

**More than just toys: Toys that represent impairment, their
online accessibility and diversity in Australia, and early
childhood educators' perspectives towards them**

Aliza Salvador

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Research**

**Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Human Sciences
Macquarie University
Sydney, Australia**

May 2017

CERTIFICATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled ‘More than just toys: Toys that represent impairment, their online accessibility and diversity in Australia, and early childhood educators' perspectives towards them’ has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Committee (Human Research), reference number: 5201600052 on 11 March, 2016.

Aliza Salvador

(42247721)

20th May, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my two supervisors, Dr Kathy Cologon and Dr Emilia Djonov. Kathy, I am eternally grateful for your kind-heartedness and everything that you have done for me – for sparking my passion for inclusion, and for believing in the potential of my study from day one. Your enthusiasm and commitment towards inclusion is truly inspiring.

Emilia, I thank you for taking me under your wing and sharing your immense knowledge with me. Without you, my thesis would not have taken the wonderful turns that it did. I appreciate your support, encouragement and guidance, and for always challenging me to do the best that I can.

Special thanks to the brilliant people I met at Macquarie University, especially my friends in HDR and ‘Team Inclusion’ (Katie, Zinnia and Amanda). I look forward to many more of our coffee dates in the future!

To my dearest family - Dad, Mum, Kuya, Alana, Ada and Henry – thank you, ‘Ohana’, for the ongoing motivation and unconditional love. To my fiancé Lawrence – I appreciate all of your patience and support. May your optimism be forever contagious, especially for pessimists like myself! I thank each of you for being with me through every step of this amazing journey.

Finally, I thank all of the educators who participated in my study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION BY THE CANDIDATE	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
LIST OF TABLES.....	VII
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
ABSTRACT	IX
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	X
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	XII
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 UNDERSTANDING ‘DISABILITY’ AND ‘INCLUSIVE EDUCATION’	2
1.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA	3
1.3 DISABILITY DISCOURSES IN CHILDREN’S MEDIA.....	4
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	5
1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS.....	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	7
2.2 THEORIES OF DISABILITY.....	7
2.2.1 THE MEDICAL/ SOCIAL MODEL DICHOTOMY.....	7
2.2.2 THE AFFIRMATIVE MODEL OF DISABILITY.....	9
2.2.3 RESISTANCE, TOWARDS AFFIRMATION.....	10
2.3 PERPETUATING ABLEISM THROUGH CHILDREN’S MEDIA.....	10
2.3.1 CHILDREN’S PICTURE BOOKS.....	12
2.3.2 CHILDREN’S MULTIMEDIA.....	14
2.3.3 CHILDREN’S TOYS.....	16
2.3.3.1 CHILDREN’S TOYS AS CARRIERS OF SOCIAL VALUES.....	16
2.3.3.2 STUDIES OF CHILDREN’S TOYS AND DISABILITY.....	18
2.4 THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR IN SUBVERTING ABLEIST IDEOLOGIES	19
2.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION AND GAPS IN THE RESEARCH.....	21
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	23
3.1 EXAMINING TOYS THAT REPRESENT DISABILITY (PART I)	23
3.1.1 DATA: AUSTRALIAN ONLINE TOY STORES.....	23
3.1.2 METHOD.....	25
3.1.2.1 ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY.....	26
3.1.2.2 TOYS REPRESENTING IMPAIRMENT	26
3.2. EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES OF EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS (PART II)	30
3.2.1 SURVEY PARTICIPANTS.....	30
3.2.2 SURVEY DESIGN	37
3.2.2.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS.....	38
3.2.2.2 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS.....	39
3.2.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	39
3.3 STUDY LIMITATIONS.....	39
3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	41
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	42
4.1 ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY	42
4.2 REPRESENTATION OF IMPAIRMENT	43
4.2.1 AGE.....	43

4.2.2 GENDER	44
4.2.3 TYPE OF CHARACTER	45
4.2.4 NAME	46
4.2.5 INDIVIDUALITY	47
4.2.6 MULTIMEDIA.....	48
4.2.7 IMPAIRMENT SIGNIFIER	49
4.2.8 GLASSES AND PIRATE CHARACTERS	50
4.3 EDUCATIONAL VERSUS NON-EDUCATIONAL	53
4.3.1 ACCESSIBILITY	53
4.3.2 REPRESENTATION OF IMPAIRMENT	53
4.3.2.1 AGE	55
4.3.2.2 GENDER.....	55
4.3.2.3 TYPE OF CHARACTER	56
4.3.2.4 NAME AND MULTIMEDIA	57
4.3.2.5 INDIVIDUALITY.....	58
4.4 EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS TOYS AND DIVERSITY	59
4.5 PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS THE AVAILABILITY OF TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT AND THEIR USE.....	61
4.6 PERSPECTIVES FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS WITH TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT	62
4.6.1 TYPES OF TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT	62
4.6.2 USE OF TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT	63
4.6.3 POPULARITY OF THE TOYS AMONG CHILDREN	63
4.6.4 EDUCATORS' VIEWS ON THE USE OF THE TOYS IN ECE SETTINGS (GROUP A)	64
4.6.5 EDUCATORS' VIEWS ON THE USE OF THE TOYS IN ECE (GROUP B)	68
4.7 BARRIERS THAT PREVENT EDUCATORS FROM MAKING TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT AVAILABLE TO THE CHILDREN WITHIN THEIR SETTING.....	74
4.8 EDUCATORS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE CONCEPT OF 'DISABILITY'	76
4.8.1 MEDICAL MODEL PERSPECTIVES	77
4.8.2 PERSPECTIVES THAT RESIST THE MEDICAL MODEL.....	78
4.8.3 VIEWS ON DISABILITY AND TOYS, AND EDUCATORS' LEVELS OF EDUCATION	79
4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY	80
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	82
5.1 THE ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY OF TOYS (PART I).....	82
5.1.1 TOYS REFLECTING COMMON DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT STEREOTYPES.....	82
5.1.1.1 IMPAIRMENT AS PERTAINING TO ELDERLY CHARACTERS	83
5.1.1.2 IMPAIRMENT VERSUS FEMININITY AND BEAUTY	83
5.1.1.3 IMPAIRMENT AS GLASSES AND PIRATES.....	84
5.1.2 IMPAIRMENT AND BEING HUMAN	84
5.1.3 IMPAIRMENT AWARENESS VERSUS IMPAIRMENT AS HUMAN VARIATION	86
5.2 EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES (PART II)	87
5.2.1 SIGNIFICANCE FOR ALL CHILDREN	87
5.2.2 THE 'INVISIBILITY' OF DISABILITY	88
5.2.3 POPULAR CULTURE AS TOKENISTIC, NOT EDUCATIONAL.....	89
5.2.4 THE IMPACT OF MEDICAL MODEL PERSPECTIVES	91
5.2.5 HIGH COSTS, LOW QUALITY AND LIMITED ACCESSIBILITY	92
5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY	94
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	95
6.1 ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY OF TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT IN AUSTRALIAN ONLINE TOY STORES.....	95
6.1.1 KEY FINDINGS FROM RQ1: WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING THE ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY OF CHILDREN'S TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT IN ONLINE TOY STORES IN AUSTRALIA? 95	
6.1.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR TOY MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS.....	96
6.1.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS.....	97
6.2 EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS AND ON DISABILITY.....	98
6.2.1 KEY FINDINGS FROM RQ2: WHAT ARE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON TOYS THAT REPRESENT IMPAIRMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS AND ON DISABILITY?	98
6.2.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS.....	99

6.2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR TOYS CREATORS AND TOY PROVIDERS.....	100
6.3 KEY STUDY CONTRIBUTIONS	100
6.4 KEY IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	101
REFERENCES	104
APPENDIX 1	114
APPENDIX 2	121
APPENDIX 3	124
APPENDIX 4	125
APPENDIX 5	139
APPENDIX 6	142
APPENDIX.7.....	143

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Australian online toys stores analysed and their ranking	24
Table 3.2: The number of bodies analysed in each online toy store	28
Table 3.3: Operational definitions and indicators for each category	29
Table 3.4: The areas explored in survey	38
Table 4.1: Results for the category of <i>age</i>	44
Table 4.2: Results for the category of <i>gender</i>	45
Table 4.3: Results for the category of <i>type of character</i>	46
Table 4.4: Results for the category of <i>name</i>	47
Table 4.5: Results for the category of <i>individuality</i>	48
Table 4.6: Results for the category of <i>multimedia</i>	49
Table 4.7: Results for the category of <i>impairment signifier</i>	51
Table 4.8: Age category upon removal of pirates and glasses	55
Table 4.9: Gender category upon removal of pirates and glasses	56
Table 4.10 Type of character category upon removal of pirates and glasses.	57
Table 4.11: Name and Multimendia categories upon removal of pirates and glasses.	57
Table 4.12: Individuality category upon removal of pirates and glasses	58
Table 4.13: The availability of toys and diversity reflected	60
Table 4.14: Types of toys reported by the educators	63
Table 4.15: Type of impairment reflected by the toys reported by the educators	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Online accessibility levels and classification descriptions.....	26
Figure 3.2: An example of a toy and the bodies identified as having a visible impairment	27
Figure 3.3: Job roles of the educators	33
Figure 3.4: Educators' highest level of education	33
Figure 3.5: Educators' years of experience.....	34
Figure 3.6: Types of service areas educators are teaching within	35
Figure 3.7: The age ranges of the children taught by the educators	36
Figure 3.8: The percent of children who do and do not experience disability taught by the educators.	36
Figure 4.1: A comparison of the toys' levels of accessibility.....	43
Figure 4.2: Comparison of bodies representing <i>eyepatch</i> , <i>pegleg</i> and <i>hookhand(s)</i> before and after removal of pirate characters	52
Figure 4.3: Number of impairment signifiers in educational vs. non-education websites.....	54
Figure 4.4: Representing diversity vs. representing impairment	62
Figure 4.5: Educators' views towards the use of the toys (Group A).....	65
Figure 4.6: Group A and Group B's views on the helpfulness of the toys	69
Figure 4.7: Educators' views towards the use of toys that represent impairment (Group B).....	70
Figure 4.8: Barriers reported by educators	74
Figure 4.9: Educators' understandings of the concept of 'disability'	77

ABSTRACT

Children's toys have been suggested to play both a passive and active role through reflecting and shaping individual attitudes towards marginalised groups in society, including people who experience disability (Ellis, 2015; Sutton-Smith, 1986, 2009; Barton & Somerville, 2012). Consequently, disability advocates are recognising and problematising the small amount of toys that represent impairment, particularly now that efforts to include children who experience disability are increasing within education settings and beyond. Despite this, there is little empirical research on toys that represent impairment. In this study, I commit to viewing impairment from the affirmative model (Swain & French, 2000). I draw on resistance theory (Friere, 1970), and borrow elements from critical multimodal discourse analysis (van Leeuwen, 2013), in the methods and interpretations. The aims of this study were twofold: to explore the accessibility and diversity of children's toys that represent impairment within major Australian online toy stores, through content analysis; and to investigate early years educators' perspectives on the use of these toys in their practice, through the distribution of an online survey. Findings from the content analyses reveal that toys that represent impairment were limited in range, mainly supporting common disability/ impairment stereotypes. This is further complicated when contrasting educational websites with non-educational websites. Findings from the survey suggest that educators regard toys that represent impairment as important and beneficial for the education of young children overall; however, educators continue to face multiple barriers impeding their ability to obtain and use such toys. These findings have implications for persons responsible for providing toys to children, and methodological implications for the critical disability studies field.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ableism: “Discriminatory and exclusionary practices that result from the perception that being able-bodied is superior to being disabled” (McLean, 2008, p. 607).

Early childhood teacher: Refers to an educator who holds a teaching qualification that is recognised by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Authority (ACECQA).

Early childhood education and care settings: Encapsulates a range of types of early childhood education services, including long day care, occasional care, family day care, Multi-purpose Aboriginal Children’s Services, preschools and kindergartens, and similar services, as recognised by ACECQA.

Educator (Early childhood): In this thesis, an educator includes persons working directly with children in any early childhood education and care service or school age care settings. An educator can either hold a qualification (certificate, diploma or degree), or be working towards a qualification.

Inclusive education: Involves consideration of presence, practices and attitudes. In an inclusive setting, all children, regardless of impairment or any other form of human diversity, are educated together. Within such a setting, all barriers that hinder children’s participation are completely removed. As specified by Cologon (2013a, p. 6), genuine inclusive education involves “embracing human diversity and valuing and supporting the belonging and full participation of all people together”.

Multimodal texts: Texts that use two or more modes of communication to create meaning.

People who experience disability: In this thesis, ‘disability’ is regarded as an experience that results from an unaccommodating and ableist society (This term is unpacked further in Chapter Two). Consequently, ‘a person who experiences

disability' is used throughout this thesis to recognise the social imposition of disability, and distinguish that from impairment, as well as to acknowledge the person first (rather than the impairment first).

Popular culture: In relation to young children, popular culture often refers to those “cultural texts, artefacts and practices” (Marsh, 2005, p. 2) that attract masses of people and are consequently mass-produced.

Toy: An object that is intended for a child to play with. In this thesis, a ‘toy’ (in a post-modern sense) is considered to be “a central mass medium for contemporary social life, either as models (replicas), miniatures or interesting objects (with or without reference to the real world) or as integrated parts of other mass media” (Caldas-Coulthard & van Leeuwen, 2002, p. 94).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
OOSH	Out of School Hours Care
UN	United Nations
UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Disability advocates such as Ellis (2015) and Atkinson (2016a) have deemed the absence of toys that represent disability/impairment to be problematic for young children¹ who do and do not experience disability. The limited manufacturing and availability of such toys in contemporary society has attracted much concern, as evident across various media platforms. Responses to these concerns include mothers independently transforming commercialised dolls into ‘disability dolls’ (Atkinson, 2016b); the creation of campaigns petitioning for the global toy industry to include positive representations of disability in their toys (Mulshine, 2015), for example #Toylikeme (Atkinson, 2016a); and commercial toy manufacturers such as Makie, Playmobile and Lego creating and selling toys that represent people who experience disability (Beaumont-Thomas, 2016).

Representations of disability within the media either perpetuate or disrupt discriminatory, or ableist, beliefs, assumptions and understandings towards disability (Swain & French, 2000; Oliver, 2004; Haller, 2010). These depictions therefore play an important role in the inclusion or exclusion of people who experience disability in general society. Given that efforts to include children who experience disability are increasing within educational settings and beyond, and that discriminatory attitudes towards disability are developed in the early years (Innes & Diamond, 1999; Dyson, 2005), the role of an early childhood educator in creating an environment that fosters young children’s positive attitudes towards disability is critical. The study presented in the present thesis explores representations of impairment in children’s toys and the perspectives of early childhood educators on using these toys in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings.

In this chapter, I present the aims and guiding questions of the present study. I first introduce the way disability and inclusive education are conceptualised within the thesis (and unpack these and related concepts further in Chapter Two), and overview key issues in inclusive education in the Australian context. This discussion

¹ In this thesis, children aged birth to eight are considered a ‘young child’.

will be contextualised with literature on resistance and children's media. I conclude by discussing the significance of this thesis, and presenting an outline of its structure.

1.1 Understanding 'disability' and 'inclusive education'

Dominant social constructions of disability have defined and continue to influence major debates about segregated education (where children who experience disability are excluded from regular schooling - whether physically or otherwise) and inclusive education (where all children are valued and participating fully in the same setting, without any segregation or exclusion). These constructions play a major role in the research into the educational outcomes of children who experience disability, and in turn the policy and practices that shape these outcomes.

Although constructions of disability have undergone constant development and debate throughout history, the 1960s saw a major theoretical shift in reconceptualising disability, moving from a 'medical model' to a 'social model' perspective (Oliver, 1981); with the former accepting impairment as problematic for both the individual and society, and the latter defining disability as the discriminatory social attitudes and practices resulting from a failure to accommodate impairment as a form of human diversity. A third construction of disability – the affirmative model (Swain & French, 2000) – was created to build on the social model in order to create a perspective of disability that frames impairment as a valued form of human diversity and as entirely “non-tragic” (p. 569), which implies that people who experience disability can live positive and fulfilling lives without tragic experiences stemming from having an impairment.

Subscribing to the affirmative model of disability in this thesis requires that 'disability' and 'impairment' be acknowledged as distinct concepts, as this distinction is a guiding factor that separates the social and affirmative models from the medical model of disability (UPIAS, 1976). In the social and affirmative models, 'disability' refers to the oppressive actions of society, which hinder the participation of individuals with impairments. 'Impairment', on the other hand, is the biological, medical label attributed to an individual, so that an impairment can be described, for example, as a 'physical impairment'. As a toy as an artefact is limited in its ability to only show impairment, and not disability, the term 'toys that represent impairment'

will be used throughout the thesis, which also means ‘toys that represent people who experience disability’.

With these shifts in conceptualising disability, what constitutes ‘inclusion’ has changed, and the inclusion of young children into regular educational settings continues to be a major topic of current interest. The understanding of inclusive education in this thesis is based on Cologon’s definition (2013a, p. 6), which acknowledges genuine inclusive education as involving “embracing human diversity and valuing and supporting the belonging and full participation of all people together”. Therefore, inclusive education is not only about children who experience disability, but about all people within any given educational context. Inclusive education works to remove any barriers in order to achieve full participation of all children, including those who experience disability; it is free from any segregation or exclusion (Cologon).

1.2 Inclusive education in Australia

Children’s right to inclusive education is articulated in both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (CRPD) (2007), both of which Australia has ratified. As stated in Article 24.1 of the CRPD:

State Parties [including Australia] recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, State Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels ...

Subsequent to this ratification, the right for all children’s full participation in education has been further documented through additional documents, such as the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009) and the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012), which further emphasise that people who experience disability hold the right to equity, participation and inclusion in education.

Despite Australia’s commitment to inclusive education, segregation in education is still prevalent and even rising across Australian states and territories (Graham & Sweller, 2011; Anderson & Boyle, 2015). One major reason for this difficulty is the dominance of medicalised views of disability, including educators’

negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children who experience disability (COAG, 2011; Cologon, 2012, 2013a).

Educators' ability to act as catalysts for inclusion depends on their perspectives towards impairment and disability, for educator attitudes towards marginalised groups and educator pedagogies and practices in responding to injustice go hand in hand (Srinivasan, 2016; Lalvani, 2015). Educators are thus influential in disrupting the ongoing cycle of exclusion, discrimination and ableism surrounding children (McLean, 2008; McCray & McHatton, 2011); but this can only be achieved if they themselves continually question, problematise and resist ableism and dominant 'medical model' attitudes towards disability.

1.3 Disability discourses in children's media

Media portrayals of disability are regarded as powerful due to their potential to either support or destabilise discriminatory attitudes towards disability (Haller, 2010). For ECE specifically, research has acknowledged the influence of media portrayals of disability on children's (Giroux, 2011) and educators' (Samsel & Perepa, 2013) attitudes towards disability. This has led to a growing body of research exploring disability representations in various forms of children's media, all of which have yielded similar results that highlight the lack of quality portrayals of disability in society (see Chapter Two).

Much of the research to date has focused on children's picture books, which recognise the efficacy of children's books in disestablishing or even preventing ableist attitudes among young children (e.g. Prater, 2003; Morgan, 2009; Matthew & Clow, 2007; Golos & Moses, 2011; Ayala, 2010; Cologon, 2013b). Mendoza and Reese (2001) posit that picture books that represent disability are beneficial for both children who do and do not experience disability, with characters who experience disability serving as relatable role models and a catalyst for inclusion.

Although researchers have yet to empirically address the potential of toys that represent impairment, children's toys have been recognised to play a major role in shaping children's understandings of the world (Marsh, 2005), particularly in relation to marginalised groups in society (Barton & Somerville, 2012; Ellis, 2015; Sutton-Smith, 1986, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2009; Caldas-Coulthard & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2002, 2003) (See Section 2.3.3). The insights offered by these researchers and

theorists imply that children's toys (similar to children's picture books) do not merely play a passive role in reflecting societal attitudes within a certain era, but also play an active role in shaping individual attitudes towards marginalised groups in society. This suggests that a lack of disability toys would both passively insinuate and actively further perpetuate ableist views towards people who experience disability.

1.4 Significance of the study

Two primary research questions (RQ) were investigated in the present study:

RQ1: What is the current situation regarding the online accessibility and diversity of children's toys that represent impairment in online toy stores in Australia?

RQ2: What are early childhood educators' perspectives on toys that represent impairment in early childhood settings and on disability?

