The Role of Boys and Girls

**1. Situations:**

Look at the situations below, in pairs/small groups, all of which have been written by girls around 10/11 years of age.

Ask:

* What’s happening?
* What roles/stereotypes are evident in each situation?
* How does this affect the feelings of the person concerned?
* What can she do about the situation – and what would the consequences be?

1. I love cars and would like to be a mechanic when I’m older. I can't think of a better career, but mum says it’s an unusual job for a girl. She thinks that I should aspire to be a teacher or a nurse.
2. This year, I’ve been playing with a group of boys on the yard. They're a lot of fun. My teacher says that she worries about me and that I should play with girls.
3. I love sports – especially football. I’m the only one amongst my friends who likes this. Most of them like dancing or gymnastics. A couple of people have called me ' butch ' because I like the same sport as boys.
4. I like wearing comfortable clothes – usually a tracksuit. Mum says I should start taking an interest in fashionable clothes now and wear clothes which makes me look more like a woman. I prefer to dress as I am, and feel good.
5. People came to school today to talk about careers. It was really exciting, and I went home full of enthusiasm for jobs I'd like to do when I leave school – but dad said that girls should marry and have children after leaving school.
6. My friend has a new little brother. She tells me that her father has been staying at home on paternity leave whilst her mother goes back to work. I think this is a bit odd. The mother should be at home with the new baby.
7. On the school awards night, I was surprised that two girls had won the top prizes. I heard some parents complaining that it wasn’t fair to exclude boys. The teacher explained that the two girls had received the highest marks, so they deserved to be selected.
8. We are currently doing project work in class, and I’ve been asked to lead a group of pupils. I tried my best to be polite and to lead the group in the best possible way, but every time I suggested something, I was called a ' Madam '. One person in the group said girls shouldn’t lead.
9. **Discussion work:**

Following the above work, carry out a group discussion, using circle time rules. Some questions that can be considered are:

* What are views and attitudes are in evidence in these situations?
* Are these a problem? Why/why not?
* How do the situations make people feel?
* What can girls/boys/everyone do when a situation such as this arises?
* What can young people/adults do to change prejudices or stereotypes?

1. **Role play:**

You can take some of the above situations, and ask pupils to play different characters.

What could the girl do in each case to change the dynamics of the situation and to create change?

After this role play, the class can agree on ' Smart Advice' – things that everyone can do to challenge prejudices and stereotypes.