fairy tales that hinder the comprehensive development of children.

Each tale in the book set honestly presents gender stereotypes and actions to be taken in an attempt to change gender stereotypes in society. The goal is to equip young readers with a solid foundation of perceptions. This, in turn, will enable them to confidently create a society of gender equality, free of barriers and social norms that impede women, men, boys, girls and other genders from enjoying and realizing their full potential.

With this Guide, we hope that every parent, teacher, and educator - through reading time at home, reading lessons at school, or reading activities in the community - will continue to inspire, as well as spread the message of humanity and progress of the book series **"Generation Equality - Fairy Tales on Gender Equality"** to a wider range of children across Viet Nam.

Sincerely,

Elisa Fernandez Saenz,

Country Representative of UN Women Viet Nam





“Fairies or muses no longer exist in our world. Who will take on the role of these deities? And who will give wings to a child's imagination to fly far beyond time? No one else, it's us.

It's you and me.”

- Kinda Paterson,
excerpt from “A Sense of Wonder: On Reading and Writing Books for Children”.



CONTENTS

Part 1: Cultivate the joy of reading	
Significance of reading time for children	7
Notes for arranging reading time for children	9
Part 2: Gender equality in children's books	
Why advancing gender equality is important for young children and the role of children's books	12
Introduction to the book series "Generation Equality - Fairy Tales on Gender Equality"	19
Part 3: Guide children to read	
Guide to reading the book "A Miracle in the Kingdom of Shoes"	23
Guide to reading the book "Anthology of Fairy Tales on Gender Equality"	29
Part 4: References	
Not every girl dreams of being a princess, not every boy dreams of being a superhero	34





Part 1:
Cultivate the joy of reading



SIGNIFICANCE OF READING TIME FOR CHILDREN



"When we read books together, like when grandparents read to their grandchildren, teachers read to pupils, parents read to their children, sisters read to their younger brothers, thousands of people in the urban city read the same book in silence. In such a manner, together we can leave our loneliness. Together, we look out and behold this world.

*Together, we look at so many people around us.
We get along with each other.
And once we mingle, we change and grow."*

- Kate DiCamillo, author of children's fiction

Reading to children is a really meaningful activity. It brings enormous benefits to children in the first years of their life, boosting brain development, emotional intelligence, language acquisition, cognitive ability, concentration, as well as study and social skills. It also forms a launchpad for children to grow up happily and successfully.

However, the greatest benefit of regularly reading with children is creating wonderful emotional bonds between children, their parents and teachers. Dr. Sally Ward, a speech and communication therapist and a reputable expert advisor in the field of speech and language impairment, shares in her famous book "Baby Talk" that, in the early stages of a child's life, the most important meaning of reading time for children is to provide them with a warm and emotional interactive experience with their parents through reading together. This is an important prerequisite to creating joy of reading in children.

Parents should read books to their children every day from the moment they are born. Likewise, teachers should read books to pupils every day, right from the first day of school. This habit needs to be maintained daily and persist at least until the child finishes primary school. The presence of children's books in every home, classroom, school, or community activity space is like a glue that binds children to the adults around them in a warm and gentle, slow and lasting way. When children sit down with their parents and teachers and listen to them read, the readers' emotive faces become a "masterpiece" to the children. Reading to children offers quality time for parents and teachers to communicate, share feelings, and express personal views with children. It is also an opportunity for children to enrich their emotional intelligence, communication, and critical skills alongside other crucial skills.

Children need books as mirrors for them to see themselves and illuminate their life experiences; as windows to see novel and interesting things; as doors through which they can enjoy a vast array of adventures in the immense worlds outside. For us as adults, reading with children helps us to slow down and reminds us of the vitality and great significance of books in the spiritual lives of children - those who are living at "lightning speed", when everything around them happens so fast.

Reading can actually change the world:
First, the child's; and then, our own.





NOTES

FOR ARRANGING READING TIME FOR CHILDREN

*"Everything we read builds us,
makes us who we are."*

- Mem Fox, author of children's fiction.

We need to remember that one of the things that makes reading time enjoyable is that children are placed in a familiar, safe space; they are encouraged to feel confident in expressing their feelings and thoughts. Therefore, parents and teachers should not aim to give lessons or be too obsessed with the goal of providing skills. We should simply enjoy reading with the children because, if we consider books a miracle, children will grow up with that belief too!

Even so, we still need to be well prepared to arrange a successful and effective reading session. Below are some of the most basic notes that should be kept in mind by parents and teachers.



STEP 1

Read to your child from the best book that you have

Lisa S. Scott, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Florida (USA), has conducted a series of studies on infant learning styles to better understand the importance of infants' reading habits on brain development and behaviour. She and her colleagues found that, in order for an infant's brain to receive the most benefit, it is extremely important to choose the right book and read it to the child

at the right time. Therefore, it is advisable to spend time choosing the books that you will read to your child. A good book to read to children is one which is appropriate for their age and perceptions and which can also stimulate them and open their mind to new things.



STEP 2 Choose a reading time that is comfortable and familiar to the children

Children often have positive attitudes and feel comfortable with familiar activities that have become part of their routine. Choose one or more fixed amounts of time during the day to read to your children - this could be before bedtime, after they have just woken up, or during their lunch and school breaks. Whether it is at home or at school, try to make "reading time" the most anticipated time of the day.



STEP 3 The amount of reading time should be suitable for the child's ability to concentrate and to pay attention

Reading time should last between 20 and 40 minutes (30 minutes on average) depending on the age of the child. Children of different ages will have different abilities to focus and pay attention. Therefore, it is advisable to choose age-appropriate books with content suitable for the child and accommodate alternative activities during the reading time to keep their attention and interest.