There is growing evidence to suggest the powerful influence of media representations of disability on children's perspectives of disability (See Chapter Two). However, research that has explored representations of disability in children's media has primarily focused on children's picture books (see Section 2.3.1.), with few focusing on other forms of media that children engage with (Bond, 2013; Martinez-Bello & Martinez-Bello, 2016; Hodkinson, 2012). This is despite the media attention asserting the absence of toys that represent impairment/disability, and the proposed advantages of exposing children who do and do not experience disability to such toys (Ellis, 2015). The present study is significant as it responds to the current issue of representations of impairment in children's toys.

The relationship between teacher beliefs towards disability and practices for the inclusion of children who experience disability has been regularly documented (See Chapter Two). Previous research (albeit limited in its quantity and range) has explored the use of children's media that represent impairment/disability in early childhood education (ECE) (Karambatsos, 2010; Morgan, 2009). However, there is a marked lack of research exploring teacher perspectives toward using toys that represent impairment for ECE. This study is, therefore, also significant in its inclusion of teacher perspectives, acknowledging the crucial and influential role of teachers in children's responses to media texts (Solis, 2007).

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One has introduced the study, situating it with the affirmative model of disability, as well as the impact of resistance and children's media on inclusion. Chapter Two explores in depth the theoretical underpinnings guiding this study and a critical review of previous research on media representations of disability. Specifically, it reviews studies of disability discourses in children's media and of educators' perspectives on and role in supporting inclusion through media that represent impairment and diversity. Chapter Three presents the methods used to investigate the guiding questions of the present study. Chapter Four reports on the findings of Part I and Part II of the study, which focus on Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, respectively. Chapter Five then interprets these results with reference to relevant theory and previous research, and draws parallels between the results of Part I and Part II. Chapter Six revisits and reflects on these findings in relation to the aims and research questions guiding the study, reviews the strengths and contributions of the study, and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter reviews the research in the two key areas to which the present study contributes: (1) disability discourses in children's media; and (2) educators as facilitators of inclusion. It first outlines theories of disability in order to position the present study within the broader area of disability studies, and to explain the affirmative view of disability to which this thesis subscribes. The review presented in this chapter will highlight the role of children's toys and early years educators in facilitating the inclusion of people who experience disability, and thus the need for, and significance of, the present study.

Literature for this review was obtained through library databases, including Macquarie University's 'MultiSearch', A+ Education, Education Research Complete, PsycINFO and Google Scholar. Included within these platforms were peer-reviewed journals, online databases, books and dissertations. The key terms used for the searches included a combination of the following: media, representation, portrayal, disability, impairment, children, special needs, handicapped, children's books, picture books, children's literature, popular culture, toys, dolls, educator perspectives, oppression, marginalisation, and culture. Research papers were further filtered through the following inclusion criteria: (1) studies must be peer-reviewed; (2) studies must be in English; and (3) studies must focus primarily on children.

2.2 Theories of disability

Most disability studies align with two major and oppositional theories of disability: (1) the medical model; and (2) the social model. These models are particularly influential as perspectives for examining both representations of disability in the media and education practices. More recently, theorists have promoted a third model – the affirmative model – as a framework for resisting ableism.

2.2.1 The medical/ social model dichotomy

The guiding factor that separates the medical model from the social model is the perceived relationship between 'impairment' and 'disability'. In the medical model,

impairment and disability are accepted as interchangeable concepts. Disability is, therefore, seen as biologically intrinsic to an individual, and thus disability is, or is caused by, an individual's impairment (Thomas, 2004). In describing the medical model, Oliver (1996) claims: "The assumption is, in health terms, that disability is a pathology and, in welfare terms, that disability is a social problem" (p. 30). Consequently, the role of society in disabling individuals goes unacknowledged. Impairment is, instead, viewed as parallel to 'brokenness', and thus as a 'problem' that should be 'fixed' or 'cured' (Cologon & Thomas, 2014; Thomas, 2004, World Health Organization (WHO), 2017).

The medical model has been criticised for contributing to the marginalisation and exclusion of individuals with impairments through its 'normal' versus 'abnormal' 'subnormal' divide, and promoting the view that individuals who do not experience disability are superior to individuals who do (Campbell, 2009). In turn, the latter group become 'other' than what is socially constructed as 'normal'. This discriminatory practice is termed 'ableism' (Campbell, 2009, p. 9). Like other forms of discrimination towards minority groups, ableism involves unequal power distributions amongst individuals within society, particularly between individuals who do and do not have impairments.

Criticisms of the medical model led to a radical condemnation of the model in the 1960s, with disability activists exposing its inability to account for society's role in disabling people (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). This resulted in the creation of the social model of disability. Central to this model was the differentiation between impairment and disability proposed by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976). Impairment was initially defined as "lacking part or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body" (p. 14); then was later reconceptualised to include all physical, sensory and cognitive impairments. In contrast to the medical model, disability is defined as "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities" (UPIAS, p. 14).

Whereas in the medical model disability is defined as a problem within an individual, disability in the social model is acknowledged as resulting from social and political processes (Lindon, 1998). Finkelstein (1975) states, "[a] person is disabled

when he or she is socially prevented from full participation by the way society is arranged” (p. 30). This understanding is reinforced by Oliver (2004, p. 21), who claims that, “the social model of disability is nothing more complicated than a clear focus on the economic, environmental and cultural barriers encountered by people who are viewed by others as having some form of impairment – whether physical, mental or intellectual” (p. 21). In the social model, then, disability is a form of discrimination resulting from society, rather than from impairment within an individual.

2.2.2 The affirmative model of disability

More recently, in stark opposition to the medical perspective, Swain and French (2000) have proposed a non-tragic view of disability that they have termed the ‘affirmative model’. It is regarded as ‘non-tragic’ in that it postulates that people who experience disability can live positive and fulfilling lives without tragic experiences stemming from having an impairment. This model aligns with the social model, maintaining the understanding of disability being an experience caused by an ableist society rather than a person’s impairment. However, Swain and French discriminate between the social model and affirmative model. The authors criticise the social model for inadequately recognising living with impairment as being entirely non-tragic, claiming: “Whilst the social model is certainly totally incompatible with the view that disability is a personal tragedy, it can be argued that the social model has not, in itself, underpinned a non-tragedy view” (p. 571). Despite its focus on eradicating disabling barriers, the social model perspective in itself does not automatically lead to positive perceptions of living with impairment as impairment is completely disconnected from disability in this model. To address this issue, the affirmative model builds on elements of the social model while adopting a view of disability that acknowledges impairment, and does so in a way that is entirely non-tragic.

Through the affirmative model, disability is perceived as “a positive, personal and collective identity”, with “disabled people leading fulfilled and satisfying lives” (p. 571). This model focuses on the valuable experiences of people with impairments as they engage in “creating positive images of themselves [and] demanding the right to be the way they are – to be equal but different” (French & Swain, 2004, p. 38). In line with the belief of disability activists such as Garland-Thomson (2004), the

affirmative model thus advocates for impairment to be regarded as a form of human diversity. As with other forms of human diversity, impairment is then seen as a reality that should not only be accepted and accommodated, but also valued as enhancing diversity in the world. The affirmative model justifies the need for addressing tragedy models of disability that underpin much of today's media discourse (Swain & French, 2000).

2.2.3 Resistance, towards affirmation

As ableism continues to pervade society today (Haller, 2010; Swain & French, 2000), young children continue to be enculturated into values that disable, discriminate and exclude people with impairments. To overcome that challenge and build truly inclusive approaches to education that align with the affirmative model of disability, Cologon (2014) argues, we need to resist the medical model. This argument is based on resistance theory and can be understood through Friere's (1970) notion of the 'cycle of certainty'. In this case, the 'cycle of certainty' refers to this process of enculturation into the dominant medical model thinking of disability. Friere writes:

The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a 'circle of certainty' within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary, the more radical that person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. (p. 39)

Friere acknowledges being 'radical' in this sense as engaging in critical thinking and critical reflection with the consideration of social justice. This allows one to recognise the oppression present in dominant ways of thinking, in order to transform it. As Cologon (2014) explains, it is this process of questioning and resisting the 'cycle of certainty' which characterises the medical model of disability that can lead to 'affirmative model' thinking, and thus promote greater inclusion.

2.3 Perpetuating ableism through children's media

The way that disability is perceived by society continues to be largely shaped and influenced by representations disseminated through powerful discourses, namely in the media. Cultural portrayals of disability within the media have created and reinforced stereotypes that have dictated what it means to be 'normal', and in contrast, what it means to be 'subnormal' or 'abnormal', with people who experience disability

commonly depicted as falling into the latter category (Cologon & Thomas, 2014; Haller, 2010).

Ablelist images within the media are acknowledged as reflecting and reinforcing the ableism present throughout society (Swain & French, 2000; Oliver, 2004). Issues relating to the connection between ableism and media representations of disability are emphasised by Haller (2010), who writes:

... media narratives that ignore, devalue, or misrepresent disability issues reflect the ableism of society through those narratives. Media content is shaped by dominant societal beliefs about disability that come from the power of the dominant able-bodied culture, which defines and classifies disability. When these dominant beliefs ignore or represent disabled people with stereotypes, this is known as ‘ableism’ (p. iii).

In addition, research conducted by Zhang and Haller (2013) establishes that individuals use the media as primary sources to derive information about people who experience disability. This is particularly the case for people who do not immediately engage with individuals who experience disability.

Therefore, the way that disability is represented assists in either perpetuating, or disestablishing, discriminatory views towards disability. Although media portrayals have been suggested to be able to positively shift the way that disability has been presented throughout time (Devotta, Wilton & Yiannakoulis, 2013), a significant body of research into media portrayals continues to indicate a near absence of positive and realistic representations of disability across numerous media platforms around the world, including print (e.g. O Malley-Keighran & Coleman, 2014; Wardell, Fitzgerald, Legge & Clift, 2014), digital media (e.g. Wardell et al., 2014; Foss, 2013), and other media that are part of children’s popular culture, such as toys; the latter which are the focus of this study (Matthew & Clow; Bond, 2013). Such representations are deemed problematic for perpetuating misunderstandings and negative perceptions towards people who experience disability.

In the following sections, the discussion of media impacts will hone in on research into children’s media, including children’s popular culture. Giroux (2011) considers popular culture (See definition in Glossary) to be a powerful “teaching machine” (p. 7) that is highly influential in shaping people’s identities and

perspectives. It is therefore important to consider the impact this type of media as well as children's media in general have on children's attitudes towards marginalised groups in society, and more specifically towards people who experience disability. As the early years have been established as being particularly crucial in promoting or thwarting positive understandings of disability (Favazza & Odom, 1997; Innes & Diamond, 1999; Killoran et al., 2004; Dyson, 2005), empirical research has investigated how disability is constructed throughout children's media.

Due to the paucity of literature (particularly empirical research) on the topic of toys that represent disability/ impairment (Ellis, 2015), the importance of children's toys that represent impairment will be paralleled with research on other children's media platforms (namely children's picture books) and toys that represent other marginalised groups, both of which have a stronger evidential base.

2.3.1 Children's picture books

As picture books are prominently used in early years settings, a strong body of research has focused on representations of impairment and disability in young children's literature. This research has established the efficacy of using picture books in aiding the disestablishment or prevention of ableist attitudes in young children (e.g. Morgan, 2009; Golos & Moses, 2011; Ayala, 2010; Cologon, 2013b). Cologon argues that, "children's literature can be a powerful medium through which we can explore a non-tragedy understanding of disability and move forward with embracing diversity and living life together" (p. 109).

Exposing children to picture books that appropriately represent realistic characters that experience disability has been recognised to be beneficial for children who do and do not experience disability. Mendoza and Reese (2001) frame these benefits through their mirror and window analogy. In this analogy, characters who experience disability within books are acknowledged to serve as relatable role models for children who do, and do not, experience disability. These characters reflect impairment as a form of human variation, thus assisting children to develop a positive sense of self (mirror). Concurrently, such characters are also said to allow children to indirectly learn about the experience of disability (window).

Despite these proposed benefits, empirical evidence indicates a near lack of portrayals of impairment and disability in children's books. Koss (2015) carried out a

content analysis of 455 contemporary children's picture books published in the U.S. From the pool of books analysed, 44% included a person with an impairment (physical, emotional, and/or cognitive). However, removing the instances of characters with glasses significantly lowered this figure to 9%, with only two books representing cognitive impairment.

A near lack of portrayals of disability within children's picture books has also been previously reported in the UK (Bookmark, 2006) and Australia (Cologon, 2013b). Bookmark, an organisation that offers resources that aim to promote inclusive children's books, conducted a study that adopted a social model approach to investigate children's views towards children's books, including those that represent disability/impairment. Workshops and discussions about these books with young children who do and do not experience disability highlighted that there were "simply not enough images of disability in books" (p. 6). The children who participated in the study expressed the view that it was important not only to have a greater frequency of characters with impairments in children's books, but also to increase the quality of books that do have these characters.

Moving beyond the question of whether picture books represent impairment and disability, Golos and Moses (2011) consider the values such representations can promote in their study exploring the representations of characters in children's books who are 'D/deaf'. This study refers to those who are part of the Deaf community as 'Deaf' (with a capital 'D') and those who are unable to hear as 'deaf' (with a lower-case 'd'). 'D/deaf' refers to both of these groups. Through content analysis of the text in 20 children's books, which identified whether texts referred to cultural perspectives – i.e. referring to Deaf culture (for example, 'mentioning the Deaf community') and others as reflecting medical perspectives (for example, 'focusing on a D/deaf character's inability to hear or speak'), Golos and Moses found that deafness was mainly portrayed in a medicalised way (518 out of 729 references). An example of this included 'discussions of fixing the deafness'. In contrast, the data contained a mere 101 references to cultural perspectives: For example, 'referencing American Sign Language'. Golos and Moses problematise these findings, acknowledging the influence that Deaf characters have on a child's self-esteem:

"All of these portrayals do not teach deaf children to value themselves as Deaf individuals; rather, they suggest to deaf children that they may not be accepted

or appreciated unless they can acquire devices and communication strategies that enable them to "fit" into a hearing world". (p. 280).

An earlier study conducted by Solis (2007) yielded similar results. Solis examined both text and image in seven contemporary children's picture books published in the U.S, through the lens of critical disability studies and critical literacy, and found that an overwhelming amount promoted ableist values (for example, portraying a character who inspires fear and/or pity, or portraying an impairment as a disadvantage). This is further complicated by examining, as Solis does, disability representations in relation to issues related to gender, race and social class.

In sum, the studies reviewed in this section demonstrate that both the frequency and the quality of portrayals of impairment and disability are important to assess in order to detect and help dismantle or avoid ableism in children's media (Bookmark, 2006; Prater, 2003), for as Cologon (2013b) notes: "both the representation and a lack of representation of people who experience disability convey messages and reflect social views" (p. 104).

2.3.2 Children's multimedia

Although not as widely researched as children's books, research has been conducted on representations of disability/impairment in other multimedia for children such as television shows, images on the walls of early years settings, and electronic games. Bond (2013) acknowledges the influential role that television can have on children's beliefs about disability. Bond's investigation of representations of physical impairment on American children's television shows revealed that such portrayals were inadequate in both quantity and quality. Bond's content analysis of 407 episodes of children's television programmes demonstrated that characters with a physical impairment were "nearly invisible" (p. 415), constituting only 0.4% of all characters. These characters, however, were represented positively – as 'equal' to characters that did not have physical impairments; for example, the character of Mr. Solomon in the television show 'Clifford's Puppy Days' uses a wheelchair, yet is satisfied with his life and serves as a role model to other characters due to his painting ability, a skill unrelated to his impairment. At the same time, there was very limited diversity among characters with impairments, who were predominantly 'elderly' (61.1% of the entire sample), white (88.9%) and male (61.1%) and not central to the story, with 72.2%

being minor or background characters. Bond problematises this: “if television provides children with a window to the world from which to view individuals different from themselves, children may be devoid of information about people who are physically disabled” (p. 415).

The ‘invisibility’ of people who experience disability is not restricted to children’s television. One study indicated similar results related to media representations of disability/impairment within the ECE context. Supporting efforts to promote anti-bias education in ECE and taking a critical disability studies approach, Martinez-Bello and Martinez-Bello (2016) examined the representations of 420 bodies displayed in images on the walls of nine ECE classrooms in Spain. This involved coding each depicted body into predetermined categories, which included determining whether or not the body had a visible impairment (‘disability’ was the term used in the study). This content analysis identified only one body as showing an impairment. As in Bond’s (2013) study, this body belonged to an older adult. Ostrosky, Mouzourou, Dorsey, Favazza and Leboeuf (2015) stress the importance of making disability and impairment visible within the early childhood curriculum, in order to promote understanding of human diversity. The near absence of impairment representations on the walls of early childhood settings identified in Martinez-Bello and Martinez-Bello’s study thus implies a lack of regard for this importance.

Focusing on children’s electronic media, Hodkinson (2012) also takes a critical disability studies approach in examining the extent to which such media reflect human diversity. Hodkinson examined 494 electronic resources made available to young children in four primary schools through content, textual and discourse analysis, of illustrations, photographs and video clips in these resources, and concludes that portrayals of disability/ impairment were “extremely limited” (p. 256). In Hodkinson’s study, too, the most prevalent images of diversity – including but not limited to those representing impairment – depicted white, adult males. In addition, the sample of images representing impairment included a prevalent 44.1% portraying people with glasses. The second and third most common type of presentation in this sample depicted people who use wheelchairs (17.7%) and pirates (11.7%). As acknowledged in the research on picture books, research on other children’s media also confirms the significance of examining both the presence and absence of impairment/disability representations and the nature of such representations.

2.3.3 Children's toys

2.3.3.1 Children's toys as carriers of social values

While there are only a very small number of studies of children's toys and disability, the impact of toys in instilling cultural values in children has long been recognised in various scholarly fields. From a cultural studies viewpoint, Roland Barthes (1972) identifies children's toys as "microcosms of the adult world" (p. 53) that play a powerful role in shaping children's understanding of their world:

Toys basically represent the institutions of our societies: the Army, Broadcasting, the Post Office, Medicine (miniature instrument-cases, operating theatres for dolls), Schools, Hair-Styling (dryers for permanent waving), Transport (trains, Citroens, Vedettes, Vespas, petrol-stations), and Science (Martian Toys) (p. 53).

In his highly interdisciplinary research, play theorist Brian Sutton-Smith (1986, 2009) also argues that children's toys, as a form of popular media, continually reflect the culture in which children are presently immersed. Toys mirror a society's changing beliefs, attitudes and values towards critical issues, such as gender, race and class, across time and space. In a similar vein, combining media and disability studies, Katie Ellis (2015) explains that most toys represent what is perceived as 'normal' and accepted by society within the particular period of time in which they are created.

From the perspective of historical archaeology, Barton and Somerville (2012, 2016) have examined 103 racialised toys available between 1880 and 1930, in the US. They argue that these toys reflect and encourage perception of certain races as 'other' and 'inferior', and promote ideologies of White superiority; the high demand for such toys coupled with the racist views that dominated American society during these times meant that the toys were made available to children for whom race and class stereotypes already were or would become 'actual' and 'normal'. In this way, these toys reinforced race- and class-based oppression. Barton and Somerville's research also illustrates the potential of studies of toys and other media from the past to reveal shifts in social values and discourses over time.

Toys' role in representing social values and their potential to perpetuate as well as subvert dominant discourses of power have also been the focus of social semiotic studies (Caldas-Coulthard & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2002, 2003; Hall, 1997;

Van Leeuwen, 2009). In these studies toys are seen as “semiotic objects of great cultural significance” (Coulthard & van Leeuwen, 2002, p. 5) whose design, through features such as the use of colour, texture, and potential for movement, can reflect dominant social values such as ideologies of babyhood (Coulthard & van Leeuwen, 2001), gender (Coulthard & van Leeuwen, 2002), and race (van Leeuwen, 2009).

Van Leeuwen incorporates this focus on specific design features in his examination of the ways toys recontextualise social roles and practices, and proposes a framework for the critical discourse analysis of toys. The framework comprises three broad categories - role, identity and symbolic meaning - that draw attention to the ways toys construct different types of ‘social actors’. In terms of role, interactive dolls, designed for the child to do something *to* them, such as teddy bears or baby dolls, are distinguished from representational dolls, which are designed to perform specific actions (e.g. Action Man) or to adopt/model certain poses (e.g. Barbie). The category of identity involves three main distinctions: (i) dolls can have unique design if they are handmade or they can be generic and further subcategorised into named (e.g. Paddington Bear, Spiderman) vs. nameless (e.g. a baby, a fireman, a Barbie); (ii) toys can be designed and marketed as individual (e.g. Spiderman), dyadic (e.g. Ken and Barbie) or collective (e.g. Playmobil); and (iii) identity can be signified by physical attributes such body build, facial features and skin colour and/or constructed through cultural, and changeable, ones such as clothes and accessories. Symbolic meanings may be reflected and (re)produced through the toys’ design as well as related discourses – see, for example, Caldas-Coulthard & van Leeuwen (2003) study of the way people talk about their teddy bears, or their 2001 study of discourses of babyhood in the marketing and use of toys for babies – and connections to folklore or media narratives. As van Leeuwen’s (2009) analysis of Playmobil characters and their accessories illustrates, the framework can be used to reveal both those social roles and identities, and associated values, designed into toys and those that are excluded.

