

Josh - Teachers and Adults Can Be Great Role Models

“Teachers and other adults can be great role models for gender equity, but it seems that kids are the ones who really **know** about gender equity”.

Josh's Story

I'm 16 and in year 10 at school. I live with my Mum and my brother and sister and catch up with my Dad on the weekends. I enjoy school and like to get involved with everything that is going on in and out of the class room. I've been really interested in what we have learned in the Respectful Relationships program at school and it all makes a lot of sense to me, particularly what we have learned about gender equality. I think my family promotes gender equality. My parents treat us kids all the same and expect the same things from us regardless of who we are in the family. We all have to do our fair share of the cooking, cleaning and outside jobs. We all get the same opportunities from our parents and they tell us each to be our own person. I don't find things as equal at school, the girls and boys are definitely treated differently. Teachers still ask for “strong boys” when they want things moved and if a girl gets up to help they are told they aren't needed, the boys have it “under control”. When it comes to sport there is a lot of resistance from teachers about boys getting involved in sports that girls usually play. For some reason it seems okay for girls to play footy and soccer but not so okay for the boys to be playing netball. I've even been told to “man up” by a teacher when I wanted to join the netball team. This just doesn't make sense to me. It's not as easy as it sounds to speak up about these things. Kids are meant to respect their teachers and go along with what they say. No-one likes being called a trouble maker and for sure that's what happens if you call out a teacher when you think they are wrong.

Attitudes and Behaviours

It's important to me that boys and girls are treated the same. We all should be able to choose what we want to do, and not be told we can't do something because we are a boy or girl, and boys or girls don't usually do that.

I think some teachers really let us down. They should know this stuff and need to really think about what they are saying. Most kids take a lot of notice of teachers and are really influenced by them.

We all know that stereotyping is bad for everyone.

Speaking up about gender equality is difficult, I find it hard to speak up and challenge an adult, especially a teacher.

Needs & Expectations

I want to be able to play the sport I'm interested in and not be labeled or frowned upon for wanting to be involved in something that has traditionally been more for girls.

I want to feel confident and safe when I speak up about gender equality and be able to do it respectfully. I want other kids to feel confident too so we can support each other.

I want to see people that I respect also learning about gender equality, and being open to changing their views and the way they go about doing things. I want teachers to really understand this stuff so things change at our school.