STEP 4 Establish rules during reading time

This is very significant. Discuss the rules and regulations of reading time with the children in advance to ensure everyone's comfort. The clearer the rules, the easier it will be for the children to be engaged and enjoy the session most effectively. These rules or principles should be

clear and fair. The regulations should be short and easy to follow. For example, the “one person speaks at a time” principle (there will always be one person only speaking during the reading time, then all others will listen); the “shhh” principle (prolonged) as a reminder for the children to keep quiet; or the principle of “raising your hand” when you need to speak up.

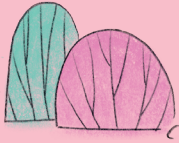
STEP 5 Organize creative activities after reading

Do not rush to close the book as soon as you say “the end!” As mentioned earlier, each book is a door leading the children to step out and discover a wide spectrum of amusing things about themselves and the world around them. Help your children to take that journey with all their excitement through the creative activities you share with them after reading together. These activities could include craft-work, art, movement, writing, discussing, or giving presentations. These will all spark inspiration and bring wonderful benefits to children, helping to embed the messages/morals of the book in their mind, stimulating the motivations of change in children and, most importantly, fostering their joy of reading.

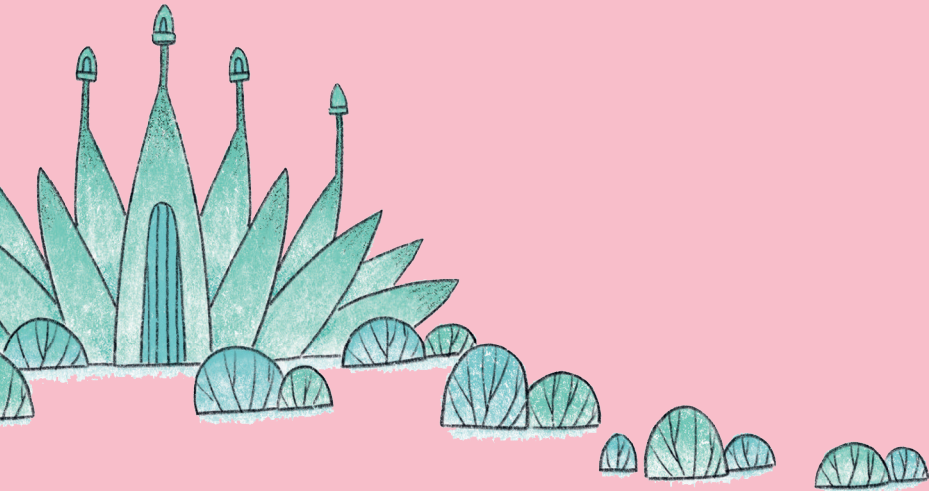
STEP 6 Joy or pleasure is at the heart of reading time

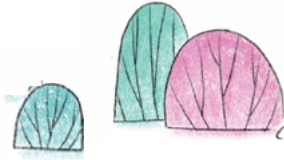
Even if reading time is planned with a specific objective in terms of the messages, morals, knowledge, and skills that children need to acquire, never forget that the overarching objective of reading time is to make children feel that reading is a great pleasure for them. When children know the joy of reading, it will become a habit. This, in turn, will stimulate their passion for reading. That passion will become an indispensable need throughout their lives. Let your children enjoy to the fullest the joy of every reading session.





PART 2: GENDER EQUALITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS





WHY PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IS IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN AND THE ROLE OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS



Equality is the recipe for happiness

"I don't wear pink, pink is a girl's colour!"

"Cutting your hair short will make you look like a boy!"

"This game can only be played by boys, girls are not allowed to play it."

"Girls are weaker than boys, boys are stronger than girls." "Girls like gossiping a lot."

"Only girls love make-up!"

The sentences above are just quick examples of the persistent, common gender stereotypes among children. At birth, children are completely free of gender stereotypes or discrimination. However, statistics and studies show that gender stereotypes are formed at a very young age by the influence of older children, adults, and social expectations. As described in a report (1) compiled after analyzing more than 150 articles, interviews, books and other studies, children between the ages of two and six learn about gender stereotypes via the toys, skills, and activities that are often associated with children of each gender. Children between the ages of seven and 10 begin to ascribe certain qualities to women and men, such as men

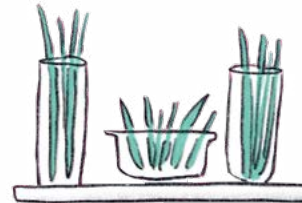
(1) Caroline Knorr. (2017). "What media teach kids about gender can have lasting effect, effects, report says". Common Sense Media. June 29. www.cnn.com

being aggressive and women being emotional.

These days, children are surrounded by messages of inequality from parents, advertisements, movies, and music that are ubiquitous across all media platforms. Businesses have even run massive campaigns for baby products in attempts to segment the market specifically for girls and boys. Gender-stereotyped messages are replayed 24/7 on social media, on television, in games, in songs, and even in children's books. From there, they have continued to creep into and been reinforced in schools and classrooms. We have become so familiar with these gender stereotypes - such as men being leaders and women being supporters or men being breadwinners and women being housewives - that we fail to realize that we have been sending those messages through words and actions that can create barriers and hinder children's awareness of their ability to develop their potential.

Gender equality is a vital factor in a just, equal, and happy world.

We need to actively share and organize activities on the topic of gender equality with children because the earlier we do this, the more effective it will be. Advancing gender equality can empower all children, enable them realize their equal opportunities, while also cultivating kindness, tolerance, respect, and empathy for difference with a view to reducing gender-based violence, abuse, and discrimination on the basis of gender.