In addition to the importance of studying toys as artefacts, the studies reviewed above acknowledge that children’s engagement with toys also plays a role in assigning meanings to toys, which may not always align with the values built into the toys themselves (Caldas-Coulthard & van Leeuwen, 2002; Ellis, 2015; Sutton-Smith, 2009). In other words, the meanings toys carry can be “reinterpreted/ re-appropriated and recreated by the child in play” (Caldas-Coulthard & van Leeuwen,

p. 96), depending on the needs and interests of a child in a given situation (van Leeuwen, 2009). Nonetheless, researching toys' design is a valuable first step in understanding their potential to reflect and shape the ideologies that dominate a particular socio-historical context.

2.3.3.2 Studies of children's toys and disability

While research has emphasised the role children's media can play in either perpetuating or disestablishing stereotypes, there is a near absence of studies on toys that represent impairment (Ellis, 2015). A considerable body of research examines adaptive toys designed for children with impairments (e.g. Hamm, Mistrett, Ruffino, 2006; Hsieh, 2008, 2012; Spain et al., 2015). Whilst these studies aim to promote greater inclusion, their focus falls outside the scope of the present study. Explorations of toys that represent impairment, on the other hand, are of direct relevance to this thesis and have focused on (1) the discourses surrounding these toys; and (2) the ways children engage with such toys.

Ellis (2015) investigated how toys that represent disability/impairment reflected social attitudes in the context of their production and reception, including through two case studies - 'Share a Smile Becky' and 'Downi Creation's dolls with Down syndrome'. 'Share a smile Becky' is the first Barbie character with an impairment, a doll with a wheelchair, and reflected the introduction of the disability discrimination legislation in the United States. While responses towards this doll were varied, adult bloggers communicated the doll's positive impact on their "sense of selves" and "coming to terms with their disability" (p. 27). Downi Creation's dolls with Down syndrome, by contrast, received a less welcoming response and the company closed down shortly after their introduction. Ellis argues that the immediate discontinuation of the 'Down syndrome dolls' reflects a culture unaccepting of impairment. More generally, like Barton and Somerville (2012), Ellis views children's toys as a valuable ground for both revealing and challenging perspectives towards marginalised groups in society, in this case, as in the present study, people who experience disability.

A different approach was taken by Saha et al. (2014), who incorporated a doll labelled as having "Down Syndrome features" and a doll labelled as having "typical physical features" (p. ix) in their methodology. While 'doll tests' are a common

approach for exploring perspectives towards impairment and stigma in general, in Saha et al.'s study the aim was to examine specifically whether children with Down syndrome preferred to play with dolls representing Down syndrome or with dolls with typical features. During a 'free-play session', the children exhibited preference towards the latter, spending more time playing with these dolls than with those with 'Down syndrome features'. In individual interviews, the children who spent more time engaging with the dolls with 'typical physical features' during the play session stated their preference verbally as well. Furthermore, children not aware of their diagnosis of Down syndrome preferred the dolls with 'typical physical features' more than children who were aware of their diagnosis and who did not show a greater preference for either doll. This may suggest that children aware of their diagnosis had a greater acceptance for Down syndrome and human variation overall. Saha et al. relate their findings back to the common perception of certain physical features being more 'ideal' and 'desirable' than others. Saha et al. thus focused on a toy marketed to families, organisations and medical providers as being to "foster a better understanding of Down syndrome" (p. 1892) in particular, rather than on toys and representations of impairment as an aspect of human diversity in general. Nevertheless, their study highlights the need for empirical research to examine children's engagement with toys that represent impairment and its potential to foster an affirmative understanding of disability as well as positive self-concept and self-esteem in children.

Furthermore, both studies reviewed in this section point to the importance of toys that represent impairment and their use to reflect and perpetuate or challenge dominant views towards people who experience disability.

2.4 The role of the educator in subverting ableist ideologies

Educational spaces, particularly ECEC settings, are considered in this thesis as crucial for disrupting children's enculturation into the dominant medical-model way of thinking about disability (See Section 2.2.3). This critical role is further stressed with research suggesting that medical model thinking is still dominant among children (De Boer, Pijil & Minnaert, 2012), and that attitudes adopted in childhood are likely to be carried into adolescence and adulthood (Dyson, 2005).

The relationship between educator attitudes towards disability and inclusive education has also been well documented (Cologon, 2012; Jung, 2007; Sharma et al., 2008, McHatton & Parker, 2011; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Baglieri, 2008). This link is theorised by Srinivasan (2016, p. 8), who claims that, “what we ‘choose’, our educational choice, is related to what we ‘see’, our image of society”. Therefore, educators’ perspectives towards diversity will impact upon all aspects of their pedagogical practice, including how they respond to it.

Research on the role of early years educators in facilitating young children’s resistance to ableism with a particular emphasis on children’s media have taken two directions and focused on: (1) the educators’ role in selecting appropriate children’s media to subvert ableist attitudes; and (2) their role in guiding children to think critically about representations of disability in various media.

Taking the first direction, while acknowledging both the paucity of children’s media that represent disability/impairment (see Section 2.3), Cologon (2013b) explored pre-service educators’ critical analysis of children’s picture books by asking 137 pre-service educators to locate and assess a children’s book that included a character who experience disability. In reviewing a range of such books, the participants in this study were able to acknowledge both covert and overt ableism, and develop a critical, ‘social model’ or even ‘non-tragedy’ standpoint towards impairment. The study thus emphasises the role educator perspectives and their ability to detect ableist ideologies in their choices of media sources that present disability for the education of young children.

The second direction, which focuses on critical teaching (Giroux, 2011) that encourages children’s resistance to dominant ableist discourses in the media is exemplified by Karambatos’ (2010) study of the role of educators in shaping the responses of five 7-year-old children who did not experience disability towards children’s literature. The children were asked to read five books which included characters who experience disability. Initial discussions with the children revealed cases of inadvertent ‘othering’ of these characters; for example, one child described these characters as being “all a little different” (p. 114). Through the guidance of the educator (the researcher), however, the children were led to discuss issues related to social justice and express their feelings about the discrimination towards the characters in the books. This study then highlighted that anti-bias education

(particularly anti-ableism) does not involve merely educating children about impairment as a form of diversity, but also engaging them in critical discussion about privilege and power (Hackman, 2005; Lalvani & Broderick, 2013).

In sum, the studies reviewed in this section draw attention to the critical role educators play in facilitating children's learning about disability, which is influenced by their own knowledge of and perspectives towards people who experience disability.

2.5 Chapter conclusion and gaps in the research

This chapter has situated the present study within existing literature on disability discourses in children's media and on the crucial role of educators in facilitating inclusion. I argued that the affirmative model of disability, resistance theory, and critical multimodal discourse analysis are valuable for investigating toys that represent impairment and educators' perspective towards these toys. I also presented a literature review highlighting the power of media representations, particularly of children's toys, to support children's developing understanding of disability and either hinder or facilitate inclusion.

The literature review identified two significant research gaps, which are both addressed in this study. Firstly, little empirical research was found on representations of disability/impairment in children's media platforms, with much of the available research examining children's books, and fewer studies on children's popular culture. Whilst the crucial nature of children's toys in mirroring and reinforcing discourses about marginalised groups in society has been well established, a marked paucity of research on toys that represent disability/impairment is evident. The present project addresses this gap as it investigates the online accessibility and diversity of toys that represent impairment in Australian online toy stores.

Secondly, although research has indicated a relationship between educator attitudes and their ability to support inclusive practices and pedagogies, few studies have examined educator perspectives towards representations of disability/impairment in media for children. As the early years have a formative influence on children's later attitudes and practices, early years educators play a crucial role in encouraging children to resist ableism (Cologon, 2014). The present study will expand our existing

understanding of this role by examining early childhood educators' perspectives towards both toys that represent impairment as well as diversity and disability.

The methods used for the current research in order to address these two gaps will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The literature review presented in Chapter Two identified the need for empirical research on the availability and range of toys that represent impairment and on early childhood educators' perspectives on these toys. Adopting an exploratory approach, this study addresses this need through two research questions, and comprises two concurrent parts:

- 1) What is the current situation regarding the online accessibility and diversity of children's toys that represent impairment in online toy stores in Australia? (Part I)
- 2) What are early childhood educators' perspectives on toys that represent impairment in early childhood settings and on disability? (Part II)

This chapter presents the research methods used in this study, including an explanation and justification of the research sample, design and instruments in relation to the study's aims. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 Examining toys that represent disability (Part I)

3.1.1 Data: Australian online toy stores

A total of seven Australian online toy websites were analysed in Part I, in order to explore the online accessibility and diversity of children's toys that represent impairment in Australia (See Table 3.1). I chose to rely on web data, as educators use these websites to buy toys (as reflected in the participants' survey responses in Part II). In addition, while websites do not offer access to toys as three-dimensional artefacts, they allow access to a greater number of toys than would be the case with visits to physical toy stores.

The original intention was to explore toys that were marketed specifically for early childhood educators. Examination of the two major online toy stores for educators in Australia, *Modern Teaching Aides* and *Educational Experience*, however, revealed a very limited number of toys that represent impairment. The search was therefore broadened to include general online toy stores in Australia,

which some educators reported to still use to purchase resources in their responses to the survey conducted in Part II. This also allowed for the two types of online toy stores – i.e. educational vs. non-educational websites – to be compared.

The online toy stores included in this sample were identified through a Google search (www.Google.com), using the search phrase, ‘toy store online Australia’. Another researcher and myself independently conducted this search, and the results of the first three pages of each search were compared. The ‘competitive intelligence’ tool offered by ‘Alexa’ (www.alexa.com) identified the five most popular websites from the results, thus representing the five websites that interested consumers would visit if they were seeking online toy stores through Google. These five websites were used for the present study. Websites that did not predominantly sell toys (e.g. online department stores) were excluded from the sample.

Table 3.1: Australian online toys stores analysed and their ranking

Name	Link	Ranking compared with other sites in Australia (according to Alexa.com)
Australian online educational suppliers		
Modern teaching aides	https://www.teaching.com.au/	3,840
Educational experience	http://www.edex.com.au/	14,733
Major Australian online toy stores		
Toys “R” Us	http://www.toysrus.com.au	1,074
Mr toys toyworld	https://www.mrtoys.com.au	7,489
Toyworld	https://www.toyworld.com.au	10,606
Online stores Australia	https://www.onlinetoys.com.au	12,444
Kidstuff	http://kidstuff.com.au/	14,920

Note: The ranking scores (according to Alexa.com) represent the websites’ ranks in comparison to all Australian websites. According to Alexa.com, this rank is determined “using a combination of average daily visitors to the site and pageviews on the site over the past three months”. A ranking of 1 represents the site with the highest combination of visitors and page views.

The toys included in the analysis are listed in Appendix 1.

3.1.2 Method

In Part I, quantitative content analyses were conducted to explore the online accessibility and diversity of children's toys that represent impairment in Australian online toy stores. Quantitative content analysis encompasses the examination of both explicit and inferred messages within a text (Bryman, 2012). The following steps are involved in traditional quantitative content analysis, according to McQuail (1989):

(1) Choose a ... sample of content; (2) establish a category frame of external referents relevant to the purpose of the enquiry; (3) choose a 'unit of analysis' from the content; (4) match content to category frame by counting the frequency of the references to items in the category frame, per chosen unit of content; (5) express the result as an overall distribution of the total universe or sample in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the sought-for referents (p. 183).

Haller (2010) endorses quantitative content analysis as beneficial in exploring how minority groups, particularly the disability community, are portrayed in the media. According to Haller, such a method is "well-suited to studying how media presentations correlate ... with the social and cultural factors in place at a given time" (Haller, p. 27).

In the present study, quantitative content analysis was employed to address RQ1, highlighting the diversity and online accessibility of toys and how these representations perpetuate certain disability constructs (both inferred and explicit). This method has been used in previous studies within the critical disability studies field to explore the portrayals of disability in various forms of children's media, including to explore disability portrayals in children's television shows (Bond, 2013), children's books (Koss, 2015), and children's movies (Scherman, 2011). Adopting this method allowed me to investigate the frequency of impairment representations, as well as the context of portrayal for characters with impairments, throughout these various media platforms.

Quantitative content analyses of the Australian online toy stores were conducted from June to August 2016. If the toy offered a description, it was also used to support the analysis. The focus was on toys that represent visible impairments (i.e.

those that can be seen or involve a visible adaptation – e.g. glasses). This is because, compared to books, a toy as an artefact represented online relies considerably on what is visible, and is unable to represent impairments and construct experiences of disability through other modes such as language or genres such as narrative, as is the case in picture books and children’s multimedia.

3.1.2.1 Online accessibility

In order to explore online accessibility, indicators of online accessibility were developed specifically for the present study. The indicators for this category were *level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4*. These levels and their meanings are presented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Online accessibility levels and classification descriptions

Level 1: Located through searching the website for general terms such as ‘disability’, ‘impairment’, ‘impaired’, ‘disabled’ or ‘special needs’.
Level 2: Located through searching for a specific impairment descriptor (e.g. ‘wheelchair’).
Level 3: Located through searching categories/ website sections that refer to disability/ impairment (e.g. a section labeled ‘disability toys’).
Level 4: Located through general browsing through a website.

For this study, level 1 was recognised as the highest level of online accessibility, as simply searching for the word ‘disability’ would be easier than browsing and examining individual webpages within a website with the aim of locating toy products that represent impairment. Each toy visibly shown as representing an impairment was classified as falling into one or more of these levels. For accessibility, each ‘toy product’ (i.e. a packaged toy) that represent impairment was the unit of analysis.

3.1.2.2 Toys representing impairment

After each website was searched for toys that represent impairment and the level of online accessibility of each toy was determined, a number of eligibility criteria were developed and applied to determine which of the bodies (within each of the packaged

toys previously analysed for accessibility) would be included in the analysis of representations of impairment. Firstly, images and descriptions of each toy were briefly scanned in order to identify the bodies that visibly represent impairment. Bodies that did not visibly represent impairment were not included in the sample. For each online toy store, each body that represent a visible impairment was included and counted separately in the total sample. Once a body was selected for analysis, screen shots were taken of the toy, including screen shots of the image(s) and the description available on the website. These screen shots supported the analysis of diversity among toys that represent impairment. For each packaged toy, each body (whether it be human, animal or other) that represent impairment was analysed as a separate unit. For example, from the set of dolls shown in Figure 3.2, five of the six bodies were included in the analysis. (See Appendix 2 for a more detailed example).

Figure 3.2: An example of a toy and the bodies identified as having a visible impairment



For packaged toys that included accessories, a doll would only be classified as representing impairment if an accessory was clearly intended for the doll. For example, a Barbie with a wheelchair accessory would only be included if an image or the writing on the package reveals that the Barbie herself uses the wheelchair; a nurse doll sold with a wheelchair, but not verbally or visually depicted as using it by

contrast, would be excluded from the study. Impairment accessories were not counted by themselves, and those sold as individual items were also excluded.

If the description or image of a body within a toy was unclear on a given online toy store's website, a Google search of the toy was performed in the attempt of finding a clearer image of the toy. Toys that could not be clearly seen and had not been seen by the researcher in physical toy stores visited at the beginning of this study were excluded from the sample.

Applying the eligibility criteria described in this section resulted in building a corpus of 547 bodies. The number of bodies analysed from each of the five online toy stores is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: The number of bodies analysed in each online toy store

Website							
	E1	E2	NE1	NE2	NE3	NE4	NE5
Number of bodies	71	80	26	17	89	101	163
Total(Educational)= 151					Total (Non-Educational)= 396		
Total (All)= 547							

Note: 'E' refers to 'Educational website' and 'NE' refers to 'Non-Educational website'

Each body in the sample was then subject to content analysis. The analysis can be described as 'multimodal', as it considered how images and language as different modes represented each body. The coding of each body employed categories developed specifically for this study by drawing selectively on Martinez-Bello and Martinez-Bello's (2016) content analysis of representations of disability in images on the walls of ECEC settings, and on van Leeuwen's (2009) framework for the critical discourse analysis of toys as 'social actors' (See Section 2.3.3.1). The category of '*external media*' and its subcategories '*connected*' vs. '*not connected*' were also added, recognising - like Caldas-Coulthard and van Leeuwen (2002) - that many toys have intertextual links with characters originating from other media such as children's television shows, and that these links may affect the way these toys represent impairment and disability. The categories developed for the present study are

presented, alongside their operational definitions and subcategories, in Table 3.3. The subcategories for the category of ‘impairment signifier’ were developed during the analysis of the toys, and therefore capture only those signifiers available in the sample, rather than other possibilities.

Examining the nature of impairment representations in the sample involved two additional steps: (1) removing bodies that had glasses and those representing pirates from the overall sample count, as previous research (Hodkinson, 2012; Koss, 2015) had identified these representations of impairment as less stigmatised and more common than others; and (2) comparing the online accessibility and range of the toys in educational websites versus non-educational toy stores, so as to consider whether and how these two types of toy stores reflected common stereotypes regarding impairment disability.

Reliability analysis

After being trained by the researcher to use the coding scheme presented in Table 3.3, an assistant independently double-coded a randomised subsample of approximately 15% (n= 84 bodies) of the data in order to determine the reliability of the coding scheme. The assistant’s coding and the original coding were compared, and a sufficient agreement on the subsample was reached, ranging from 98% to 100% for each category and subcategory.

The clear-cut nature of ‘online accessibility’ levels did not warrant double coding.

Table 3.3: Operational definitions and indicators for each category

Categories	Operational definition	Subcategories
Age	Based on behaviour and appearance according to the image(s) or description e.g. elderly having white hair and wrinkles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child • Adult • Elderly • Unclear
Gender	The image(s) or description reflected a body whose basic characteristics represented males or females based on hairstyle, clothing, physical stature, the presence or absence of facial hair and other distinguishing characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female • Unclear

Type of character	Based on behaviour and appearance according to the image(s) or description e.g. animals with animal features and superheroes as having special powers like flying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human • Animal • Fantasy/superhero
Name	Whether or not the body represented was given a name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named • Nameless
Individuality	Whether the body represented was sold in a group or individually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual • Group
Multimedia	Whether the body represented is connected to other media. If this was unclear through the image(s)/ descriptions, the researchers performed a Google search to determine whether or not the body was connected to other media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected • Not connected
Impairment signifier	Based on the image(s) or descriptions e.g. the body would be classified within the indicator of 'wheelchair' if seen using a wheelchair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glasses • Walking stick • Cast • Wheelchair • Walking frame • Eyepatch • Blind (excluding 'Glasses' and 'Eyepatch') • Leg brace(s) • Hook hand(s) • Pegleg • Stretcher. • Missing eye • Hearing aid • Crutches • Bandage(s) • Smaller fin • Amputation • Conjoint twins • Prosthetics

3.2. Exploring perspectives of early years educators (Part II)

3.2.1 Survey participants

The participants in Part II of this project were 59 early childhood educators who completed an anonymous online survey designed to explore the research question, 'What are early childhood educators' perspectives on toys that represent impairment in early childhood settings and on disability?'

Educators were recruited through emails sent to ECEC settings² in Sydney, Australia. A list of ECEC settings were collected through seeking settings listed on the Australian Government's website, titled 'MyChild' (www.mychild.gov.au). The settings were located by searching the website for following regions: Central Northern Sydney NSW, Central Western Sydney Region NSW, Inner Sydney Region NSW, Inner Western Sydney Region NSW, and Lower Northern Sydney NSW. The email addresses of every setting within these regions were collected and duplicates were removed. This information is freely accessible for public viewing. This produced a list of 1521 ECEC settings.

After distributing the survey to these settings, the early childhood educators within each setting were provided the option to complete the survey and/or pass it onto other educators within their setting. It was requested that one educator from each room complete the survey. As this study specifically focused on the area of Sydney, the educators completing the survey were required to be working within a setting in Sydney. Educators were also asked to fill out the survey only if they worked directly with children for the majority of the day, as the present study explores how toys are used with children. One educator's responses were still included within the analysis despite not meeting this criterion, due to the relevance of the educator's answers. The present study aimed to explore the perspectives of all educators, thus the educators were not required to be university trained.

