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Story Reading and Children's Gender Stereotype Representation

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Abstract

Children's perception of gender stereotypes influences their gender role representations, leading to preferences regarding gender-toy associations and gender-role based beliefs. Exposure to literary stories can shape children's gender-role representation by either enforcing stereotypes or countering them. The current study investigates one type of literature that young children are often exposed to: folklore stories with goddesses, which contain abundant and varied gender information across different cultures. Twenty-eight 4-to-5-year-olds were randomly assigned to hear either a gender role typical or atypical goddess story. Toy stereotyping ratings and confidence levels of responses were obtained before and after the story exposure. This is an ongoing study and provides a preliminary summary of investigating the impact of story reading on young children's gender stereotype representation. It also provides insight regarding the need for and ways to measure impacts of story readings.