By empowering and opening up opportunities to everyone, girls will become stronger, more assertive, more confident, and more self-reliant. Meanwhile, boys will be liberated from the standards of strength and toughness. Girls may have technical and physical strengths, and boys may possess artistic life attitudes and aptitude. No one should have to hide who they are. Promoting gender equality will have a direct effect on improving children's mental health, emotional intelligence, and social skills.

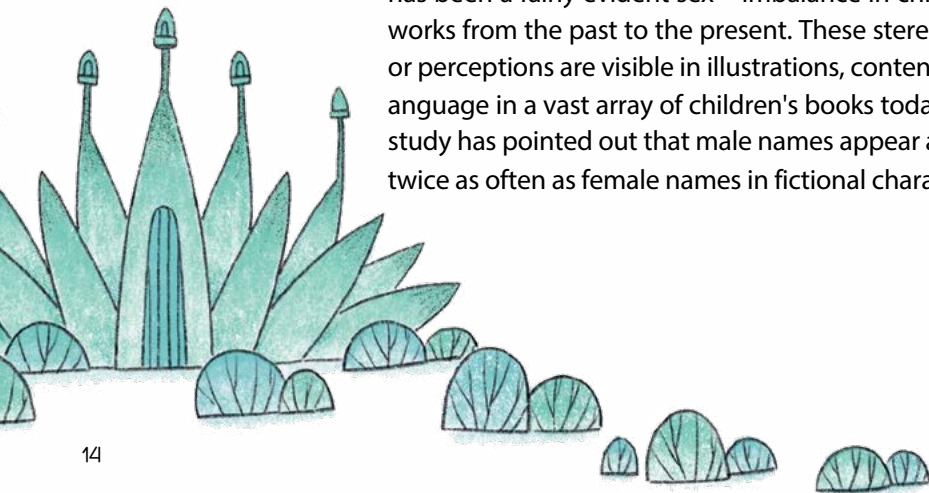
Children's books are considered to be the most appropriate and effective tool to introduce and educate children about gender equality. Through the use of books, children will soon learn that in every aspect, we are more alike than different. As children grow into adults, it is essential that they should pursue passion and never let gender stereotypes limit their choices.



The role of children's literature in advancing gender equality

Children's literature plays an important role in transmitting culture and shaping children's personalities. Gender equality is a pivotal aspect of social progress. Therefore, we cannot overlook the role of children's books in influencing, leading, and motivating children towards messages of equality, positivity, and humanity.

First and foremost, we have to face the fact that there has been a fairly evident sex imbalance in children's works from the past to the present. These stereotypes or perceptions are visible in illustrations, contents, and language in a vast array of children's books today. One study has pointed out that male names appear almost twice as often as female names in fictional characters



Male characters have also been present in illustrations and cover pages 53 percent more often than female characters. The absence of female characters has constrained opportunities for girls to establish a foothold in society. In other words, stereotypes have restrained freedom of expression for both boys and girls due to the gender roles presented in books that children read or have read to them at home and at school. For boys, books are often geared towards building up the image of a strong man who is capable being a leader and who likes action. For girls, on the other hand, books place more emphasis on becoming future ideal mothers and wives



meeting society's expectations on traditional gender roles. This will exert a great impact on the evolution of gender roles in the future, limiting children's opportunities to express themselves in line with their capabilities and interests.

That is why children's books, or other works embracing robust and clear messages on gender equality, must be introduced and be more available in families, schools, and community spaces for children. Parents, teachers, and educators really need to pay more attention to the books they choose to read to their children as children will become what we read to them from their earliest year.



Notes on selecting books for children

Dos

Selecting a good book for children is not a difficult task. In addition to such factors as the child's age, cognitive ability, interests, and personality, look for the books that don't just portray male and female genders by stereotype through taking into account the factors suggested below:



- The individuals are depicted with distinctive or unique personalities.
- Performance is not assessed based on gender.
- Occupations are free of gender-based discrimination.
- Outfits are described in functional terms instead of being based on gender.
- Females are not always weaker and more fragile than males.
- Individuals are logical or emotional depending on the situation, no matter whether the characters are male or female or have diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.
- The language used in the text is gender-neutral.
- Illustrations should be gender sensitive and non-sexist.

Don'ts

- Proactively make comments about the outer appearance, physique, and personal characteristics of the characters in the book.
- Prioritize choosing books appropriate to a child's gender (for example, princess books for girls and dinosaur books for boys). A child's gender should not be a priority when choosing books for children.
- Buy fake, contraband books, or books with unclear copyright.





The art of talking when reading with children



The interactions between parents, teachers, and readers with children during the reading process are important and meaningful. They help children to feel safe, inspired, and connected to the stories while also prompting them to think and reflect on the morals that the stories want to convey. Parents, teachers, and readers can use physical interactions such as holding the child in their lap, sitting close to the child, holding the child's hand, giving high fives to the child, or patting the child's head to encourage them. Keep your eyes on the child, don't just focus your attention on the page you are reading. Make sure the child always feels that, even if you do not directly mention their name, your eyes are always on them. Besides, chatting and asking questions before, during, and after reading is also an especially crucial and effective mode of interaction. Your questions can trigger curiosity and spark the child's imagination while also providing an opportunity for you to discuss with the child interesting perspectives on specific topics in each book.

Here are some suggestions to help parents, teachers, and readers talk and raise questions to prompt and encourage children before, during, and after reading:

- Discuss the cover of the book (pictures, characters, settings, activities, etc., that can be observed by the children) and predictions about the content of the book.
- Introduce the author, illustrator, information about the writing process, the special things, or the theme of the book.