From the initial pool of 1521 surveys distributed via email (including 2 follow-up emails), a response rate of only three percent (50 responses) were received. In addition, approximately five percent of emails failed to send due to invalid email addresses detailed on the MyChild website. In order to increase the amount of survey responses, advertisements of the study were distributed to two online platforms: Early Childhood Australia WebWatch issue 237³ and the NSW Early Childhood Teachers Facebook page⁴. A copy of the advertisement can be found in Appendix 3. Ultimately, a total of 80 surveys were submitted. As the respondents were able to skip questions, surveys that did not answer every question were still included in the

² OOSH settings and kindergartens were included in this sample as they covered the early childhood age range.

³ <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-webwatch/webwatch-index/april-june-2016/eca-webwatch-issue-237-june-2016/>

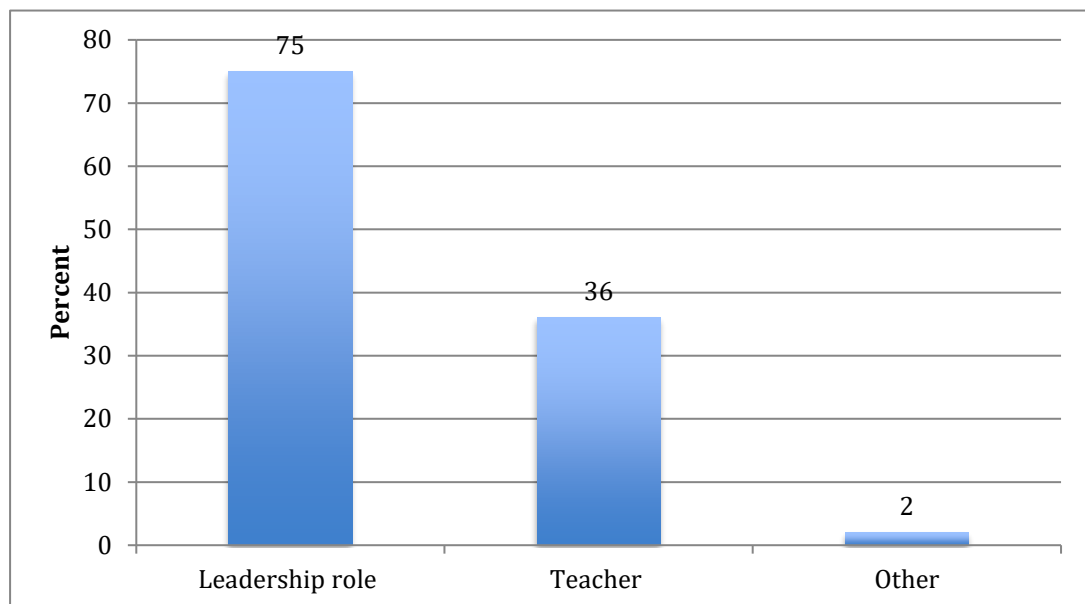
⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/302549249900903/>

assessment if they answered the first question of Section 4 – i.e. whether their setting had toys that represent disability/ impairment. Extracting responses that did not answer this question resulted in a final count of 59 usable surveys. These surveys formed the basis of the Part II data analysis. Of them, only 45 answered all of the required questions. As this study reports on purely descriptive statistics, and as such does not intend to extrapolate any conclusions about a full population, the remaining 14 surveys were still usable and included in relevant aspects of the analysis.

Most of the participating educators (n=44, 75%) indicated having a leadership role (director, room/ group leader, nominated supervisor, educational leader, 2nd in charge and coordinator), with many listing more than one role. This may be due to the fact that the recipients of the invitation emails could have been those in leadership positions, and as such chose to complete the survey themselves. A total of 21 (or 36%) indicated their role to be an ‘educator’/ ‘teacher’, with 13 (22%) of these educators reporting an ‘early childhood teacher’ role. The remaining educators indicated being a ‘casual staff’ member (n=1, 2%) or an assistant (n=1, 2%). Figure 3.3 summarises the job roles of the educators.

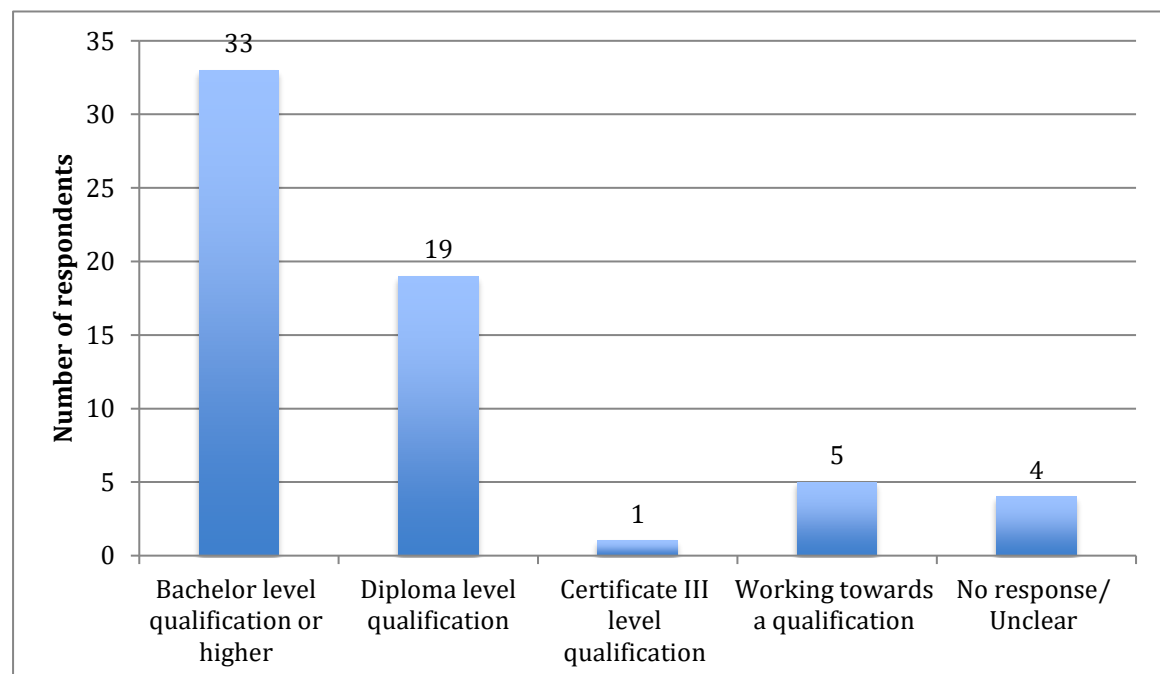
From these educators, the majority indicated holding a Bachelor’s-level degree or higher (n=33, 56%), 19 (32%) indicated holding a Diploma-level qualification, one (2%) indicated holding a Certificate III-level qualification, and five (8%) indicated that they were working towards completing a qualification. Four (7%) educators offered no response or offered an unclear response (e.g. ‘TAFE’ or ‘degree’). Again, the high frequency of educators reported to hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher could be due to the possibility that those in leadership positions directly received the invitation email and therefore chose to complete the survey themselves. This may have influenced their understanding of disability and inclusive education depending on the courses on disability and inclusive education that were offered throughout their degree. Figure 3.4 summarises the educators’ highest level of education.

Figure 3.3: Job roles of the educators



Note: Educators were able to list one or more options

Figure 3.4: Educators' highest level of education



Note: Educators were able to list one or more options. Though most respondents specifically mentioned that their degree was within the area of education, it was often unspecified specifically what degree was held as many just reported 'Bachelor' without specifying whether their degree was in early childhood.

Many of the educators were highly experienced, with 37 (63%) indicating working within the early childhood sector for 10 years or over, which suggests that their responses were likely to reflect strong familiarity with Australia's ECEC sector. The educators' years of experience are summarised in Figure 3.5.

The majority of the educators indicated currently working within a long daycare centre (n=44, 75%), 11 (19%) a preschool setting, four (7%) an OOSH setting, and four (7%) reported working within other settings (family day care, kindergarten and occasional care). Figure 3.6 presents the types of service type areas within which educators are teaching.

Figure 3.5: Educators' years of experience

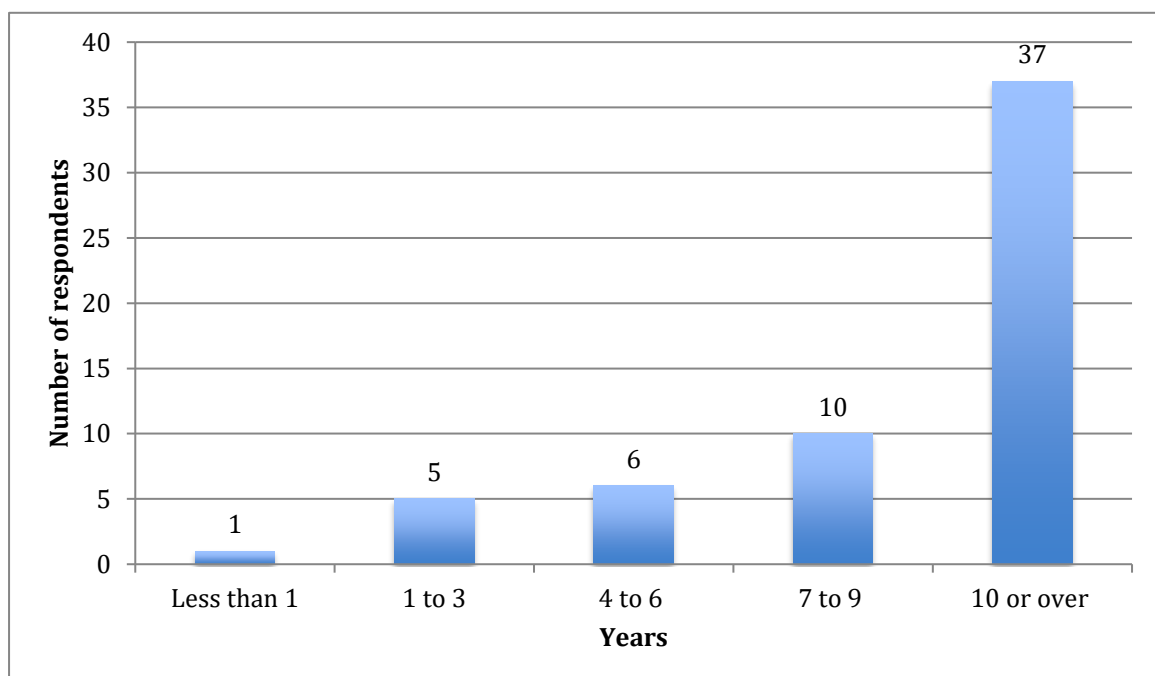
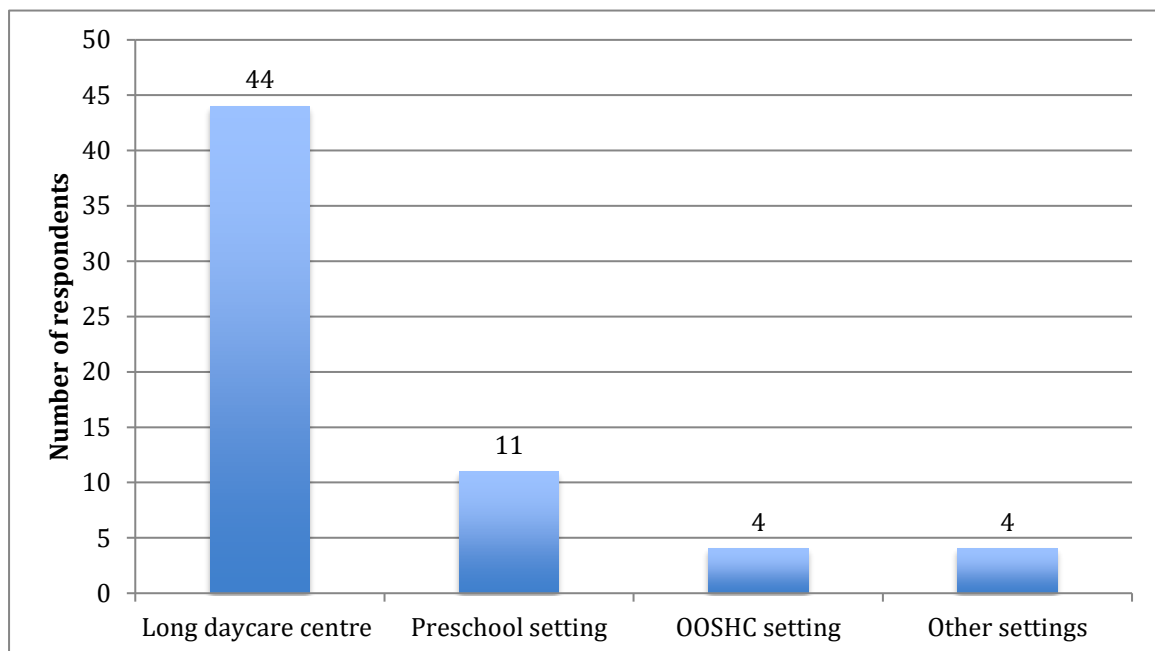


Figure 3.6: Types of service areas educators are teaching within



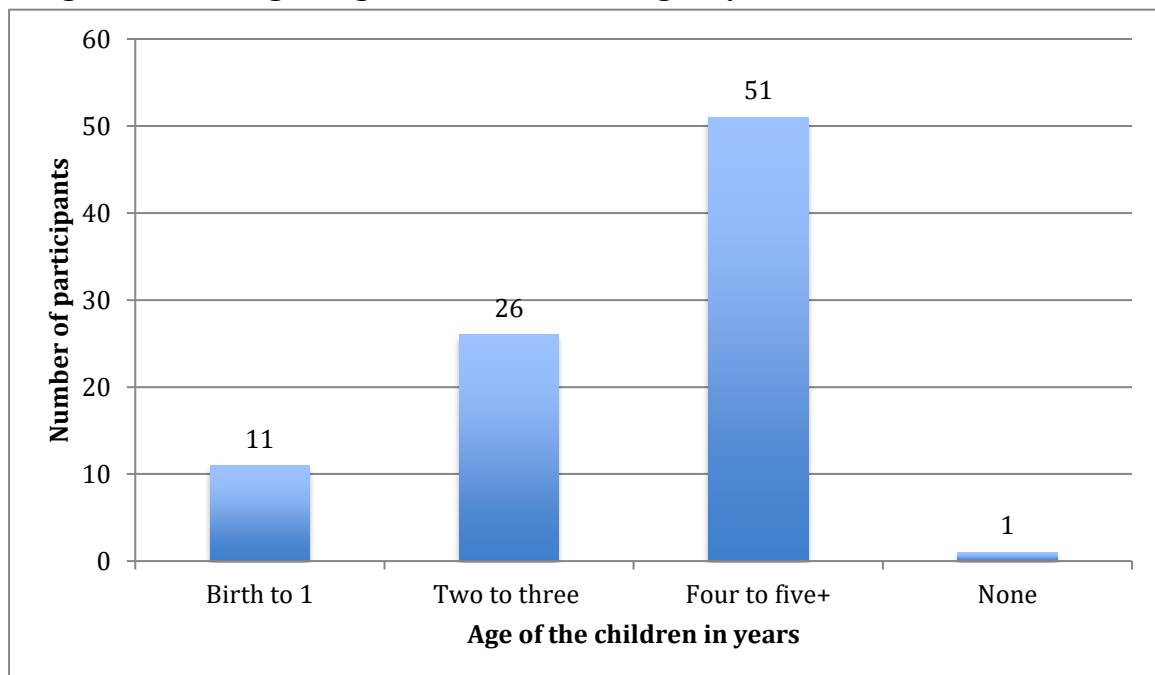
Note: Educators were able to list one or more option

Although comparing educators depending on the age group they work with was not an aim of the study, it is worth noting that the respondents as a whole group have experience across the early childhood prior-to-school spectrum of age groups, and their responses were thus likely to reflect a range of different perspectives (see Figure 3.7 for a summary of the age ranges of the children taught by the educators). The educators indicated teaching 4-5+ year olds (n=51, 86%), 26 (or 44%) indicated teaching 2-3 year olds, and 11 indicated teaching birth-1 year olds (19%). One (2%) reported to not engage in teaching the children directly.

As shown in Figure 3.8, 44 (65%) of respondents reported that children labeled⁵ with an impairment attended the setting, while 15 (25%) reported that this was not the case.

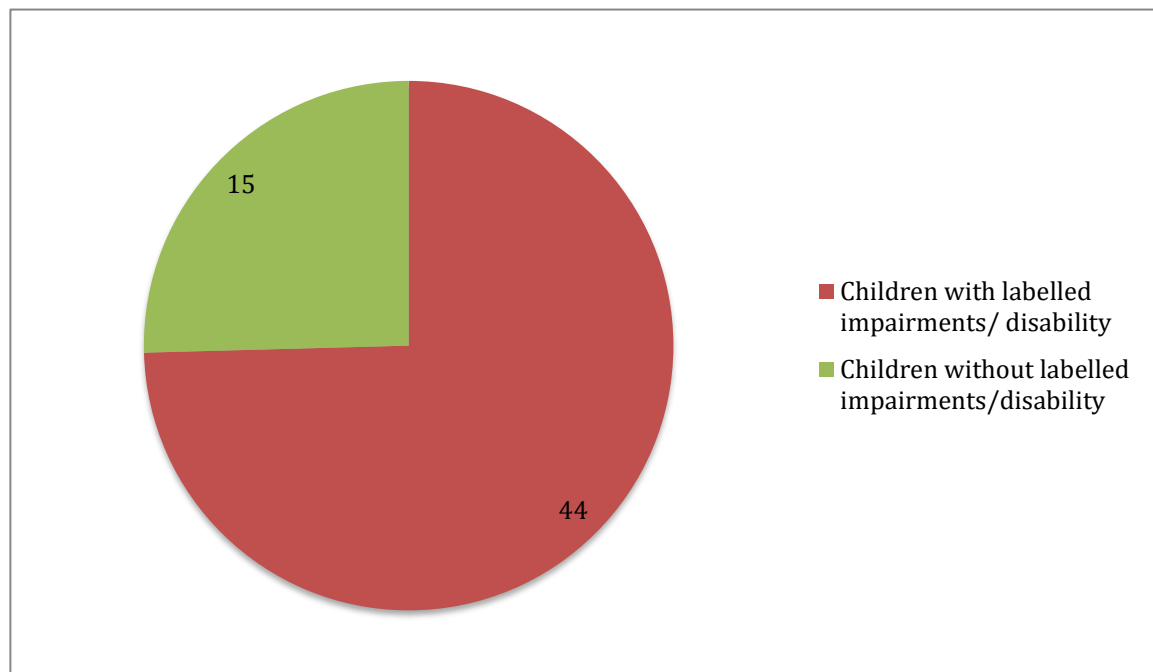
⁵ Children who are formally diagnosed with an impairment.

Figure 3.7: The age ranges of the children taught by the educators



Note: Educators were able to list one or more option. One (2%) educator reported to not engage in teaching the children directly (indicated by 'none').

Figure 3.8: The percent of children who do and do not experience disability taught by the educators.



3.2.2 Survey design

In recognition of the crucial role that educators' attitudes play in the success or failure of inclusive education (see Section 2.4.), the online survey in Part II of this project was designed to explore the perspectives of early childhood educators towards the use of toys that represent impairment for the education of young children and their understanding of disability in general. Surveys with similar formats, particularly through the inclusion of open-ended questions, have been used to explore the attitudes and beliefs of educators towards inclusion and disability (e.g. Cologon, 2012; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2008) and towards the use of popular culture for the education of young children (e.g. Dickie & Shuker, 2014). Surveys allow responses to be gathered at a faster rate than other methods such as interviews, which was particularly useful for the present study, given the short timeframe for data collection. The inclusion of open-ended questions ensured individuals were able to clarify and elaborate on their answers to the close-ended questions, thus also providing more contextual information to these answers (de Vaus, 2013).

The survey was constructed using the 'SurveyMonkey' online survey development software (<https://www.surveymonkey.com>). The survey was piloted with four educators before its distribution to early childhood centres. As this is a new area of research, the questions within this survey were created specifically for this present study (see Appendix 4 for a copy of the survey). The survey comprised a series of 34 questions, including multiple choice, Likert, and open- as well as closed-answer formats, organised into six sections, which are described in Table 3.4.

Sections 2 and 3 of the survey aimed to contextualise the findings of Section 4. Section 2 explored the educators' perspectives towards toys in general. It is acknowledged that educators' perspectives towards the use of toys in general may impact their perspectives towards the use of toys that represent impairment. As the concept of 'toys' can be interpreted in varied ways, this also sought to highlight what the educators reported to be 'a toy'. Section 3 aimed to highlight how many educators had toys that represent diversity more broadly in comparison to toys that represent impairment more specifically.

Section 4 presented different questions for educators who in Section 2 had indicated that they do not have toys that represent impairment within their settings

(Group A) and for those who had indicated that their settings had such toys (Group B).

