

“BOYS CAN’T BE PRINCESSES”

An Understanding of Speech-Language Pathologists’ Perceptions of Gender Bias, LGBTQ+ Bias, and LGBTQ+ Related Issues When Working with Young Children

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PURPOSE STATEMENT

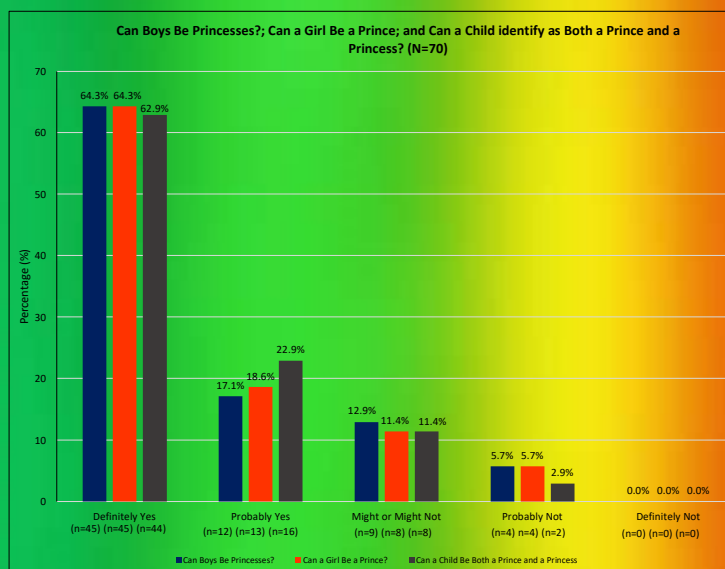
The purpose of this study was to investigate gender bias and LGBTQ+ bias that may be held by Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) which can impact clinical services provided to pediatric clients and their family members. This study investigated if SLPs have familiarity with terminology about gender identity, correct pronoun usage, gender bias, and LGBTQ+ related issues in clinical language assessments and practices.

METHOD

- The Researcher developed a Qualtrics survey of Speech-Language Pathologists about their potential personal bias towards clients who are gender non-conforming or have gender non-conforming families
 - Online recruitment included:
 - ASHA Special Interest Groups (SIGs 1, 14, 16);
 - ASHA Research Community Boards & ASHA SLPs in Schools site
 - ASHA’s Lesbian Gay Bisexual Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists (L’GASP members)
 - Social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram)
- 100 ASHA certified SLPs completed the survey.



Boys Can Be Princesses Too. (2020). Cover Photo [Photo]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/BoysCanBePrincessesToo>



Participants’ Ratings of Their Likelihood of Using Gender-Specific Pronouns and Making “Gender” Assumptions

	Extremely Likely 1	Moderately Likely 2	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely 3	Moderately Unlikely 4	Extremely Unlikely 5	n	M	SD
Assume someone’s gender based on client’s appearance	22.9% (n=16)	57.2% (n=40)	12.9% (n=9)	7.2% (n=5)	0.0% (n=0)	70	2.04	0.80
Use gender-specific pronouns towards a client	47.9% (n=34)	38.0% (n=27)	11.3% (n=8)	2.8% (n=2)	0.0% (n=0)	71	1.69	0.78
Assume a couple’s same-sex marital status	1.4% (n=1)	20.0% (n=14)	40.0% (n=28)	22.9% (n=16)	15.7% (n=11)	70	3.31	1.0
Assume a client’s family members’ gender pronouns based on their appearance	21.4% (n=15)	55.7% (n=39)	15.7% (n=11)	4.3% (n=3)	2.9% (n=2)	70	2.11	0.89
Use gender-specific pronouns when talking about others	54.4% (n=37)	30.9% (n=21)	13.3% (n=9)	1.5% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	68	1.61	0.77
Use gender-specific pronouns when talking about specific objects	12.9% (n=9)	22.9% (n=16)	31.4% (n=22)	17.1% (n=12)	15.7% (n=11)	70	3.00	1.24
Using gender-specific pronouns during a clinical session	55.1% (n=38)	31.9% (n=22)	10.1% (n=7)	2.9% (n=2)	0.0% (n=0)	69	1.61	0.78

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MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

- The first major finding was that Speech-Language Pathologists were aware that gender bias and LGBTQ+ bias exists and appeared to be willing to analyze and critique this bias and find solutions for resolution.
- A second major finding was that while Speech-Language Pathologists were able to acknowledge that bias exists and may be able to identify their own personal bias, they were less likely to critique their own personal bias (an indication of a lack of cultural sensitivity).
- The third major finding in this study was that SLPs agreed that there is bias in language assessment tools used. SLPs were able to identify language assessments that are gender-specific which do not consider gender non-conforming clients or their families. While SLPs are not able to change published language assessments, many provided testing and scoring alternatives or modifications that would potentially benefit the clients being assessed.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Speech-Language Pathologists should be open to trainings and have the willingness to do the work in order to provide for an all-inclusive space for their clients including cultural sensitivity training, access to this training in graduate programs, and monitoring language to ensure they are not using offensive terms. The more access that SLPs have to cultural sensitivity, the more competent they arguably will be to their clients and more specifically to their clients who are gender non-conforming or have gender non-conforming families.
- The second implication of this study is that SLPs need to lobby for more inclusive language assessments to be created for many different clients and which work to reduce bias. Additionally, SLPs should work on ways to uniformly adapt current assessments to be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ clients and their families.