- Choose with the children their most important or favourite word, line, illustration, character, situation, or context in the book you have just read and explain that choice.
- "If it were me...": Children can choose a character and transform into that character. Parents, teachers, and readers can discuss with the children if they were the character, what would they talk about, how they would act, what they would wear?
- Ask in what way would the story change or develop if one character made a different decision?
- Ask how the character has changed throughout the story? What has caused that change?
- Ask: If you could rename the book, what would it be?
- Ask: If the context of the story could be changed, how would the children change it?
- Ask: If you could change the characters in the book, which character(s) would you change?
- Ask: If it were you, how would you act/talk in this situation?
- Discuss what would happen if the character is someone other than him/herself in the book: a priest, a different gender or race, a different age or social class?
- Try to imagine and retell the story if the character went out of the book and lived in your world right now.
- Write a letter or pose interview questions with the characters in the book about their emotions, feelings, or life.





INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK SERIES

“GENERATION EQUALITY – FAIRY TALES ON GENDER EQUALITY”

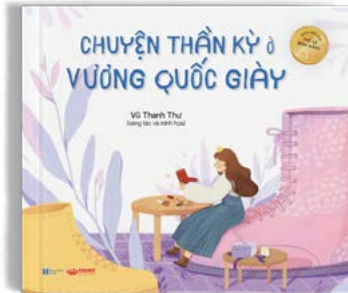
In 2019, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), ChildFund Viet Nam, and the Embassy of Ireland hosted the “Generation Equality: Modern Fairy Tale Writing Contest”. This aimed to spread a message, contribute to stimulating positive change, and break down barriers and gender stereotypes in fairy tales which have been inherently very popular among children. The contest attracted the participation of numerous authors of all ages across the country with more than 193 entries.

The highest prize-winning works of the “Generation Equality: Modern Fairy Tale Writing Contest” have been compiled and published by UN Women and Crabit Kidbooks in two books “**A Miracle in the Kingdom of Shoes**” for children aged 3-8 and “**A Collection of Fairy Tales on Gender Equality**” for children aged 8-12. The winning works conveyed powerful, inspirational messages through the creative and engaging expressions of the authors. Their messages enable readers of all ages to set the foundation of a society of gender equality, free of barriers and social stereotypes that prevent women, men, boys, girls and other genders from enjoying and realizing their potential.



The book

"A Miracle in the Kingdom of Shoes"



Vu Thanh Thu
(Written and illustrated)

Information about the book::

Hardcover printed book with dust jacket and folded flaps. Book size: 22x20cm

Suitable age range: 4+

The book tells the story of Princess *Hoa Thuy Tien* (daffodils) who had a great passion for shoes and dedicated her whole heart to her dream of becoming the most talented shoemaker in the kingdom. However, she was prevented by the king on the grounds of rules that had existed for countless generations in the kingdom. With a strong desire to pursue her passion and dreams, Princess *Hoa Thuy Tien* finally brought a wonderful miracle to the whole kingdom with her shoes.

The book conveys the moral that everyone deserves to wear the right shoes on their chosen path of passion. Regardless of your gender, any pressure that society puts upon you will not be a deterrence or cause you to give up.



The book “Anthology of Fairy Tales on Gender Equality”



Information about the book:

Hardcover printed book with dust jacket and folded flaps.
Book size: 22x20cm Suitable age range: 7+

This book is composed of three tales:

The Princess with Ruffled Hair

Bui Thi Giang (author), Nhu Quynh (illustrator)

“The Princess with Ruffled Hair” is a story about the distant kingdom of Ho Penh and its very special first queen -

Princess Ho Sao. This is a fascinating fairy tale written by the author to convey the message: “Fighting for gender equality does not mean a woman will live like a man, but that women can live to the fullest with their own nature. Men or women – all have the right to become different.”



The Formula of Happiness

Pham Trinh Yen Chi (*author*),
Luong Linh (*illustrator*)



“Formula of Happiness” was edited from the idea of the tale “Princess Coffee and Prince Milk Tea” by the Author Yen Chi. Princess Milk and Prince Tea are young people with big dreams of their own. They want to live that dream and be themselves. This story of young people's journey to eliminate long-standing stereotypes was written to share the moral: “Promoting gender equality is promoting the removal of burdens and stereotypes placed on the shoulders of both males and females. It's not a story about splitting into two shares or measuring benefits and rights, but about the respect, sharing, and tolerance we can have for each other.”

The Most Fabulous Summer Party

Le Thi Nhu Thuy (*author*), Luong Linh (*illustrator*)

“The Most Fabulous Summer Party” is a story built on an idea taken from the work “Companion” by author Le Thi Nhu Thuy. This innocent, joyful, and vital story shares with us the message: “In relationships surrounding family, love, and friendship, apart from love, the most important thing of all is equality and mutual recognition - that is the foundation, the recipe for a sustainable and growing relationship.”





Part 3:
GUIDE CHILDREN TO READ



GUIDE TO READING THE BOOK “A MIRACLE IN THE KINGDOM OF SHOES”



*Vũ Thanh Thu
(Writer and illustrator)*

*Suitable age range: 4 years old +
Number of pages: 32
Reading duration: 10-15 minutes
Theme: Dreams, family,
occupations*

“A Miracle in the Kingdom of Shoes” is a picture book appropriate for children aged 3 years and over. This is a book for parents to read with their children at home or for teachers to read to preschool-aged children at school accompanied by interesting activities to help children begin to familiarize themselves with the first concepts of gender, equality, and gender equality.

1. Talk to children before reading

(Duration: around 05 minutes)

Start the reading time with your child by introducing the name and author of the book.