Included within Section 4 were three questions (3c.iii-iv) aiming to explore how the toys are used in three types of experiences: planned experiences, dramatic play, and free play. In the EYLF, experiences are acknowledged to be planned or unplanned (free play) by the educator (p. 9), all of which stem from children's interests and education curriculum documents. This includes dramatic play, in which children are able to "make a narrative by sharing knowledge through plot lines of play, character role play, and re-enactments" (Karabon, 2017, p. 907). Children's knowledge of the world is shaped and reflected through such play (Cecchini, 2008).

Table 3.4: The areas explored in survey

Section	Areas explored
1	Background information of the educator and their settings.
2	The availability and use of toys within the educators' settings.
3	The diversity of toys within the educators' settings.
4	The prevalence and use of toys that represent impairment within the educators' settings.
5	The educators' understanding of disability and inclusion.
6	Additional comments

3.2.2.1 Quantitative data analysis

The survey was open for a period of three months to give educators adequate time to complete it. *SPSS Statics for MAC*, Version 22 (IBM, 2013), was used to analyse the statistical data gathered from the survey in Part II. As the present study aimed to address an area with limited research, descriptive statistics were used; which, according to Gersten (2001), is crucial in assisting to "elucidate problems or issues" (p. 46). Quantitative data were analysed for frequency distribution, in order to understand early childhood educators' perspectives toward the use of toys that represent disability in ECEC settings.

3.2.2.2 Qualitative data analysis

Data collected from the open-ended questions from the survey in Part II were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data were imported and coded through NVivo qualitative data analysis software, Version 11.4.0 (QSR International, 2016). The themes were created in an inductive manner rather than predetermined (Bryman, 2012). Themes emerged from the data upon first reading through the responses for each open-ended question. After developing the themes, responses were then read a second time; and next, were coded to one or more of the themes. A single response could be coded to more than one theme, but could not be coded more than once to a given theme. The analysis of the open-ended questions was considered alongside the quantitative findings from the survey, in order to gain a clearer and deeper understanding of the educators' responses from the multiple-choice questions.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations

This research has been considered and approved as meeting the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) by the *Macquarie University Research Ethics Committee* (Reference: 5201600052) (See Appendix 5). Issues regarding obtaining informed consent, upholding confidentiality and anonymity, and avoiding coercion, were discussed and approved throughout this process.

Details of the study and its voluntary nature were outlined within the emails that invited early childhood educators to participate in the survey (see Appendix 6). Furthermore, prior to commencing, the educators read and agreed to a form that indicated their informed consent, and their ability to skip questions/ opt out completely at any time, to be able to proceed to the survey questions. In order to protect the identities of all educators, the data collected throughout the study were stored in a password-protected computer.

3.3 Study limitations

The scope of this study was carefully designed to address limited time constraints, resulting in limitations that may have potentially impacted upon the generalisability and quality of the findings. There was a low response rate for Part II, which may have been largely due to the voluntary status of the survey. In addition, educators receiving

the invitation email for the survey could choose whether to distribute the surveys to the other educators within the setting. Therefore, the findings may not accurately reflect the perspectives of diverse types of early childhood educators in Sydney, Australia (e.g. from different socio-economic areas, with different experiences of working with children who experience disability). One way to overcome this limitation in future studies is to directly contact a random selection of settings from the original participant pool and ask whether or not toys that represent impairment are available within each setting.

This study investigates an unexplored area, which justifies the use of descriptive statistics. However, in order to examine issues identified in the present study in more depth and with greater generalisability, future studies should include statistical analyses that investigate relationships between variables – e.g. the relationship between educator perspectives towards disability and their perspectives toward the use of toys that represent impairment in ECEC settings, or comparing different groups of educators.

Although the mychild.gov website was useful in identifying possible educators for Part II, it may be possible that not all of the early childhood settings within Sydney were identifiable within the website. This issue was further exacerbated due to the large number of invalid email addresses presented within the website's directory. This may have led to a number of potential educators being unable to participate in the study.

Another potential limitation was related to exploring toys through online toy stores in Part I. Many of the toys were difficult to see due to the size and clarity of the images offered by the websites, and therefore excluded from the analysis in those cases where a Google search did not retrieve clearer representations. Some toys that represent impairment may thus have been overlooked. Furthermore, identifying some toys as representing impairment may have been influenced by individual prior knowledge about the characters represented in the toys. For example, I knew that Nemo (a character in the movie *Finding Nemo*) has a smaller fin. Future studies may complement the analysis of toys in online toy stores with the same toys accessed as 3D toys directly, for example in physical toy stores or early childhood settings.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research design and methods used in this study. The study was presented as comprising two concurrently conducted parts, each aligned with one of its two key aims. Quantitative content analysis was adopted to investigate the toys that represent impairment currently available online, and a survey was distributed to explore early childhood educators' perspectives towards using these toys for the education of young children. The next chapter will present the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

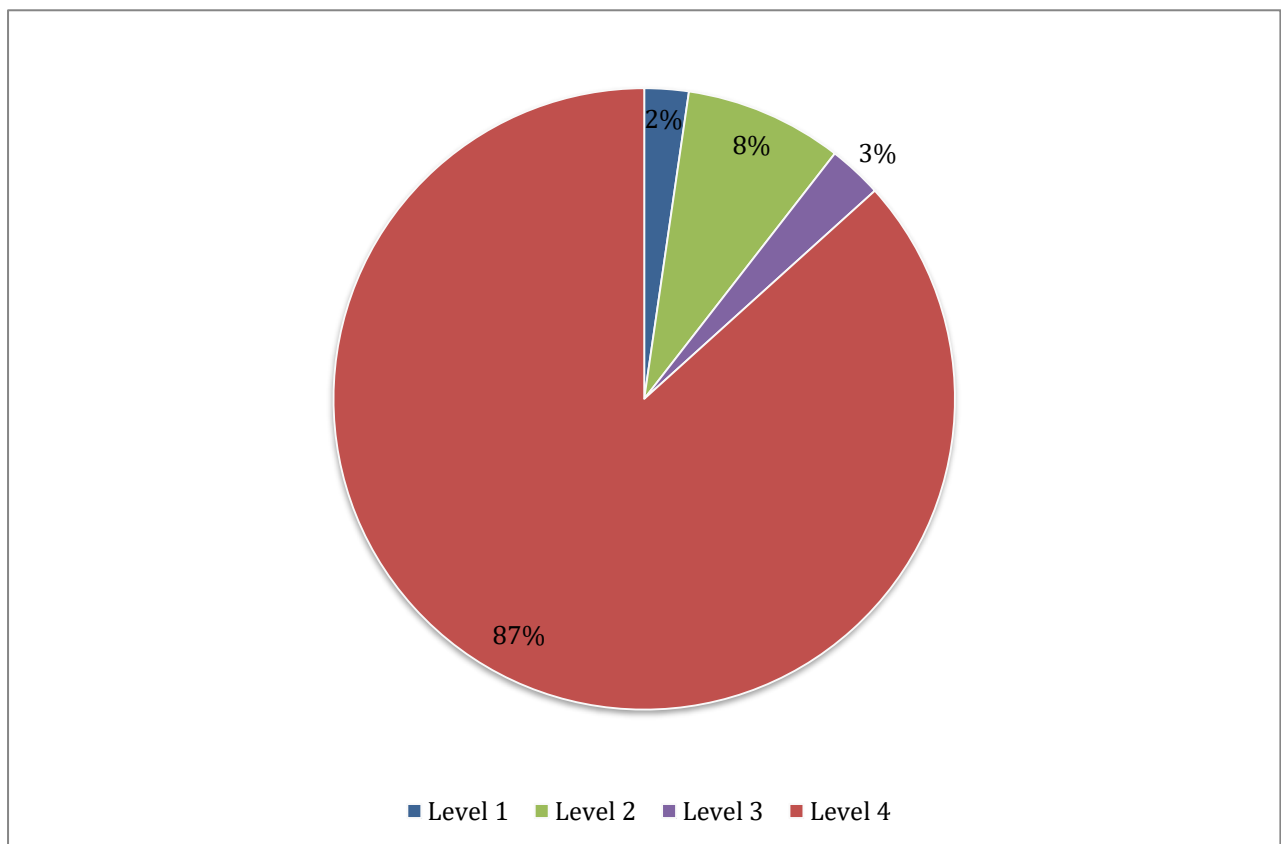
The findings of the present study are presented in this chapter. It is organised into two parts: Sections 4.1 - 4.3 focus on the results of the quantitative analysis of toys in RQ1 (Part I); and Sections 4.4 - 4.8 on the results of the survey in RQ2 (Part II). This chapter reports the findings of both parts separately; however, as the discussion presented in Chapter Five demonstrates, the two parts are intended to be complementary and inform one another.

Part I: RQ1. What is the current situation regarding the online accessibility and diversity of children's toys that represent impairment within Australia?

4.1 Online accessibility

As discussed in Chapter Three, each packaged toy shown or described as representing an impairment was classified as falling into one or more of the four 'online accessibility' levels. This study found 369 toys that represent impairment, some of which were categorised as belonging to more than one level of accessibility. Classifying the 369 toys into one or more levels resulted in 426 codes. The majority of toys were located through searching every toy within a given online toy store: 369 out of all 426 (86.6%) codes were classified under Level 4 of accessibility, as shown in Figure 4.1. The second most common accessibility category was Level 2, with 35 (8.2%) of all codes located by searching for a specific impairment signifier. These were followed by locating toys by browsing categories/online store sections referring to 'disability', with 12 (2.8%) codes at Level 3. Searching each toy store website using the term 'disability' or common synonyms yielded the smallest number of results, with only 10 (2.3%) codes under Level 1.

Figure 4.1: A comparison of the toys' levels of accessibility



4.2 Representation of impairment

The content analysis of the representation of impairment in the sample included 547 bodies identified as representing visible impairments. Each body was analysed within the categories and subcategories presented in Chapter Two. The impacts of removing glasses and pirate characters were also investigated, in order to further analyse representation of impairment.

4.2.1 Age

The majority of the 547 bodies were identified as representing an adult (N=292, 53%). Considerably fewer of the bodies were identified as representing children (N=120, 22%) and elderly characters (N=72, 13%). Table 4.1 presents the findings for the category of *age* for all of the online toy websites analysed.

Table 4.1: Results for the category of *age*

Website	Age			
	Child	Adult	Elderly	Unclear
E1 (% of bodies in E1)	18 (25.4%)	28 (39.4%)	22 (31.0%)	3 (4.2%)
E2 (% of bodies in E2)	19 (23.8%)	48 (60.0%)	12 (15.0%)	1 (1.3%)
Total (Educational) (% of bodies in E1 & E2)	37 (24.5%)	76 (50.3%)	34 (22.5%)	4 (2.6%)
NE1 (% of bodies in NE1)	1 (3.8%)	17 (65.4%)	3 (11.5%)	5 (19.2%)
NE2 (% of bodies in NE2)	2 (11.8%)	11 (64.7%)	2 (11.8%)	2 (11.8%)
NE3 (% of bodies in NE3)	17 (19.1%)	55 (61.8%)	9 (10.1%)	8 (9.0%)
NE4 (% of bodies in NE4)	30 (29.7%)	46 (45.5%)	7 (6.9%)	18 (17.8%)
NE5 (% of bodies in NE5)	33 (20.2%)	87 (53.4%)	17 (10.4%)	26 (16.0%)
Total (Non - Educational) (% of bodies in NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4 and NE5)	83 (20.9%)	216 (54.5%)	38 (10.0%)	59 (14.9%)
Total (All) (% of bodies in all websites)	120 (21.9%)	292 (53.4%)	72 (13.2%)	63 (11.5%)

4.2.2 Gender

Of the 547 bodies, most were identified as representing a male (N=352, 64%), approximately one third as representing a female (N=166, 30%), and 29 (5%) were unclear. Table 4.2 presents the findings for the category of *gender* for all of the online toy websites analysed.

Table 4.2: Results for the category of *gender*

Website	Gender		
	Male	Female	Unclear
E1 (% of bodies in E1)	35 (49.3%)	35 (49.3%)	1 1.4%
E2 (% of bodies in E2)	38 (47.5%)	39 (48.8%)	3 (3.8%)
Total (Educational) (% of bodies in E1 & E2)	73 (48.3%)	74 (49.0%)	4 (2.6%)
NE1 (% of bodies in NE1)	20 (76.9%)	5 (19.2%)	1 (3.8%)
NE2 (% of bodies in NE2)	14 (82.4%)	3 (17.6%)	0 (0.0%)
NE3 (% of bodies in NE3)	63 (70.8%)	23 (25.8%)	3 (3.4%)
NE4 (% of bodies in NE4)	73 (72.3%)	25 (24.8%)	3 (3.0%)
NE5 (% of bodies in NE5)	109 (66.9%)	36 (22.1%)	18 (11.0%)
Total (Non - Educational) (% of bodies in NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4 and NE5)	279 (70.4%)	92 (23.2%)	25 (6.3%)
Total (All) (% of bodies in all websites)	352 (64.4%)	166 (30.3%)	29 (5.3%)

4.2.3 Type of character

Approximately half of the 547 bodies were identified as depicting a human character (N=275, 50.3%), 148 (27%) depicting a fantasy/superhero character , and 124 (23%) depicting an animal character. Table 4.3 presents the findings for the category of *type of character* for all of the online toy websites analysed.

Table 4.3: Results for the category of *type of character*

Website	Type of character		
	Human	Animal	Fantasy/ Superhero
E1 (% of bodies in E1)	65 (91.5%)	3 (4.2%)	3 (4.2%)
E2 (% of bodies in E2)	71 (88.8%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (11.3%)
Total (Educational) (% of bodies in E1 & E2)	136 (90.0%)	3 (2.0%)	12 (7.9%)
NE1 (% of bodies in NE1)	9 (34.6%)	4 (15.4%)	13 (50.0%)
NE2 (% of bodies in NE2)	10 (58.2%)	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.6%)
NE3 (% of bodies in NE3)	31 (34.8%)	24 (27.0%)	34 (38.2%)
NE4 (% of bodies in NE4)	37 (36.6%)	28 (27.7%)	36 (35.6%)
NE5 (% of bodies in NE5)	52 (31.9%)	61 (37.4%)	50 (30.7%)
Total (Non - Educational) (% of bodies in NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4 and NE5)	139 (35.1%)	121 (30.5%)	136 (34.3%)
Total (All) (% of bodies in all websites)	275 (50.3%)	124 (22.7%)	148 (27.1%)

4.2.4 Name

There were roughly an equal number of named (N=291, 53% of all bodies) and nameless (N=256, 47%) bodies. Table 4.4 presents the findings for the category of *name* for all of the online toy websites analysed.

Table 4.4: Results for the category of *name*

Website	Name	
	Named	Nameless
E1 (% of bodies in E1)	6 (8.5%)	65 (91.5%)
E2 (% of bodies in E2)	6 (7.5%)	74 (92.5%)
Total (Educational) (% of bodies in E1 & E2)	12 (7.9%)	139 (92.1%)
NE1 (% of bodies in NE1)	7 (26.9%)	19 (73.1%)
NE2 (% of bodies in NE2)	14 (82.4%)	3 (17.6%)
NE3 (% of bodies in NE3)	74 (83.1%)	15 (16.9%)
NE4 (% of bodies in NE4)	82 (81.2%)	19 (18.8%)
NE5 (% of bodies in NE5)	102 (62.6%)	61 (37.4%)
Total (Non - Educational) (% of bodies in NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4 and NE5)	279 (70.4%)	117 (29.5%)
Total (All) (% of bodies in all websites)	291 (53.2%)	256 (46.8%)

4.2.5 Individuality

Most of the bodies were sold in a group (N=401, 73.3%) compared to individually (N=146, 26.7%). Table 4.5 presents the findings for the category of *individuality* for all of the online toy websites analysed.

Table 4.5: Results for the category of *individuality*

Website	Individuality	
	Individual	Group
E1 (% of bodies in E1)	4 (5.6%)	67 (94.4%)
E2 (% of bodies in E2)	6 (7.5%)	74 (92.5%)
Total (Educational) (% of bodies in E1 & E2)	10 (6.6%)	141 (93.4%)
NE1 (% of bodies in NE1)	3 (11.5%)	23 (88.5%)
NE2 (% of bodies in NE2)	5 (29.4%)	12 (70.6%)
NE3 (% of bodies in NE3)	22 (24.7%)	67 (75.3%)
NE4 (% of bodies in NE4)	41 (40.6%)	60 (59.4%)
NE5 (% of bodies in NE5)	65 (39.9%)	98 (60.1%)
Total (Non - Educational) (% of bodies in NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4 and NE5)	136 (34.3%)	260 (65.7%)
Total (All) (% of bodies in all websites)	146 (26.7%)	401 (73.3%)

4.2.6 Multimedia

A total of 247 bodies were connected to one or more other forms of media (N=45%), and an almost equal number were not connected to any other form of media (N=300, 55%). Table 4.6 presents the findings for the category of *multimedia* for all of the online toy websites analysed.

Table 4.6: Results for the category of *multimedia*

Website	Multimedia	
	Connected	Not connected
E1 (% of bodies in E1)	6 (8.5%)	65 (91.5%)
E2 (% of bodies in E2)	4 (5.0%)	76 (95.0%)
Total (Educational) (% of bodies in E1 & E2)	10 (6.6%)	141 (93.4%)
NE1 (% of bodies in NE1)	3 (11.5%)	23 (88.5%)
NE2 (% of bodies in NE2)	7 (41.2%)	10 (58.8%)
NE3 (% of bodies in NE3)	64 (71.9%)	25 (28.1%)
NE4 (% of bodies in NE4)	71 (70.3%)	30 (29.7%)
NE5 (% of bodies in NE5)	92 (56.4%)	71 (43.6%)
Total (Non - Educational) (% of bodies in NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4 and NE5)	237 (59.8%)	159 (40.1%)
Total (All) (% of bodies in all websites)	247 (45.2%)	300 (54.8%)

4.2.7 Impairment signifier

The impairment signifiers that were collated upon analysing the bodies ultimately included *glasses, walking stick, cast, wheelchair, walking frame, eyepatch, blind, leg brace(s), hook-hand(s), pegleg, stretcher, missing eye, hearing aid, crutches, bandage(s), smaller fin, amputation, conjoint twins* and *prosthetics*. As discussed in Chapter Two, each body can be classified into one or more impairment signifiers. Classifying the 547 bodies into one or more levels resulted in 591 codes. Table 4.7 provides a comparison of the number of bodies classified under each impairment signifier, ordered by the highest number of representations to the lowest.

Removing elderly characters reduced the number of walking sticks by more than half (N=10, 1.7% to N=4, 0.8%), and walking frames by half (N=6, 1.0% to N=3, 0.6%).

4.2.8 Glasses and pirate characters

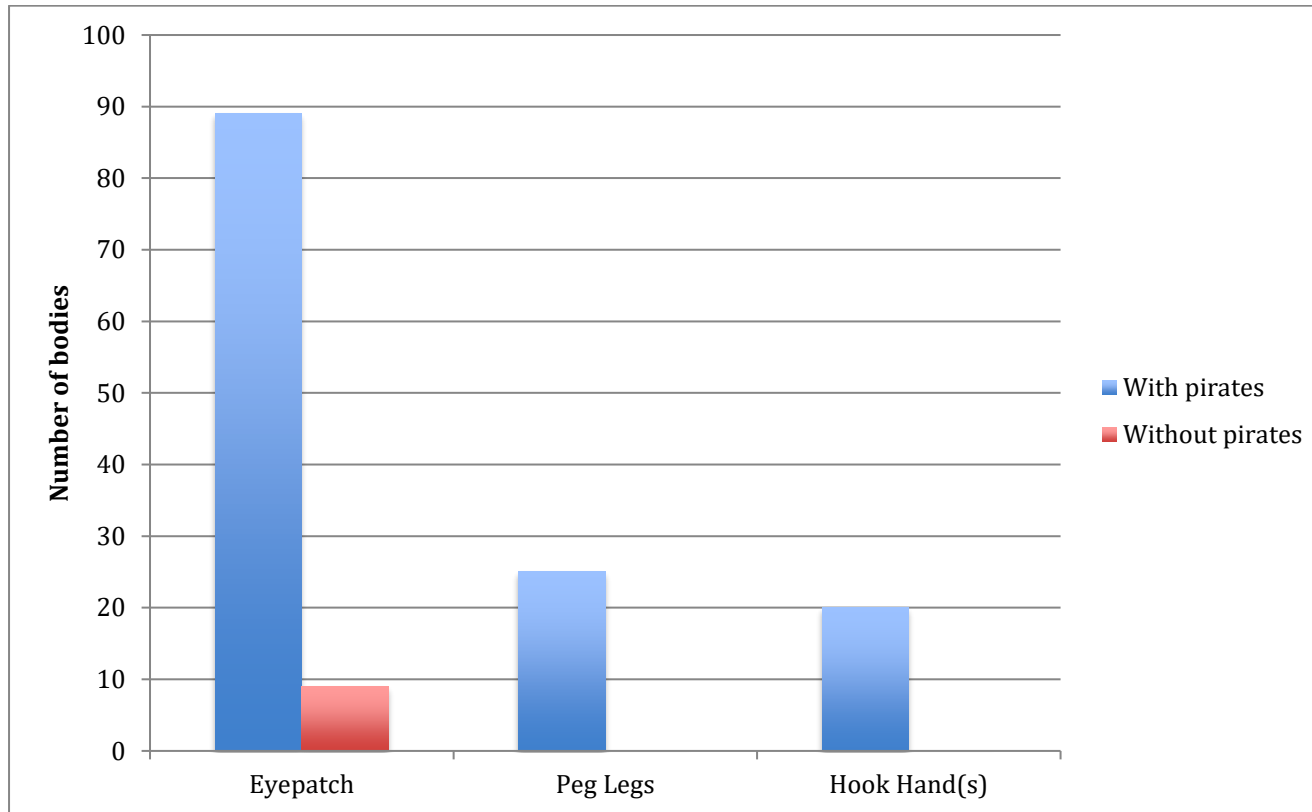
A total of 334 bodies were classified under the impairment signifier of glasses (56.5% of the 591 codes for impairment signifier). Upon removing the instances of bodies with glasses, the number of bodies that were identified as representing impairment fell from 547 to 213 bodies. This also reduced the percentage of human characters from 53% (of the sample prior to removing instances of glasses) to 34.2% (of the sample after removing instances of glasses). Concurrently, the percentage of fantasy/superhero increased from 27% to 42%. Removing the bodies with glasses also reduced the percentage of elderly characters from 9.5% to 7.0%, as 57 of the 72 bodies that depicted an elderly character had glasses (79% of the elderly bodies before removing glasses).

