

Equity 8™

The gender-equity rating

Little Critter: Storybook Collection (picture book)

Written and illustrated by Mercer Mayer, Copyright 2005

Rating: 0 out of 8 stars



Met criterion = 1

Did not meet criterion = 0

Egregiously did not meet criterion = - 1

What to look for	Example(s)	Rating	Explanation of rating and recommendations
<p>Did the author tell the entire story without mentioning gender? (Just by mentioning gender we communicate that it's someone's most important quality and activate stereotypes.)</p>	<p>No gendered words, such as she, he, girl, boy, mommy, daddy, etc.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Gendered terms and pronouns are used, including grandma, grandpa, mom, dad, sister, Miss, and snowman (instead of Snow Critter).</p> <p>In the beginning, in "A Letter from Little Critter," Little Critter says he likes to play football and baseball, two sports that have excluded girls and women. Not a good start for helping girls feel just as important in this book and boys seeing them that way, too.</p> <p>Never learning Little Critter's sister's name is disrespectful to her (and she is always referred to as "little").</p> <p>Good that Little Critter says, "big kid" on page 151.</p>

<p>Did the artist illustrate the entire story without contributing to gender stereotypes?</p>	<p>No pink, bows, or exaggerated eyelashes, etc. on girls. No blue, ball caps, etc. on boys, (Length of hair alone is not enough to exclude a book from this criterion. Authors often want/need to differentiate between characters. Hair is one way to do so that is less loaded with negative stereotyping.)</p>	<p>- 1</p>	<p>How female characters are illustrated is “over the top” with stereotypes. They sometimes look ridiculous.</p> <p>Girl characters are dressed excessively in pink. Bows are in hair. Little Sister’s hair bow is so large, it’s distracting (page 106).</p> <p>The teacher, librarian, mom, and grandma are wearing long, puffy dresses/skirts, often in pink. Mom occasionally wears an apron over her dress.</p> <p>Choosing to dress the adult females in clothing styles that were common before women were allowed to vote is regressive, odd, and harmful.</p> <p>A deviation from these clothes is on one page, when Mom suddenly wears shorts and a tank top for a bike ride.</p> <p>Male characters are wearing up-to-date clothes that are easier to be active in: shorts and pants. There are ball caps on numerous characters, such as on pages 174 to 175.</p> <p>The illustrations often show characters doing stereotypical gendered behavior, such as only boys playing football and Mom at the stove (page 46-47, 70-71, 91, 134, 143, 165, 174, and 152-153).</p> <p>Little Sister is often just the observer of Little Critter’s antics (page 24, 26, 30, 88, and 161), and is sometimes</p>
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			<p>the “wet blanket” to his fun (page 19 and 130-131).</p>
<p>Is there counterstereotyping? (Note: not mentioning gender counters stereotypes as it puts gender in the background.)</p>	<p>Are stereotypes challenged by showing the opposite? Examples are showing a boy happily cuddling a baby or a girl swinging a bat with expert skill.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>The few times stereotypes are countered are overshadowed by the stereotyping in the rest of the stories.</p> <p>The counter-stereotyping that did happen: Gabby runs the fastest among the friends. (page 55) Little Sister is playing with a bulldozer; then she is shown operating it. (pages 110 and 115) Gabby is shown playing with a boat. (pages 62 and 77)</p> <p>The stereotyping includes: Girls are mostly observers of boys, and very rarely the other way around. Nine times female characters are shown with their hand/hands up in alarm and not taking action. (None of the boy/men characters are shown holding up their hands in alarm.) Boys only are playing football. Mom is the only one shown at the stove or wearing an apron.</p>
<p>Are characters with different gender representations interacting with mutual respect, skill, and admiration? (Or are the characters neutrally drawn so we can create the above dynamic ourselves?)</p>	<p>Are girls and boys both shown using tools while building something? Do they smile at each other? Do they treat each other like a peer (and not an/a</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Some but not enough.</p> <p>Often when Gabby and Little Critter interact, it's mutually respectful. Little Critter and Little Sister rarely interact with mutual respect.</p>

	<i>inferior or superior)?</i>		
<i>Does the girl character have agency?</i>	<i>Is her body shown in motion? Is she making something happen through her efforts? Can you see her straining her muscles in active movement?</i>	0	<p><i>There is not enough agency among the girl characters.</i></p> <p><i>Little Sister is often shown merely reacting to Little Critter's antics, sometimes with her hands up in alarm as if she is easily shocked, startled, or frightened. Too few times she does an antic of her own.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher, librarian, mom and grandma are often shown merely standing or sitting.</i></p> <p><i>Gabby has some agency (pages 136 and 55), which is great. On one page, the mom is riding a bike. That is good to see.</i></p> <p><i>There is not enough agency among the girl characters, however, to warrant a 1.</i></p>
<i>Does the book's story represent any of the Guiding Principles?</i>		1	<p><i>In "Just a School Project": Resiliency. Little Critter works hard to find a topic for the science fair.</i></p> <p><i>In "Just a Dump Truck": Community. The three characters are shown working together on a construction site.</i></p> <p><i>However, in many of the stories, there are mixed messages.</i></p> <p><i>Little Critter, in "Bye-bye, Mom and Dad," talks about wanting to help, but the stressed expressions on</i></p>

			<p><i>Grandma and Grandpa show that he's not really helping (pages 12, 13, and 15). In "Just a Snowman," he gives Little Sister a hug and an apology, but only after we're told she unfairly complained about being hit by a snowball and he "had to" (pages 130 and 131). The way Little Critters deals with a conflict with the bigger kids in "Just Big Enough," merely perpetuates the rivalry. The big kids don't look like they've learned mutual respect and understanding (page 176).</i></p> <p><i>Then there are times when compassion is missing. When Little Critter falls, Little Sister is shown smiling rather than coming to help him (page 133).</i></p>
<p><i>Are girls the main characters or do they share the spotlight equally with boy characters?</i></p>		0	<p><i>Girl characters exist, but usually not on equal terms.</i></p>
<p><i>Is the writer and/or illustrator a woman?</i></p>		0	