Before you start reading, spend about five minutes looking at the cover with your children and asking them what they see on the cover. After listening to the children's feedback, parents and teachers can ask the children some questions related to the things they see or share, for example:

- *Who wants to be a princess?*
- *In your opinion, what kind of person is the princess?*
- *What is a "miracle"? Have you experienced any miracles?*
- *How do you see the shoes on the book cover?*
- *Can you guess who made these shoes?*

2. Trigger curiosity while reading



(Duration: 5-10 minutes)

Parents and teachers start reading books to children. Hold the book close to their field of vision so they can see the illustrations on the pages.

For children of a young age, parents/teachers should not stop too many times while reading to ask questions. Questions can trigger a child's curiosity, but they can also stifle their interest and ability to focus.

Ideally, about three to five short questions should be asked. For each question, invite one or two children to respond. This interactive part will become more interesting and engaging if teachers or parents use questions that children can answer with actions or emotional expressions.

Questions that teachers/parents can ask children when reading the book "A Miracle in the Kingdom of Shoes" include:

- Page 1-2: *What is Princess Hoa Thuy Tien's dream? Why is the King called "The Irritable King"? Let's try to make irritable faces with me! Now, look/observe my face closely to see I am! (Make different facial expressions and conclude with the child. This is "irritable/angry parent/teacher", this is "happy parent/teacher", this is "surprised parent/teacher" for children to experience different emotions.)*

- Pages 3-4-5-6: Look at the illustrations and guess what the jobs of the characters you see are.

- *Pages 9-10: Can we guess for whom the princess's special shoes are made?*

- *Pages 13-14: Look at the face of this irritable king, what kind of king has he become? Can you guess why the king is so cheerful and radiant now?*

- *Pages 19-20: If you gave a special gift to someone you love, what gift would you give?*

- *Pages 21-22: Has the princess fulfilled her dream yet?*

When a child shares an answer, just show your attentive listening, empathy, and recognition by repeating the child's answer. Don't try to immediately distinguish "right/wrong" or explain in a lengthy/verbose way the child's answer to other pupils. Based on children's discussion while reading, we will consider choosing appropriate post-reading activities to lead children to extended discussion, to provide more information, or orient correct/right perspectives/viewpoints for children.



3. Creative activities after reading (Duration: 5 minutes)

At the age of 3-6 years, creative post-reading activities are organized with the aim of prolonging the children's joy of reading while encouraging them to recall the characters, content, and events of the story in the most natural way. Parents and teachers can refer to some simple activities below:

Activity 1 There are many different pairs of shoes on the dust jacket of the book. Let's observe with the children and suggest which shoes they like/want to wear the most and why?

- *Meaning and objectives of the activity:* Stimulate children's interest in the book and encourage them to share their interests or observations after reading the book.

Activity 2 Organize a game where children can try on the shoes of other family members or friends. Ask questions for the children to share how they feel.

- *Meaning and objective of the activity:* This is a simple activity that helps us talk to children about putting ourselves in other people's shoes to feel their thoughts and understand their actions. While children perform the activity, see if they encounter any difficulties, if they can handle them on their own or if they need support from others. Then, we can ask the children how they feel, who they think about when they feel that way, what they think about, etc.

This is an effective practical exercise for the children to learn the lesson of putting themselves in others' shoes.

Activity 3 Each of the children will design a pair of shoes for themselves or someone they love. (For younger children, you can prepare in advance the drawings of different shoes for the children to colour, collage, decorate...)

- *Meaning and objective of the activity:* Inspire the children to create arts from the book and encourage children to express their personality and feelings to their loved ones.

Activity 4 Children draw their dreams and what they will do to realize those dreams.

- *Meaning and objective of the activity:* Once again, emphasize to the

children that the princess has used her talent to persuade her father, pursue her dreams, and change the long-standing laws of the kingdom. Encourage the children - whether boys or girls - to manifest their dreams and to be confident in them.



4. Activities to advance gender equality appropriate to kindergarten-age children

Gender inequalities that persist in families, classrooms, and schools all bring potential harms to boys and girls. Messages that reinforce gender stereotypes (e.g. boys are better at math and science) will make children turn down opportunities to participate in certain topics and activities; as well as limit the full realization of their potential. Through appropriate lessons, activities, and methods, parents and teachers can organize fun and meaningful activities to encourage children to confidently express themselves, respect differences, and most effectively develop their talents.

Sample activity: Invite friends/parents who are performing non-traditional gender roles to talk and interact with children. Parents/teachers could invite a female scientist, a male ballet dancer, a policewoman, a male chef, etc. who are doing jobs that contradict the stereotypes perceived by the children to come to share about their work. These are the most vivid and persuasive role models to help children break down stereotypes, dare to challenge themselves, and not be afraid to express their wishes.

Team or group work: Divide children into same-sex groups in group activities, and let them swap roles and have the opportunity to experience gender-stereotypical activities such as that boys enjoy scientific experiments and girls like playing



enjoy scientific experiments and girls like playing cooking games. Swap roles often and give girls the chance to carry out science experiments and boys the chance to cook a meal together. Dividing children into same-sex groups will create more opportunities for children to speak up and participate more actively in the activities. Likewise, encourage and remove gender barriers in children's fun activities so that boys can play with dolls and be nurses while girls can act as firefighters or engineers.

Reading: Books with the appearance of both male and female characters, expressing the spirit of equality, are needed on bookshelves in families and classrooms. Parents and teachers can refer to the list of suggested books in this document.



5. Objective to be achieved

Introduce children to some key words, terms, and their basic meanings:

Princess, king, dream, happiness, man, woman, son, daughter etc.

Introduce several occupations associated with each gender that children observe in the book.

Children can share about their dreams; the occupations they want to take up and, initially, they can do to realize their dreams and conquer those occupations.