A total of 134 bodies were classified under the impairment signifiers of eyepatch (N=89), pegleg (N=25), and hook-hand (N=20). However, if pirate characters were removed from the sample, the number of bodies with eyepatches became 9, and peglegs and hook hands fell to 0 (as shown in Figure 4.2).

Table 4.7: Results for the category of *impairment signifier*

Impairment signifier	Total (All) (% of total codes within <i>impairment signifier</i>)
Glasses	334 (56.5%)
Eyepatch	89 (15.1%)
Pegleg	25 (4.2%)
Hook-hand	20 (3.4%)
Wheelchair	18 (3.0%)
Prosthetics	18 (3.4%)
Cast	13 (2.2%)
Smaller Fin	12 (2.0%)
Stretcher	11 (1.9%)
Walking stick	10 (1.7%)
Crutches	7 (1.2%)
Bandage(s)	7 (1.2%)
Walking frame	6 (1.0%)
Leg brace(s)	6 (1.0%)
Blind	4 (0.7%)
Conjoint Twins	4 (0.7%)
Amputation	3 (0.5%)
Missing eye	2 (0.3%)
Hearing aid	2 (0.3%)

Figure 4.2: Comparison of bodies representing *eyepatch*, *pegleg* and *hookhand(s)* before and after removal of pirate characters



4.3 Educational versus non-educational

The comparison of bodies found on educational vs. non-educational toy store websites revealed differences in online accessibility and representation of impairment.

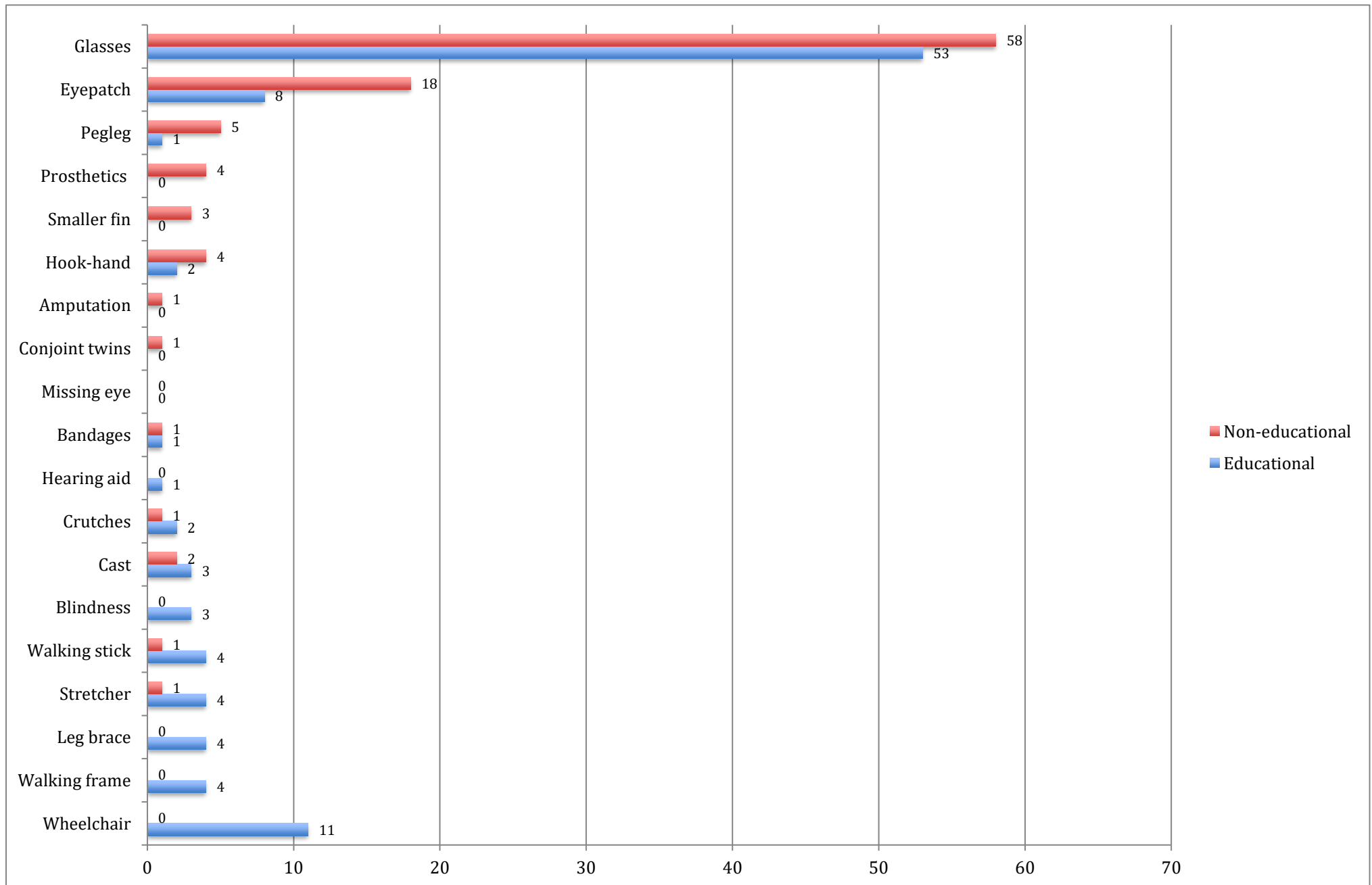
4.3.1 Accessibility

In relation to accessibility of the packaged toys in educational websites, 73.2% of the toys found in educational websites (N=90) were in level 4, 13.8% (N=17) in level 2, 9.8% (N=12) in level 3, and 3.3% (N=4) in level 1. In contrast, non-educational websites had a greater percentage of toys in level 4 (92.0% of the bodies found in non-educational websites, N=279), followed by level 2 (5.9%, N=18), level 1 (2.0%, N=6), and finally level 3 (0%). Consequently, a greater percentage of toys were located through generally searching every toy in non-educational websites compared to educational websites. Simultaneously, a greater percentage of toys were located through searching for a specific impairment signifier, searching categories/subcategories that indicated impairment, and searching for the term ‘disability’ or common synonyms in educational websites compared to non-educational websites. For example, for level 3 toys, one educational website had a category titled ‘Inclusion and wellbeing’, which included toys that represent impairment. The other educational website had a subcategory titled ‘social inclusion’ under the category ‘inclusive education’, which included toys that represent impairment. Non-educational websites had no categories/ subcategories of the sort.

4.3.2 Representation of impairment

Differences were apparent in the educational and non-educational websites’ representations of impairment, across the categories of impairment signifier (See Figure 4.3), age, gender, type of character, name and multimedia, and individuality. The differences across age, gender, type of character, name and multimedia, and individuality were further highlighted upon removing the bodies that represented pirate characters and glasses.

Figure 4.3: Number of impairment signifiers in educational vs. non-education websites



4.3.2.1 Age

Toys that depicted adults were found to be the most prevalent in both educational (50.3%, N=76) and non-educational (54.5%, N=216) websites. However, the number of adults fell when removing the instances of glasses and pirates in non-educational websites (resulting in 36.0%, N=23), in comparison to educational websites (resulting in 43.9%, N=25).

Upon removing the instances of glasses, the percentage of children rose from 24.5% to 40.4% in educational websites, and 21.0% to 32.8% in non-educational websites. This also resulted in a drop in elderly for both the educational (22.5% to 12.3%) and non-educational (9.6% to 6.3%) websites. Therefore, the bodies with glasses and pirates were mostly depicted as adults and elderly. Table 4.8 presents the number of bodies reflecting each of the subcategories for 'Age' upon removing pirates and glasses.

Table 4.8: Age category upon removal of pirates and glasses.

Website	Age			
	Child	Adult	Elderly	Unclear
Educational (% of all Educational)	23 (40%)	25 (44%)	7 (12%)	2 (4%)
Non-educational (% of all Non-educational)	21 (33%)	23 (36%)	4 (6%)	16 (25%)
Total (% of entire sample)	44 (36%)	48 (40%)	11 (9%)	18 (15%)

4.3.2.2 Gender

In relation to gender, the bodies in the educational websites depicted a roughly even number of females (49.0%, N=74) and males (48.3%, N=73). This contrasts with non-educational websites, which depicted roughly three times more males (70.5%, N=279) than females (23.2%, N=92).

Removing glasses and pirates did not result in major changes for the gender category (See Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Gender category upon removal of pirates and glasses.

Website	Gender		
	Male	Female	Unclear
Educational (% of all Educational)	27 (47%)	28 (49%)	2 (4%)
Non-educational (% of all Non-educational)	55 (86%)	7 (11%)	2 (3%)
Total (% of entire sample)	82 (68%)	35 (29%)	4 (3%)

4.3.2.3 Type of character

There were major discrepancies between the bodies available in the educational vs. non-educational websites. In particular, 90.1% (N=136) of all bodies from educational websites depicted human characters, 7.9% (N=12) were fantasy/ superhero characters (7.9%, N=12), and 2% (N=3) bodies were animal characters. In comparison, the non-educational toy stores had approximately even proportions of human (35.1%, N=139), fantasy/ superhero (34.4%, N=136), and animal (30.6%, 121) bodies that represent impairment.

Focusing on pirate-related impairment signifiers and glasses more specifically, non-educational websites had overwhelmingly higher representations of pirate-related impairment signifiers (27%) and toys with glasses (58%), as well as animal characters (31%). However, upon removing the instances of glasses and pirates, the majority of bodies were fantasy/ superhero characters (46.9%, N=64), followed by an even number of human (26.6%, N=17) and animal (25.6%, N=17 units) characters. When removing glasses and pirates in the educational websites, the number of fantasy/ superhero and animal characters fell further (98.2%, N=56 human, 1.8%, N=1 fantasy/superhero, and 0% animal) (See Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Type of character category upon removal of pirates and glasses.

Website	Type of character		
	Human	Animal	Fantasy/Superhero
Educational (% of all Educational)	56 (98%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Non-educational (% of all Non-educational)	17 (27%)	17 (26%)	30 (47%)
Total (% of entire sample)	73 (60%)	17 (14%)	31 (26%)

4.3.2.4 Name and multimedia

Most of the toys from the educational websites were nameless (92.1%, N=139) and were not connected to any other form of media (93.3%, N=141). This contrasts with the units in the non-educational websites, which were mostly given a name (70.5%, N=279) and connected to other forms of media (59.9%, N=237).

Upon removing glasses and pirates, the percentage of bodies connected to other media rose from 59.8% to 79.7%, and those not connected fell from 40.2% to 20.3%. Educational websites showed no major changes for the category of multimedia. No major changes were revealed for the name category (See Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Name and Multimendia categories upon removal of pirates and glasses.

Website	Name		Multimedia	
	Named	Nameless	Connected	Not connected
Educational (% of all Educational)	2 (4%)	55 (96%)	2 (4%)	55 (96%)
Non-educational (% of all Non-educational)	48 (75%)	16 (25%)	51 (80%)	13 (20%)
Total (% of entire sample)	50 (41%)		71 (59%)	53 (44%)

4.3.2.5 Individuality

The bodies in both websites were mostly sold as a group, but educational websites showed a greater gap between individual (6.6%, N=10) and group (93.4%, N=141) bodies in comparison to non-educational websites (34.3%, N=136 individual and 65.7%, N=260 group).

However, removing the instances of glasses and pirates shifted the percentage of group and individual bodies in non-educational websites (resulting in 57.8% individual and 42.2% group) (See Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Individuality category upon removal of pirates and glasses.

Website	Individuality	
	Individual	Group
Educational (% of all Educational)	1 (2%)	56 (98%)
Non-educational (% of all Non-educational)	37 (58%)	27 (42%)
Total (% of entire sample)	38 (31%)	83 (69%)

Part II: RQ2. What are early childhood educators' perspectives on toys that represent impairment in early childhood settings, and on disability?

4.4 Educators' perspectives towards toys and diversity

To contextualise the questions focusing specifically on toys that represent impairment, sections 2 and 3 of the survey asked participants about their more general views about toys and about diversity.

Of the 59 educators, 48 (81%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they had a lot of toys available to the children within their setting throughout the day. From the open-ended questions that followed, it became clear that some of the educators who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement questioned whether or not certain playthings could be classified as toys. For example, one educator questioned whether a “marble run” was a toy. Another educator regarded only “educational open-ended resources” as toys. Consequently, educators' views towards what should be considered ‘a toy’ thus seemed to vary and may have influenced their responses. The remaining 10% (n=6) reported being neutral.

All but one educator responded to the question regarding diversity in toys, and 69% (n=40) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “the toys that are made available to the children represent diversity”, 10% (n=6) disagreed, and 21% (n=12) opted for the neutral choice. Table 4.13 presents a comparison of the educators' perspectives towards the availability of toys within their setting, and the diversity reflected through these toys.

Of the 59 educators, 55 commented on their response to this question. Four key themes arose from these responses: ‘Diversity as culture/ethnicity’, ‘Diversity and natural resources’, ‘Diversity as setting-specific’, and ‘Barriers’.

Table 4.13: The availability of toys and diversity reflected

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My setting has a lot of toys available to the children to play with throughout the day (% of respondents to the question)	19 (32%)	29 (49%)	6 (10%)	2 (3%)	3 (5%)
The toys that are made available to the children represent diversity (% of respondents to the question)	8 (14%)	32 (55%)	12 (21%)	6 (10%)	0 (0%)

Note: The first question yielded 59 responses and the second 58.

Diversity as culture/ ethnicity

Of the 55 responses, more than half (n=34) were coded to the theme ‘Diversity as culture/ethnicity’, with educators explicitly mentioning that their toys reflected different cultures and/or ethnicities, such as “*international foods*”, “*cultural dress-ups*”, and “*culturally diverse dolls*”.

Diversity and natural resources

A total of six responses were coded to ‘Diversity and natural resources’, with educators linking the open-endedness of toys to a greater ability to reflect diversity. One educator reported, “*The beauty of natural resources are that wherever children are from they can identify with them and use them how they like*”.

Diversity as setting-specific

Some educators commented that the toys that are offered should be representing the children, families and communities represented in their setting. A total of nine responses were coded to ‘Diversity as setting-specific’, with one educator stating, for example:

We ensure the fabrics and textiles etc. in our dress ups reflect the diversity of our cultures, and additional props e.g. dolls, artefacts etc. are added that reflect our families’ and communities’ diversity and differences.

It is important to note that, although ‘culture’ was given as one of the examples of diversity in the question, all participants had read the survey’s introductory screen and were thus aware that the study focused on toys and disability.

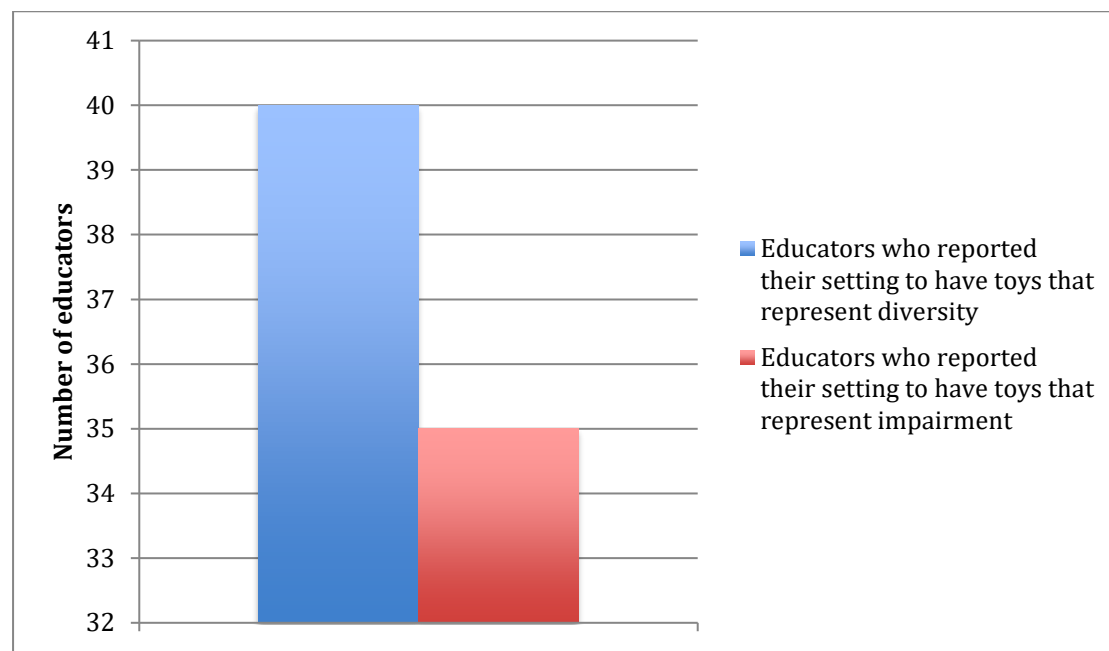
Barriers

Although there was not a specific question related to barriers, some educators specifically mentioned that their setting could improve in the number and quality of toys that represent diversity. A total of 11 responses were coded to ‘Barriers’. These educators mostly attributed this to cost, accessibility, and issues with tokenism, with one educator claiming: *“Range is not extensive with dolls available, and puzzles and role play-based resources again always seem more expensive and at times tokenistic”*.

4.5 Perspectives towards the availability of toys that represent impairment and their use

Section 4 of the survey explored educators’ perspectives towards the availability of toys that specifically represent impairment within the educators’ settings. Over half of the educators (n=35, 59%) reported that their setting had toys that represent impairment, and the remaining 24 (41%) reported that their setting did not. Of the 40 educators (69%) who reported that their setting had toys that represent diversity, five (13%) reported that their setting did not have toys that represent impairment (See Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Representing diversity vs. representing impairment



The rest of Section 4 of the survey comprised two groups of questions: questions for those respondents who had reported that toys that represent impairment are available at their setting (Group A); and questions for those who reported that no such toys were available at their setting (Group B) (See Appendix 4).

4.6 Perspectives from early childhood settings with toys that represent impairment

4.6.1 Types of toys that represent impairment

When asked to list and subsequently describe all of the toys that they could think of that represent impairment within their setting, educators mainly described the toy types (e.g. puzzles, dolls, etc.) and/or the types of impairment/ impairment signifier(s) that the toys represented (e.g. wheelchair, leg brace, Deaf, etc.). The number of each type of toy and impairment mentioned in these responses are presented respectively in Tables 4.14 and 4.15. A total of 26 educators answered this question, with most educators listing more than one type of toy and/or impairment. As Table 4.14 shows, many educators listed books and puzzles in their responses.

Table 4.14: Types of toys reported by the educators

Type of toy	Number
Dolls/ figurines	24
Books	16
Puzzles	10
Posters/ picture cards	8
Puppets/ felt pieces	6
Props/ accessories	4
Games	2
Construction toys	1
Props/ accessories	1

Note: As many educators considered books, posters and picture cards as toys, these have been included here. Educators also reported modified toys for children who experience disability, however these were not considered further due to being outside the scope of the present study.

