



Sharing tasks at home

Ages 7-8

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD GOING THROUGH?

To define themselves as a boy or a girl, children will observe the attitudes and behaviour of the men and women around them. **Families**, just like **school**, **peers** and the **media**, influence how children adopt certain types of behaviour over others and sometimes even convey stereotypes.

Stereotypes are beliefs that people should play specific roles based on their sex. This belief limits people in their personal choices and influences their particular interests and attitudes.

EXAMPLES OF STEREOTYPES	
Girls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ are emotional ■ like to help and take care of others ■ pay attention in school ■ like to do housework 	Boys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ shouldn't show their feelings ■ prefer competitive sports ■ are talkative at school ■ like to build and repair things



The less their environment conveys stereotypes, the greater the chance that children will:

- succeed in school
- have better self-esteem
- have good relationships with others
- adapt easily to change

In this context, the family, or the people closest to a child, plays an important role in decreasing the influence of stereotypes and encouraging egalitarian relationships between boys and girls.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT?

Adopt the following attitudes:

- Value the same behaviour in girls and boys. For example, encourage the development of manual dexterity in both sexes.
- Praise the same attitudes in girls and boys. For example, value caring attitudes in both sexes.
- Help children choose activities based on what they like and not on their sex.
- Have realistic expectations for children based on their abilities and not on their sex.

Children's personalities, tastes and interests are what should guide your attitude towards them.

Think about how you divide up tasks at home

- Do you believe that some tasks must absolutely be done by boys or girls?
- Do you believe that some tasks must not be done by boys or girls?
- How are tasks divided up at your home?
- Is the division of labour fair?
- What were the reasons that determined who does what?

There are many ways to divide up tasks among family members. For example, this can be done based on each person's:

- interests
- skills and physical abilities
- duties and the family context
- schedule, etc.

A task should not be given to someone based on his or her sex.



Tips

Give children **diverse** tasks and responsibilities that help them develop a range of skills. For example, you can ask your daughter to repair something or ask your son to take care of a baby or an animal. Point out their strengths during the activity. Ask them what they liked about the activity.

Don't hesitate to get involved in your children's activities, whether you're a mom or dad and your child is a boy or girl (e.g., a mom can play catch with her son, a dad can draw with his daughter). This will inspire them!

Respect children's preferences and games no matter what their sex.

WHAT CAN HELP YOU?

A book you can read with your child

DE SAINT MARS, Dominique, and Serge BLOCH. *Les filles et les garçons. Un petit livre pour se connaître et connaître les autres*, Bayard Éditions, 1995. (Collection Les Petits Savoirs)

Do you need a professional resource?

Call Info-Santé at 811 or the parenthelp line at 1-800-361-5085.

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