GUIDE TO READING THE BOOK “ANTHOLOGY OF FAIRY TALES ON GENDER EQUALITY”



Suitable age range: 6 years old +

Number of pages: 64

Reading time: 15-20 minutes per tale

Themes: Family, dreams, friendship, respect for differences, occupations

“Anthology of Fairy Tales on Gender Equality” comprises three tales suitable for children from primary school age (6 years +). The book is especially suitable for children's bedtime reading at home or themed reading time at school. Each tale in the book contains a meaningful message about the role of each gender, about sharing responsibilities, and the right to live one's dreams.

1. Talk to children before reading (Duration: around 05 minute)

At this age, children have the ability to actively and clearly express their thoughts and opinions. Therefore, parents/teachers are likely to start reading time by asking a question centering around the topic of the story for children to discuss.

Another activity that can be used is to watch a short video about the topic with the children (appropriate length is about 1-2 minutes). For example, before reading the book “Anthology of Fairy Tales on Gender Equality”, parents/teachers can watch with their children the video Gender Roles-Interviews with kids or the video introducing Gender roles and stereotypes.



2. Trigger curiosity during reading

The tales in this book are long-plot stories with a variety of character lines and situations that are intertwined and connected with one another. In order for children to fully follow the stories, parents/teachers should focus on reading each story to the children in its entirety. For a group of children who can already read aloud fluently, one child can be invited to act as the reader of each story.

When reading the book, parents/teachers **can pause at some climactic moments or dramatic knots and let the children predict, share solutions, and express their thoughts.** However, only one or two such details should be selected as occasions to pause in the middle of the reading process. For example:

- With regard to the story "**The Princess with Ruffled Hair**", you can stop at the following paragraph: *"When ceasing the horse's hooves, Ho Sao realized that he had come out to the other side of the wood near the citadel, where there was a barracks carefully guarded by soldiers. In a corner of the barracks, she caught a glimpse of a group of strangely dressed people."* (Page 15)

Suggested question: How do you see Ho Sao's act of leaving? If you were her, would you act like that? What if Ho Sao was in danger when she reached the barracks? If the group of strangely dressed people weren't the women from a neighboring country who were taken as tributes, who could they be? How will the story unfold then?

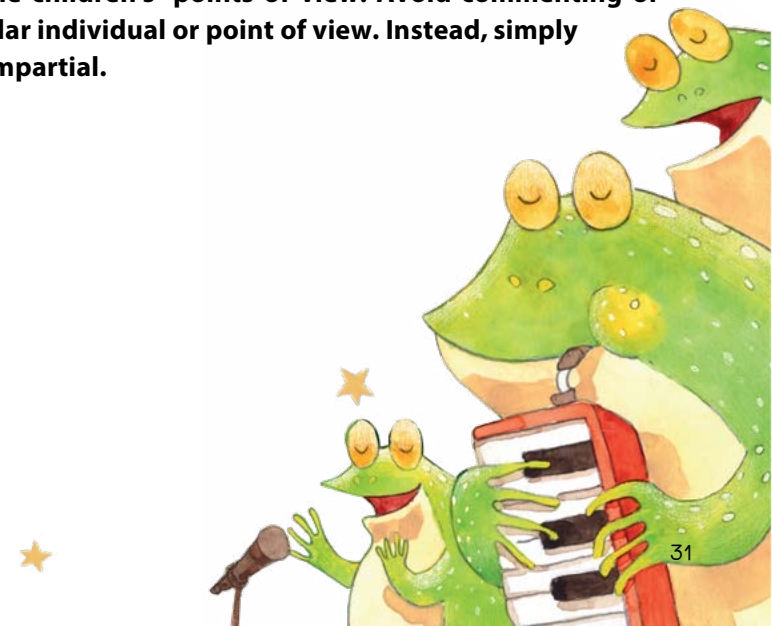
- The tale "**The Formula of Happiness**" can be paused at the paragraph: *"So with extraordinary intelligence and intensive knowledge gathered from a wide range of novels that she had read in the library before, the princess managed to escape and quickly found her way to the Kingdom of Tea."* (Page 32)

Suggested question: In your opinion, why was the princess able to escape and find her way to the Kingdom of Tea? What are the hobbies of the princesses that you usually find in fairy tales? What is the hobby of Princess Milk? Apart from fleeing and going to the Kingdom of Tea, what else do you think the princess can do?

- The tale **“The Most Fabulous Summer Party”** can be paused at the paragraph: “(the sound of the basket being torn apart)!The basket was torn apart, and all the berries fell all over the place. Ti Toay also lost momentum and fell into a puddle of rainwater. By the time Ly Lac managed to pull him up, Ti Toay had already gotten soaked to the skin, shivering. His legs were scratched and his hands were painfully sore.” (Page 50)

Suggested question: If you were Ti Toay, how would you feel? If you were Ly Lak, what would you say to Ti Toay?

Listen to one or two of the children’s opinions for each question and try to encourage them to express different thoughts and points of view. This is the time for the children to recognize the differences in their peers’ thoughts and opinions, as well as diverse patterns of a situation. So, what parents/teachers need to do now is **listen and express their appreciation to the children's points of view. Avoid commenting or praising a particular individual or point of view. Instead, simply stay neutral and impartial.**



3. Creative activities after reading

Discussions on the topics or personalities of each individual book or role-playing activities are relevant post-reading activities for children of this age range. Suggest the topic of each story to the children (refer to the introduction to the book kit) so that they can better understand the messages and their meaning.