Table 4.15: Type of impairment reflected by the toys reported by the educators

Type of impairment reflected through toys	Number
Mobility	16
Vision	10
Hearing	5
Physical	3
Behavioural	1
Developmental	1

4.6.2 Use of toys that represent impairment

A total of 27 educators reported that toys are used during free play (n=26), dramatic play (n=22), and in planned experiences (n=23).

In the open-ended responses, one educator who reported that the children did not use the toys during dramatic play explained, *“as there are not many of these toys available, they are only sometimes set out and utilised in play”*. Another educator commented that *“the toys are put out to promote discussions with educators”*, however also reporting that the children did not use the toys during their dramatic play nor in planned experiences.

4.6.3 Popularity of the toys among children

A total of 25 participants responded to the question, ‘Do the children play with these toys as much as they play with other toys?’ Of the 25 educators, 14 (56%) responded with ‘yes’ and 11 with ‘no’ (44%).

The open-ended responses revealed opposing perspectives. Two educators reported that the toys that represent impairment were just as popular as the other toys. One reported, for example:

“the dolls with impairments are used just as frequently as the dolls with no impairments”

In contrast, one educator reported that the toys were “*definitely not as popular as the other toys*”. Another educator also reported that the toys that represent impairment were not as popular, but also reported that the toys that represent impairment are not popular “*as... we only get when it is needed*” and as such “*are not being offered all the time....*”. This suggests that educator practices may have an impact upon the popularity of toys that represent impairment.

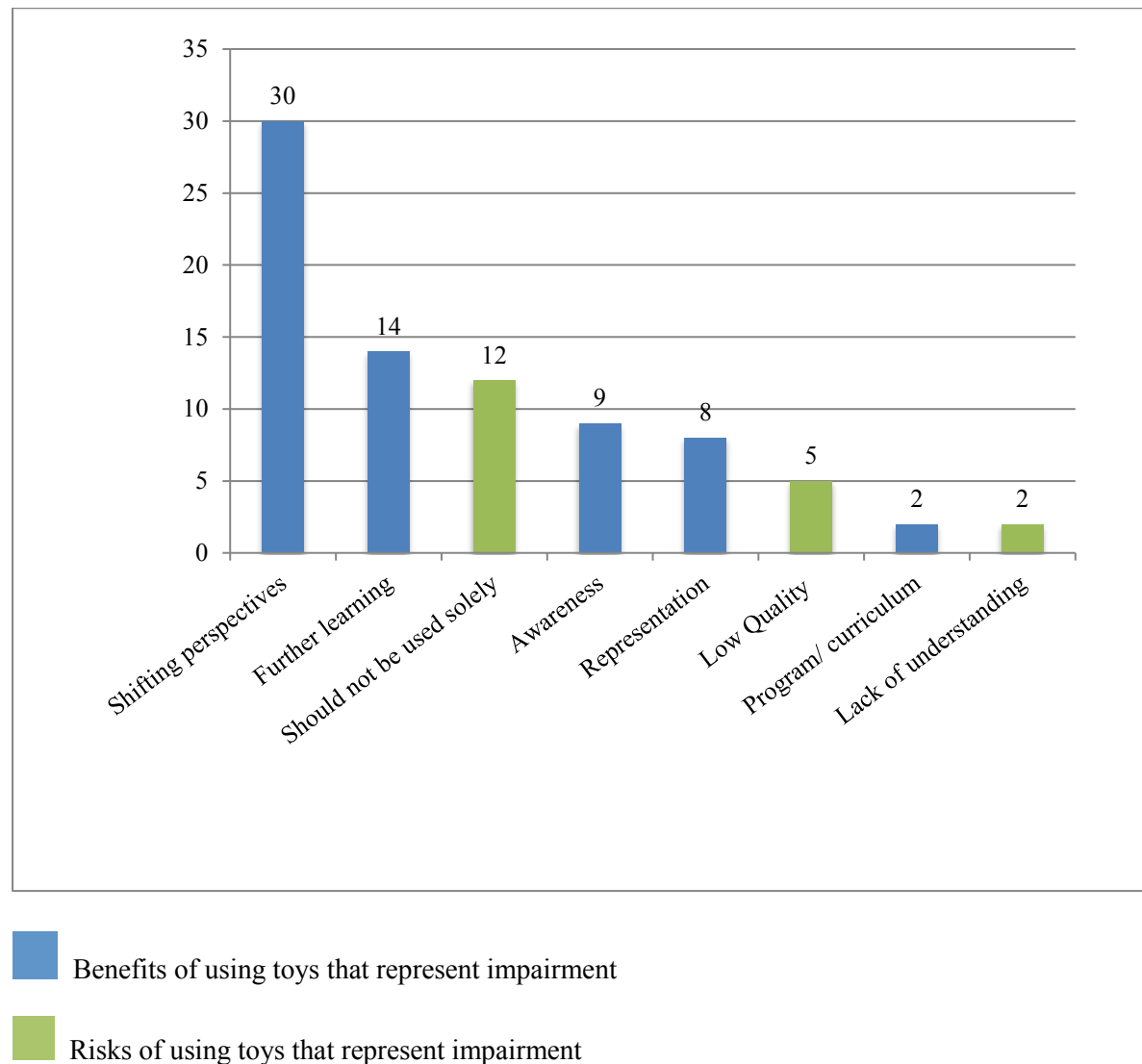
4.6.4 Educators’ views on the use of the toys in ECE settings (Group A)

Three questions aimed to explore the perspectives of the educators who have toys that represent impairment towards the use of such toys for ECE: ‘Do you believe that it is important for toys that represent impairment to be made available to the children within your setting?’; ‘Do you believe that toys that represent impairment would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity?’; and ‘Are these toys helpful in educating children about disability/difference?’

All 25 educators (100%) reported it as important for toys that represent impairment to be made available to the children within their setting, 24 of these 25 educators (96%) reported that toys that represent impairment would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity, and 19 of the 25 educators (76%) either strongly agreed or agreed that toys that represent impairment were helpful in educating children about disability/ difference.

The open-ended responses to these three questions further revealed the educators’ views towards the use of toys that represent impairment for ECE. The number of responses coded to each theme across the three questions is presented in Figure 4.5. As discussed in Chapter Two, a single response could be coded as referring to one or more of the themes, but could not be coded more than once to a given theme.

Figure 4.5: Educators' views towards the use of the toys (Group A).



A total of 95 responses were coded to themes regarding the educators' perspectives towards the use of toys that represent impairment. These themes were categorised into two broad groups: the benefits of using toys that represent impairment, and the risks of using toys that represent impairment.

The benefits of using toys that represent impairment for ECE

Themes within the broad group of 'the benefits of using toys that represent impairment' comprise: 'Shifting perspectives', 'Further learning', 'Awareness', 'Representation', and 'Program/ curriculum'.

Influences children's perspectives towards people who experience disability

A total of 30 responses were coded to the theme of 'Shifting perspectives', with educators reporting that toys that represent impairment assist in educating children to be more understanding, and thus accepting, of people who experience disability. Educators often linked their responses to increased positive attitudes towards people who experience disability, diversity and inclusion amongst children. Examples of these responses include:

I believe that it is vital to offer a range of resources that represent disability at the service. It is important to learn to be accepting of diversity/difference and disability.

It [toys that represent impairment] promotes tolerance, acceptance, natural for children so they don't question but include

Expanding learning about disability, diversity and inclusion for ECE

Educators also reported that toys that represent impairment could lead to further learning about disability, diversity and/or inclusion for ECE. Educators reported that these toys have the potential to encourage further discussion about disability/impairment. A total of 14 responses were coded to the theme, 'Further learning'. For example, educators reported:

... they spark group discussion and which in turn promotes learning

... they [toys that represent impairment] promote investigation, questions

Leads to greater awareness of people who experience disability

Educators also reported that toys that represent impairment assists in making children more aware of people who experience disability within society. Educators attributed this benefit for children who are not regularly exposed to people who experience disability. A total of nine responses were coded to the theme, 'Awareness'. Educators reported, for example:

I think a range of people need to be represented especially because we are in a small community with almost exclusively Anglo families who have very little experience with disability/impairment and differences in general.

Children may not be in contact with many or any individuals with additional needs and such toys would be a good tool for educators.

Represents families within the setting and community

Educators reported it to be important for toys to represent the families within their setting and community, with toys that represent impairment being particularly relevant for reflecting families who experience disability. Eight responses were coded to the theme of 'Representation'. For example, educators reported:

We have and have had children with various disabilities and we want them to be just as included as every other able bodied child.

They [toys that represent impairment] depict the people of the world, that the children will come across in everyday life.

Supporting program/curriculum goals

Finally, two educators reported that toys that represent impairment were important in supporting their program/ curriculum. Two responses were coded to the theme 'Program/curriculum'. Educators reported, for example:

We are inclusive centre with enrolled needs and educators are continually melding ability into program and adapting for all children as normal.

It is part of our curriculum.

The risks of using toys that represent impairment in ECE

The second broad group regarded the risks of using toys that represent impairment. Situated within this broad group were the themes: 'Should not be used solely', 'Low quality' and 'Lack of understanding'.

Should not be used solely

Fourteen responses were coded to the theme, 'Should not be used solely'. Many educators reported that the toys should not be the only resource used to educate children about disability, and that further discussion and intentional teaching should guide children's play:

I think it can be tokenistic and we only provide children with these toys when talking about people with additional needs.

I think the ways of using it. You cannot just put dolls. We need to explain the reason why we have these dolls, intentional thought

Without an educator with them they can just be tokenistic.

Are lacking in quality

Educators also commented on issues regarding the quality of toys that represent impairment. Five responses were coded to the theme, 'Low quality'. Low quality was particularly stressed as a risk by the one educator who disagreed that such toys that were currently available in their setting were helpful in educating the children about disability/difference. This educator reported that the "... *range and quality needs to be wider*".

Young children lack adequate understanding of disability/impairment

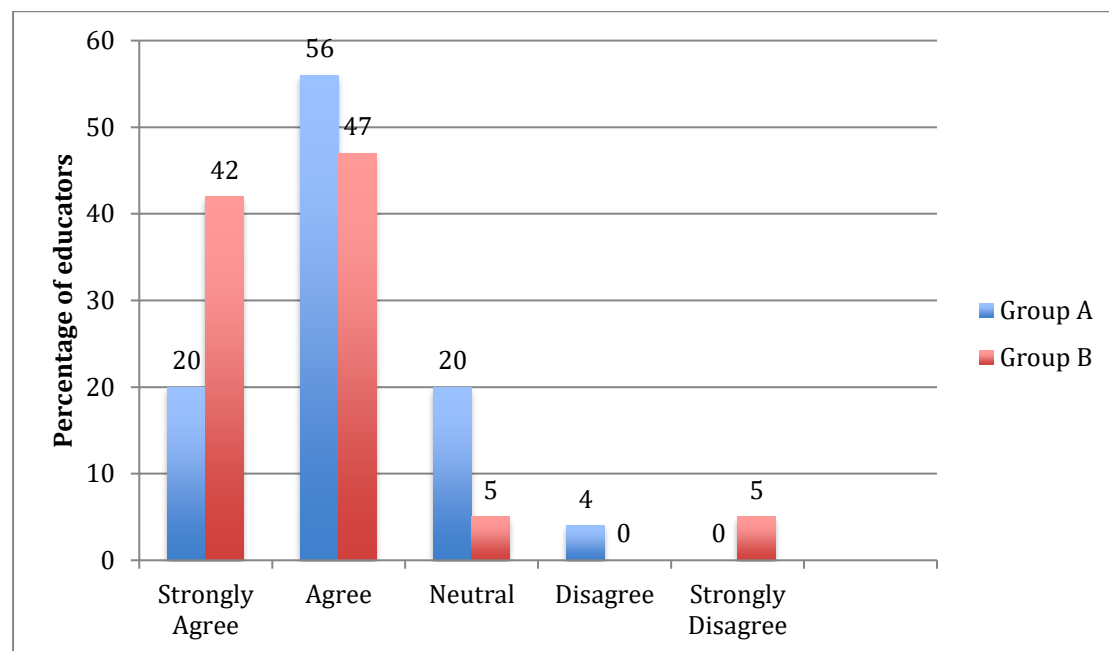
Finally, two educators questioned whether or not young children would be able to understand the concept of disability/ impairment. Two responses were coded to the theme, 'Lack of understanding'. For example, one educator mentioned: "*It is hard to know how much understanding a child has of disabilities/impairment at such a young age...*".

4.6.5 Educators' views on the use of the toys in ECE (Group B)

Three questions aimed to explore the views of the educators who do not have toys that represent impairment towards the use of such toys for ECE: 'Do you believe that it is important for toys that represent impairment to be made available to the children within your setting?'; 'Would having these toys within the setting be helpful in educating the children about disability/difference'; and 'Do you believe that toys that represent impairment would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity?' These questions differed from those asked of Group A, as Group B were only able to comment on whether or not they perceive it to be helpful/ beneficial to have these toys (without actually having them) in their settings. Figure 4.6 compares the perspectives of Group B with Group A on the helpfulness of toys that represent impairment.

Of the 24 educators who had reported that their setting does not have toys that represent impairment, 19 (79%) responded to the three questions. An overwhelming majority of these educators (n=17, 89%) reported that it was important for such toys to be made available within their setting, and either strongly agreed or agreed that this would be helpful in educating children about disability, and 16 (84%) that this would contribute to teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity more generally.

Figure 4.6: Group A and Group B's views on the helpfulness of the toys

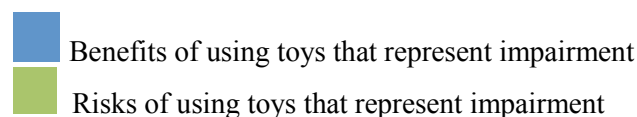
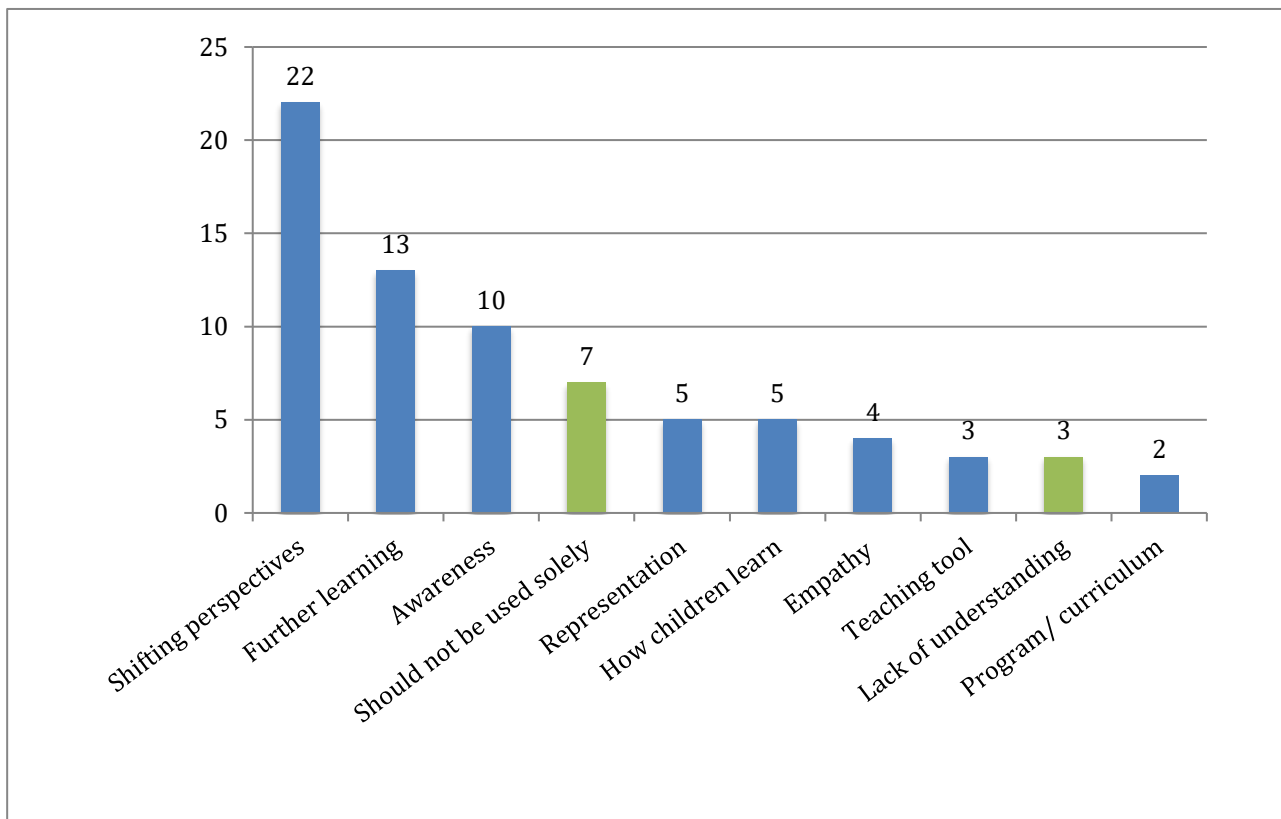


Note: Reflecting the perspectives of N=29 Group A respondents and N=19 Group B respondents (Survey Question 3d for Group A, and 3h for Group B).

Similar to Group A, educators in Group B elaborated on their views within the open-ended responses. The number responses coded into falling in each theme is shown in Figure 4.7. Responses were coded to the same themes created in 3.1 (depending on relevance) and additional themes were added for the responses that did not fall into the current themes. Again, educators mentioned one or more benefits in their responses.

Responses were coded a total of 74 times into one or more themes regarding the educators' perspectives on the use of toys that represent impairment in Group B. As per Section 4.6.4, these themes were further categorised into two broad groups: the benefits of using toys that represent impairment, and the risks of using toys that represent impairment.

Figure 4.7: Educators' views towards the use of toys that represent impairment (Group B)



The benefits of using toys that represent impairment for ECE

Themes that fall into the broad group of ‘the benefits of using toys that represent impairment’ were: ‘Shifting perspectives’, ‘Further learning’, ‘Awareness’, ‘Representation’, ‘How children learn’, ‘Empathy’, ‘Teaching tool’, and ‘Program/ curriculum’.

Influences children’s perspectives towards people who experience disability

A total of 22 responses were coded to the theme, ‘Shifting perspectives’. Educators reported that toys that represent impairment assists in educating children to be more understanding, and thus accepting, of people who experience disability. The educators reported, for example:

The earlier the exposure the more naturally the children will accept disability as a part of their everyday lives

... from personal experience, I was fearful of people who had a disability because as a child I was told not to look, not to approach, not to point or ask questions. To normalize disability in a child's world would prevent this.

Expanding learning about disability, diversity and inclusion

Many educators also stated that toys that represent impairment have the potential to stimulate further discussions about disability and diversity. Thirteen responses were coded to the theme, 'Further learning'. Educators, for example, stated:

They [toys that represent impairment] could also be used for teachable moments.

[Toys that represent impairment] provides a provocation for questioning / interest / discussion / learning

Leads to greater awareness of people who experience disability

Educators in Group B also reported the value of toys that represent impairment in increasing awareness of people who experience disability for children who are not exposed to people who experience disability within society. A total of 10 responses were coded to the theme, 'Awareness'. For example, one educator stated:

... particularly if a typical demographic is represented at the centre and the area the child come from. They may not have the opportunity to experience in their environment/community.

Represents families within the setting and community

Some educators reported that it was important to have toys that represent impairment in order to represent children who experience disability within their setting and community. Five responses were coded to the theme, 'Representation'. For example, one educator stated:

We have children within the centre with disabilities and impairments and they could help children understand their peers' challenges

Aligns with how children learn

A total of five responses were coded to the new theme, 'How children learn'. This is due to some educators explicitly mentioning that toys in general could cater for how children learn best. For example, educators stated:

... children learn through exploration and toys would benefit there investigation

... children learn best through their play and interactions with others. These resources and toys could be used for this.

Increases empathy towards people who experience disability

Educators also explicitly stated that toys that represent impairment could assist in increasing children's empathy towards people who experience disability. These responses referred to people who do not experience disability supporting people who do. Four responses were coded to the theme, 'Empathy'. Educators, for example, stated:

... it [toys that represent impairment] would be useful to teach this practice as children can respect the people [who experience disability] and support them.

[Toys that represent impairment are important to] show a level of normality and empathy e.g a Barbie who has a leg missing can still be played with and cared for.

Can be used as a teaching tool

The theme, 'Teaching tool', was added, as some educators mentioned the usefulness of these toys as a resource for themselves. Three responses were coded to this theme. One educator, for example, stated:

"It would be helpful to myself to find appropriate ways to education the children. It is easy to talk about things but I feel they would benefit most from a practical point of view."

