

Equity 8™

The gender-equity rating

The Pout-Pout Fish (picture book)

Written by Deborah Diesen, Illustrated by Dan Hanna, Copyright 2008

Rating: 3 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>	0	<p>Gender is attached to the names of characters (Mr., Ms., and Mrs.). Completely unnecessary.</p> <p>Instead, the author could have used other words if extra syllables were needed for rhyming: "Hello there, Fish," "Hey there, Fish," "Hey, Blue Fish," etc. (instead of "Hey, Mr. Fish"),</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</p>	0	<p>The main male character is blue (with some purple details). Another male character, the octopus, is mostly blue. The female clam is partly pinkish.</p> <p>Many will likely guess that the Bright/Brilliant Swimmer is female because of the flowing fins and purple color. It's good that there are no exaggerated eyelashes or</p>

	<p><i>characters. Hair is one way to do so that is less loaded with negative stereotyping.)</i></p>		<p><i>gendered accessories on this fish.</i></p> <p><i>The book would be better if the blue fish and the swimmer fish did not kiss on the lips at the end, as that fuels the stereotype that girls and boys can't be (and remain) purely friends. Kissing on the cheek is more typical of friendship and kindness.</i></p> <p><i>Instead, at the end of the book, the blue fish could have kissed the swimmer fish on the head. Then we could have seen both of their big, smiling faces.</i></p> <p><i>It's good that the male jellyfish is pink (with some purple and blue) and the female squid is an orangish-brown.</i></p>
<p><i>Is there counterstereotyping? (Note: not mentioning gender counters stereotypes as it puts gender in the background.)</i></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>0</p>	<p><i>It's great that the male jellyfish is pink. There is not enough countering of stereotypes, however, to warrant a 1.</i></p>
<p><i>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?)</i></p>	<p><i>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</i></p>	<p>1</p>	<p><i>All the creatures are trying to inspire blue fish to be happier.</i></p> <p><i>The book would be better if the creatures talked to the blue fish with more compassion and less blame, such as, "Will you join us in this game? It might cheer you</i></p>

	<i>inferior or superior)?</i>		<i>if you came.” or “Helping others can feel good. Will you help me move this wood?”</i> <i>Blue fish <u>does</u> respond respectfully to all the creatures.</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	<i>Giving a kiss is not the kind of agency looked for in this criterion. (Although kissing in the book is focused on kindness, kissing itself is not purely an act of kindness. It is more complicated than that.)</i>
<i>Does the book’s story represent any of the Guiding Principles?</i>		1	<i>Joy Contribution Authenticity</i>
<i>Are girls the main characters or do they share the spotlight equally with boy characters?</i>		0	<i>The male fish is definitely the star of the book (and in its title), though there are three female characters identified.</i>
<i>Is the writer and/or illustrator a woman?</i>		1	