4. Activities to promote gender equality suitable for primary school children

Children form gender stereotypes from an early age through observing social norms, messages from the media, and unintentional lessons from adults around them. To help break the cycle of forming gender stereotypes and unequal gender perceptions, parents/teachers should utilize the lessons learnt on gender stereotypes in daily activities to nurture individual awareness and responsibilities.

- The true or false game: Print some of the children's popular gender views and have them categorized by the children into columns of "Agree" and "Disagree". Then, give the children the opportunity to share about their choices. These popular views could be:

- Boys are stronger than girls
- Girls run more slowly than boys
- Boys like blue, girls like pink
- Girls like makeup, boys don't
- Boys who cry are weak
- Girls like gossiping
- Boys like sports



- Swapping gender roles: This activity is appropriate for children from grades 3 to 7 combined with very effective creative reading and writing activities. Ask each pupil to bring a book of fairy tales or any book to class. Divide pupils into small groups and each group will take turns to read aloud to the class a chapter from the book, but swapping the gender roles of all the characters.

For example: the female Cinderella will be a man hoping to catch the attention of a princess. This activity will provide the children with good giggles and an opportunity to reverse their perception and thinking about gender stereotypes that are already familiar to them.

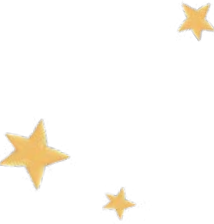
5. Objective to be achieved

- Children will be able to understand the meaning of concepts and terms: Gender, gender equality, gender stereotypes, gender roles, equality, equal rights, dreams, and passion.
- Children will be able to confidently share or present their views on a particular topic or question.
- Children will be able to fully understand gender roles and confidently express themselves, respect friends' personalities, and show empathy.



Part 4: References





NOT EVERY GIRL DREAMS OF BEING A PRINCESS, NOT EVERY BOY DREAMS OF BEING A SUPERHERO

From the age of three, children begin to form curiosity and eagerness to learn about their own gender and those of people around them. This is also the perfect time for parents and teachers to start conversations about equality, gender, gender characteristics, and the social roles of each gender with children.

The openness of parents and teachers at this stage until the end of primary school will help children to form their own healthy and positive gender norms and to build a mental foundation and firm viewpoints for children towards adulthood. At the starting point, these can be abstract concepts for children. Therefore, parents and teachers will face difficulties when communicating and sharing them with children.

Appropriate children's books should be used to start a conversation with the children.

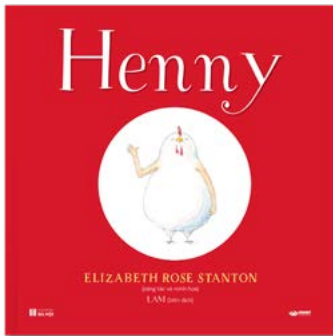
Various researchers have pointed out that children tend to identify themselves with the characters of the same sex in the they read. Therefore, the imbalance in the ratio of male-female characters in children's books will implicitly make children believe that "women and girls hold less important roles in society than men and boys". Coupled



twith the “Generation Equality - Modern Fairy Tales” kit, the books listed below are the best and most relevant children's books on this topic for both girls and boys that parents and teachers can refer to.

★ Books for preschool children (3-6 years old)

1. Henny

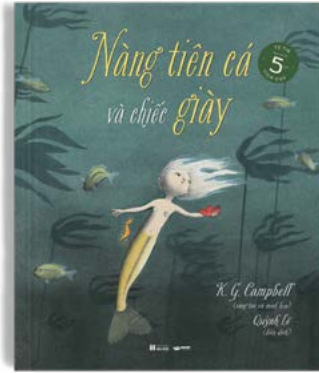


*Author: Elizabeth Rose Stanton (Hanoi Publishing House,
published by Crabit Kidbooks)*

The message of the book: Appreciate and bring into full play what you possess; become the best version of yourself; what you believe in today will be what you become tomorrow.

Henny doesn't look like a normal chicken. Because Henny has no wings, but arms! A pair of hands! There were times when she enjoyed her difference - those were the times when she was delighted to run so fast that her arms were flung back like a band of ribbon. But sometimes... being different isn't fun. Henny can't do things the way other hens do. But, in the end, Henny realized that it's not necessary to do things the same as others do. This heartwarming story, told in a sweet, light narrative voice associated with fresh and highly expressive illustrations, celebrates the beauty of each individual identity.

2. The Mermaid and the Shoe



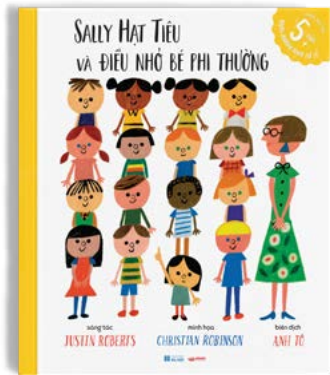
Author K. G. Campbell
(Hanoi Publishing House,
published by Crabit
Kidbooks)

The message of the book: a modern fairy tale for extraordinary girls; steadfast and persistent hearts will find their life's dream.

Minnow is a little and curious mermaid. While her elder sisters grew up to be flawless and shone with impressive talents, Minnow still indulged in her quest to find answers to her petty questions. This is a fun, hilarious and fairy-oriented story, conveying a meaningful personality education message: Always be confident in yourself. The book will be a great assistant in the classroom and at home for parents and teachers to emphasize the power of perseverance and the importance of questioning while reminding children that believing in themselves is always worth it.



3. The Smallest Girl In the Smallest Grade



*Written by: Justin Roberts,
Illustrated by: Christian Robinson (Hanoi
Publishing House, published by Crabit
Kidbooks)*



The message of the book: Don't turn a blind eye to the ugly things that happen in front of your eyes. All of us, no matter how big or small, are capable of creating giant impacts.

A positive story about a young girl named Sally McCabe will leave readers with a warm feeling and belief that everyone has sufficient power to change the world. It is an inspirational work about Sally, the smallest girl in school, who still quietly lived in her own daily world. Every day she noticed, though most people ignored it, ugly things going on around her, such as the bad way people treated each other. In an almost desperate attempt to change everyone, Sally found her voice and made the whole school listen to her long-fostered concerns. This is a great book for teachers to read with the whole class, thereby challenging children to re-evaluate the world in terms of what they themselves can do to make positive impacts on it.



4. Olivia and the Fairy Princesses



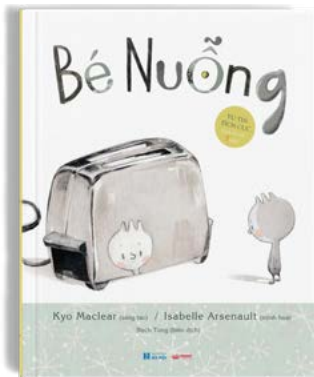
*Written by: Ian Falconer
(Hanoi Publishing
House, published by
Crabit Kidbooks)*

The message of the book:
Parents, please respect and understand children. No matter who they want to be, the most important thing is to let the children be themselves.

Olivia is an energetic female pig vibrant with confidence and humour. In this book, she expended all that energy in breaking free from the stereotypes of ruffled pink dresses and letting her imagination run wild. Olivia had a very eloquent statement that “If everyone is a princess, then there is nothing special about being a princess anymore”. That's why she chose to be herself - a perfect choice. The children will also be confident in being themselves after reading every word of Olivia.



5. Spork



*Written by: Kyo Maclear,
Illustrated by: Isabelle
Arsenault (Hanoi Publishing
House, published by Crabit
Kidbooks)*

The message of the book: Being yourself is just perfect.

The picture book is about Spork, who is a hybrid son of his (spoon) mother and (fork) father. This “multi-cutlery” tale, told in a playful, wise, and sweet voice, is a perfect occasion to spark conversations on individuality and how to accept differences, because it is the differences that make us shine. Most importantly, the tale offers a hopeful and positive message that we all have a purpose in our existence in this life, and that we all have a place to belong.



★ Books for primary school children (6-12 years old)



Written by: *Chelsea Clinton*,
Illustrated by: *Alexandra Boiger*
(Hanoi Publishing House,
published by *Crabit Kidbooks*)

are the ingredients to become strong, confident in their abilities, and determined to pursue their dreams. Although changing stereotypes is difficult, it doesn't mean it is impossible. And this is the book to open up new doors and wings to launch children to the future. Every child deserves to be the most incredible version of themselves!

1. She persisted

The message of the book: Learning how to overcome adversity to follow your passion.

This book presents a short, concise, and immensely inspirational introduction about the 13 women who helped change and shape the U.S. to become what it is today. It is an anthem for persistence and daring to follow dreams, for the firm belief in what is regarded as the truth.

For children, these



2. Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Tales of Extraordinary Women (Books 1 and 2)

★ **The message of the book:** Dreams are for everyone, for those who have persistent and unwavering faith in them.

(Kim Dong Publishing House)



★
Written by:
Elena Favilli, Francesca Cavallo



“Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Tales of Extraordinary Women” includes modern fairy tales about 100 extraordinary and inspirational women, from Elizabeth I to “Tennis Queen” Serena Williams. The main characters in these stories are not princesses but women who have changed the world, so these are wonderful goodnight books to instill massively inspirational and big dreams in young readers' minds.

3. Louise, the Adventures of a Chicken



Written by: Kate
Dicamillo, Illustrated by:
Harry Bliss
(Hanoi Publishing
House,
published by
Crabit Kidbooks)



The message of the book: Explore the world; encourage children to be ready to be themselves; be courageous to pursue one's passion.

The story is about a chicken who nurtured desires to go on an adventure. She decided to leave home and ventured out into the wide world. She was happy to experience adventures, but she constantly encountered unpredicted dangers. “Louise, the Adventures of a Chicken” is led by a witty, humorous, visual writing style with quite a few satirical and amusing details or episodes but also contains morals of life. The book will inspire young readers, especially girls, to readily embark on challenging adventures and explorations and to understand themselves better.

4. Malala's Magic Pencil



Written by: Malala
Yousafzai,

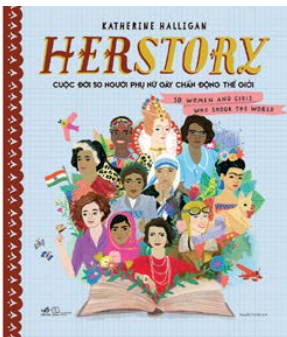
Illustrated by: Kerascoët (Kim
Dong Publishing House)

The book is based on a true story of a little girl who wished for a better world. Malala's childhood world changed and so did her childhood wishes when her right to go to school was threatened, just because she was a girl. Instead of wishing for a magic pencil, Malala then picked up the actual nib. She sat alone in her room writing about the challenges she had to face, but people all over the world read what she wrote, and those writings changed the world, in a miraculous and warmer manner.

Refer to the book "I am Malala" by author Malala Yousafzai and Patricia McCormick (Kim Dong Publishing House).



5. Herstory - 50 Women and Girls Who Shook Up the World (Stories That Shook Up the World)



Written by: Katherine Halligan
(World Publishing House, published by
Nha Nam)

The book celebrates the powerful and inspiring women who changed the world through uplifting stories. These are great role models for children to break down stereotypes about women's roles in society so that they can confidently express themselves and dare to face challenges to live their dreams.



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