Complies with the program/curriculum

Finally, two responses were coded to the theme, 'Program/ curriculum', with educators stating that the toys complied with their ECE program/ curriculum. One educator stated, for example, that the toys "... *promote discussion/inquiry and can be used in a number of ways as part of the routine/ programming*".

The risks of using toys that represent impairment for ECE

The educators in Group B also mentioned some risks of using toys that represent impairment. Situated within this broad group were the themes, 'Should not be used solely' and 'Lack of understanding'.

Should not be used solely

Seven responses were coded to the theme, 'Should not be used solely'. Many educators reported that toys that represent impairment were helpful, but that other

forms of learning about disability, diversity and inclusion were more important. Educators stressed that it should not be the only form of learning about disability, otherwise it can be tokenistic:

... as long as the educators had enough experience to start the discussion/learning with the children and not make it a tokenistic approach.

One educator also linked this back to the importance of intentional teaching and the approach to disability, claiming that the usefulness of toys that represent impairment:

... would depend on how they were used. Inclusion needs to be the focus of the teaching, rather than just pointing out aspects of difference.

Another educator particularly stressed the issue of tokenism in relation to toys that represent impairment. This educator also did not believe that toys that represent impairment would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity, or that it was important for such toys to be made available to the children within their setting:

I think relationships, attitudes, conversations and challenging stereotypes with children and families are much more effective than tokenistic toys.

Young children lack adequate understanding of disability/impairment

Three responses belonging to one educator were categorised into the theme, 'Lack of understanding'. This educator mainly attributed this to issues with maturity and misunderstanding in relation to the 'sensitive' and 'serious' nature of impairment/disability, stating, for example:

Children lack suitable maturity to distinguish which items should be used for 'play' and laughter and which toys are meant to be used more seriously.

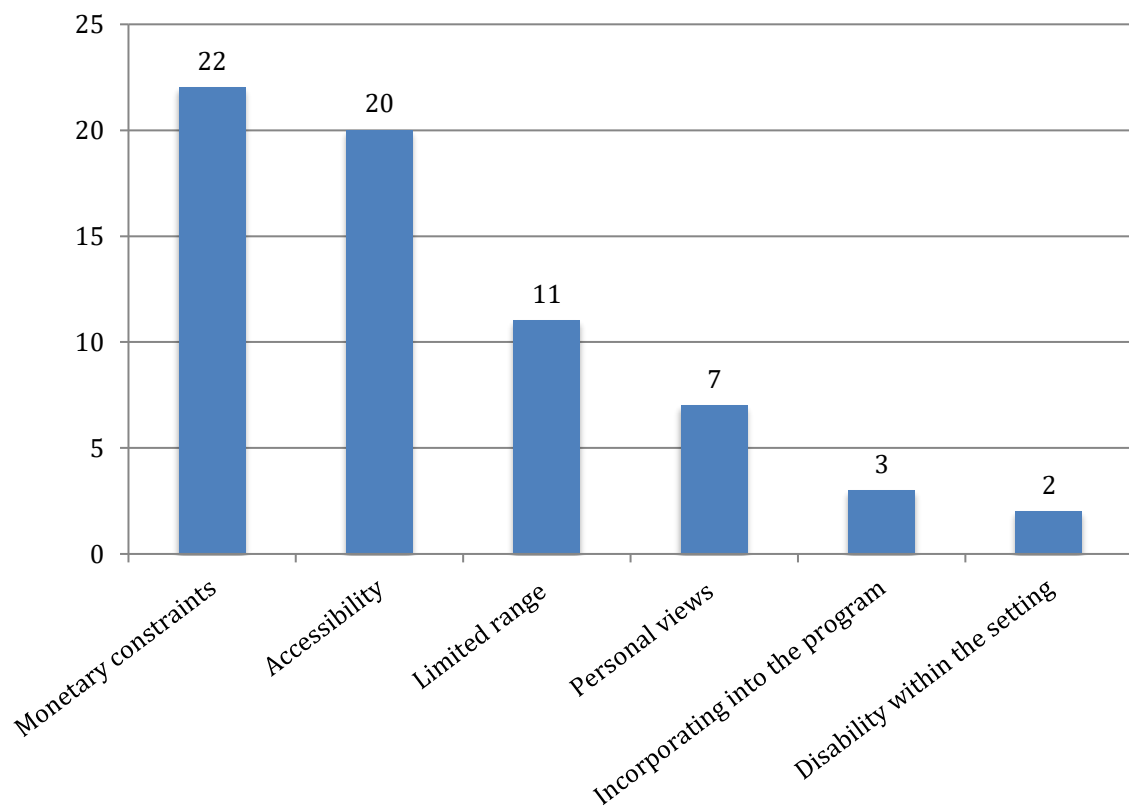
Children are very adaptable when they have to face misfortunes of life and will learn to deal with another's disability when they have to face it. Therefore it is not necessary to 'prepare' children to learn to face everything. It is impossible to know and understand some things that happen and why they happen and will only overwhelm them.

4.7 Barriers that prevent educators from making toys that represent impairment available to the children within their setting

A total of 44 educators (across Group A and B) responded to the question, ‘Do you think your setting needs more toys that represent impairment’. Of the 44 educators, 33 either agreed or agreed (75%) that their setting needed more toys that represent impairment, and five educators (11%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Six educators (14%) opted for the neutral choice.

The open-ended responses revealed several barriers that prevented educators from making toys that represent impairment available to children within their setting. The themes that arose from these responses were: ‘Monetary constraints’, ‘Accessibility’, ‘Limited range’, ‘Personal views’, ‘Incorporating into the program’, and ‘Disability within the setting’. Responses were coded 65 times into one or more themes. Figure 4.8 shows the number of responses categorised into each theme.

Figure 4.8: Barriers reported by educators



Monetary constraints

The most prevalent barrier reported was monetary constraints. A total of 22 of the 65 responses were coded to the theme 'Monetary constraints'. Educators stated that purchasing more toys that represent impairment would be out of the budget or that lack of funding did not allow it. This was often connected to the costs of these toys in relation to other toys:

Cost. I feel that these resources are often quite costly to purchase.

Budget - money to spend as often these resources can cost quite a lot as with the multicultural resources.

One educator who did not have toys that represent impairment within their setting, but strongly agreed that having such toys would be helpful in educating children about disability/ difference, strongly disagreed that their setting needed more toys that represent impairment. This may be due to the barriers related to monetary budgets for toys that represent impairment, with the same educator stating:

"Tight budgets that provide the bare minimum. These resources are often much more expensive than stock standard. These resources should be available in standard chain but often are not."

Accessibility

The second most reported barrier was that of accessibility. A total of 20 responses were coded to the theme 'Accessibility'. Educators often reported that toys that represent impairment were difficult to find:

"Apart from pictures and books I have been unable to find suitable resources"

"Personal knowledge of the resources out there. I hadn't even given it a thought to be honest until completing this survey. I know of books but not specific toys."

Limited range

In addition to accessibility, although educators were able to locate toys that represent impairment, the limited range of such toys was deemed a barrier. A total of 11 responses were coded to the theme, 'Limited range'. For example, educators stated that there is a "limited selection available" and that "finding and sourcing toys that would be relevant" was a "big restriction".

Personal views

Some educators also regarded personal views of various individuals as a barrier. Seven responses were coded to the theme, 'Personal views'. For example, one educator reported *"the lack understanding about why this [toys that represent impairment] is important - by room leader, director"* as a barrier to providing such toys. Another educator reported *"family perceptions"* as another barrier. Similarly, one educator who did not believe that they needed such toys within their setting attributed this to personal views of disability and the views of parents/carers about disability:

I would consult families before I would introduce such toys to the service, as toys to play to me should represent an element of 'fun'. Toys representing a disability would not be a 'happy' toy to me. The barrier would be the way I approach and think about impairments and disabilities.

Difficulty incorporating into the program

A small number of educators reported that it would be difficult to incorporate toys that represent impairment into their programs. Three responses were coded to this theme. One educator listed *"incorporating them [toys that represent impairment] into the program correctly"* as a barrier. Another educator linked this back to the issue of tokenism, regarding *"trying not to make it [toys that represent impairment] seen as a token"* a barrier.

No children who experience disability within the setting

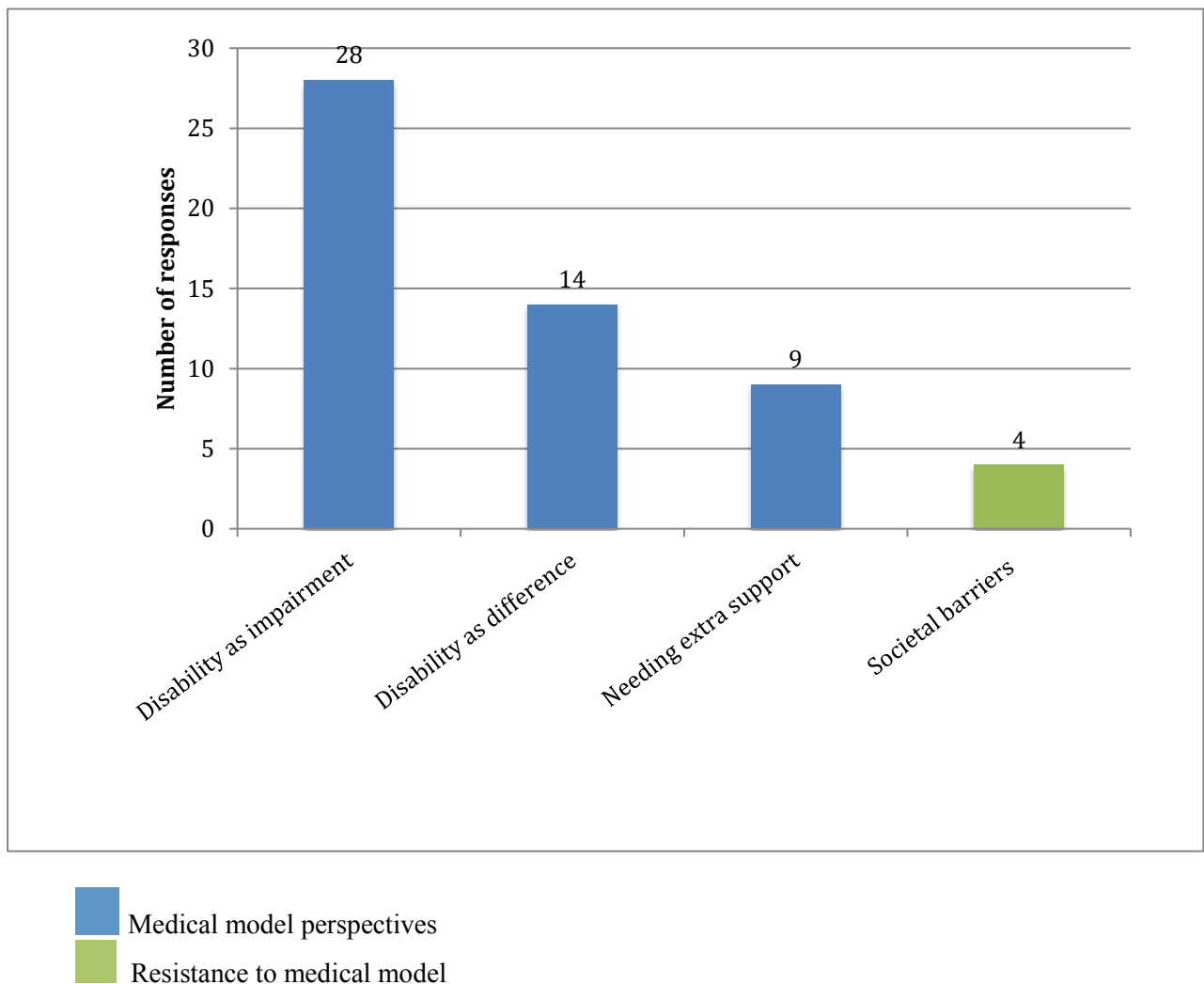
Finally, two educators attributed the lack of toys that represent impairment to the lack of children who experience disability enrolled within their setting. Two responses were coded to the theme, *No disability within the setting*. One educator regarded *"not seeing any one with impairment"* as a barrier. The other stated: *"If we have more children with disabilities/impairments we would get more toys."*

4.8 Educators' understandings of the concept of 'disability'

The final section of the survey aimed to explore understandings of the concept of 'disability' among all participants, through the question, 'What do you understand disability to mean?' (Question four of the survey). A total of 41 educators provided their own definition of 'disability', and 55 responses were coded as referring to one or more themes. The number of responses coded into each theme is shown in Figure 4.9.

These themes were categorised into two broad groups: medical model perspectives and perspectives that resist the medical model.

Figure 4.9: Educators' understandings of the concept of 'disability'



4.8.1 Medical model perspectives

The themes within the group, 'medical models of disability', included: 'Disability as impairment'; 'Disability as difference'; and 'Needing extra support'. A total of 51 responses were coded to the broad group, 'Medical models' (93%), which were found within the responses of 37 of the 41 educators (90%).

Disability as impairment

Most of the responses were coded into the theme, 'Disability as impairment' (N=28, 51% of all responses coded). The educators often regarded disability as impairment or

disability as resulting from impairment. Impairment was also often described as a 'limitation', 'condition' or 'defect':

"A physical or mental barrier to being a capable and well person."

"... a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities."

"Disability means a defect someone would have from birth."

Disability as 'difference'

Fourteen responses (25%) were coded into the theme, 'Impairment as difference'. Educators often discussed people who experience disability as something that is 'other' than 'normal' or 'atypical'. At times, this was coupled with views related to what people who experience disability are unable to do in comparison to those who do not experience disability:

"Disability means that a person has difficulty in areas that others don't, such as, can't see, hear or walk."

"Something that deviates from what is perceived to be 'normal' development"

Disability as needing extra support

Finally, nine responses (18%) were coded to the theme, 'Needing extra support', with some educators viewing people who experience disability as needing extra support. For example, educators stated:

"... they [people who experience disability] may need additional assistance to complete tasks that others find easy"

"Someone who has an additional need beyond that of the typically developing child."

4.8.2 Perspectives that resist the medical model

In contrast, a smaller number (n=4, 10% of the educators who provided a definition of disability) of educators showed resistance to the medical understandings of disability. One theme arose from the responses of these educators, i.e. 'Social barriers'. Four responses were coded to this theme.

These educators perceived disability as resulting from the societal barriers that are imposed upon a person who experiences disability, rather than from stemming solely from impairment. Educators stated, for example:

“The socially imposed barriers to being and doing which are usually experienced by people who have an impairment (physical or mental or emotional).”

“I recognise the legal definition of disability and understand what that means from a political point of view. I think disability goes beyond that though. People are disabled by environments that exclude them”

4.8.3 Views on disability and toys, and educators’ levels of education

In this section, educators’ responses are analysed together to explore relationships between educator’s views on disability, educators’ views on toys that represent impairment, and educators’ levels of education.

Of the 37 educators whose definitions of disability fell into ‘medical models of disability’, 22 (59%) held a Bachelor-level qualification or higher, 13 (35%) held a Diploma, and the remaining two were working towards a teaching qualification. A total of 23 of these 37 educators reported having toys that represent impairment within their setting. Of these 23 educators, 17 either strongly agreed or agreed (74%) that such toys are helpful in educating the children about disability/ difference, all reported that it is important for such toys to be available to children, and 22 (96%) reported that toys that represent impairment would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity.

Of the remaining 14 educators who reported that toys that represent impairment were not available within their setting, all but one (n=13, 93%) reported that the toys were important and beneficial for ECE. The one educator who did not believe toys that represent impairment are important in educating children about disability/ difference, inclusion and diversity, subscribed to a medical model view of disability, as reflected in the participants’ explanation that children are already asked to “*comprehend too much information*” and that:

“... they have to learn about stranger danger, they have to deal with divorce, they have to learn about terrorism, they have to learn about sustainability, they have to learn about obesity, they have to learn to compete... and much more. So let them have fun and laughter with happy toys.”

All four educators whose definitions of disability showed resistance to the medical understandings of disability held a Bachelor-level qualification or higher. Three of these educators (75%) reported that their setting did not have toys that represent impairment. Of these three educators, two strongly agreed that having these toys within the setting be helpful in educating the children about disability/ difference, reported that it is important for toys that represent impairment to be made available to the children within their setting, and reported that toys that represent impairment would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity.

In contrast, one educator strongly disagreed that having these toys would be helpful in educating the children about disability/ difference, reporting that such toys were not important or beneficial for ECE. This educator reported that *“relationships, attitudes, conversations and challenging stereotypes with children and families are much more effective”*, and referred to toys that represent impairment as ‘tokenistic’: *“I think relationships, attitudes, conversations and challenging stereotypes with children and families are much more effective than tokenistic toys”*.

The educator who did have toys that represent impairment within their setting reported that such toys were important and beneficial for ECE.

Overall, although a relationship between educators’ perspectives towards toys that represent impairment and their views on disability was not apparent, all educators who reported resistance to the medical model in this study held a Bachelor level qualification or higher.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of Part I and Part II of the present study. The findings in Part I suggest that the toys found to represent impairment across the online toy stores were lacking in range. Furthermore, comparisons were drawn between educational and non-educational websites’ portrayal of disability/ impairment, through both the accessibility and range of the toys that each sell.

The findings in Part II suggest that, although educators predominantly reported medical-model perspectives towards disability, educators overall regarded toys that represent impairment as important and beneficial for ECE; however they communicated issues with tokenism and inability to access high-quality toys that

represent impairment. The following chapter will provide a discussion of these findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the key issues raised by the findings of this study. Parallels will be drawn between these findings and the findings of previously conducted studies, as well as theory. In addition, the findings from Part II will be informed by the findings from Part I.

5.1 The online accessibility and diversity of toys (Part I)

Children's media has been regarded as a major contributor in shaping and reflecting children's understandings of disability. The near lack of authentic portrayals of impairment in children's media has been well documented (Martinez-Bello & Martinez-Bello, 2016; Bond, 2013; Koss, 2015; Golos & Moses, 2011; Hodgkinson, 2012). Comparing the number of children's toys that do and do not represent impairment fell outside of the present study's scope. However, the findings that emerged in Part I reinforce the near lack of diverse and authentic portrayals of impairment in children's media. This was evident for the sample of 547 bodies within 369 toys that represent impairment across the seven Australian online toy stores. In line with Mendoza and Reese's (2001) window/ mirror analogy (see Chapter Two), this finding indicates that these toys are unlikely to either serve as relatable role models or to support children to see impairment as a form of human diversity and learn about the experience of disability.

5.1.1 Toys reflecting common disability/impairment stereotypes

As with previous studies on disability/ impairment representations in children's media, the present study found a relationship between age, gender and diversity of impairments reflected. In comparison to representations of adults and elderly combined, there was a limited representation of children (22% of all bodies). Moreover, in comparing the frequency of male and female representations, the analysis revealed a smaller percentage of female representations (30%). In addition to the limited representations of children and females, there was also a limited diversity of impairments reflected by the toys. These correspond with the findings of previous studies, which found a very limited presence of children, females and different types of impairments in children's television programs (Bond, 2013), children's electronic

media (Hodkinson, 2012), images on early childhood classroom walls (Martinez-Bello & Martinez-Bello, 2016), and children's books (Koss, 2015).

5.1.1.1 Impairment as pertaining to elderly characters

Bond (2013) problematises the limited representations of children who experience disability in children's media, positing that adult characters may not resonate with children as effectively as child characters. According to Matthew and Clow (2007), it is crucial for children who do and do not experience disability to see representations of themselves. Dubow, Huesmann and Greenwood (2007) recognise the connection between the identification with a media character and the impact that the media source will have on children. Consequently, if children do not see themselves represented through media portrayals of disability/ impairment, the media may have little positive effect on children's ability to develop a perspective of impairment as a form of human diversity. Instead, the sample of children's toys that were analysed in the present study reflects stereotypical associations of impairment with old age, particularly the use of walking sticks (4 out of 10 bodies with walking sticks did not depict an elderly character) and walking frames (3 out of 6 bodies with walking frames did not depict an elderly character).

5.1.1.2 Impairment versus femininity and beauty

The small number of female characters within children's media reflects stereotypical discourses of femininity and beauty. The media consistently reflects and reinforces what Wolf (1993) terms 'the beauty myth', which is often equated to flawlessness or perfection. Impairment is constructed as being outside the notion of beauty due to impairment not fitting within what is regarded as 'ideal' or the 'norm' (Ellis, 2015). Consequently, impairment continues to be excluded from the often-interrelated discourses of beauty and femininity. According to Ellis, "for women with disabilities, the pressure can be particularly intense because it is so much harder for these women to achieve the culturally prescribed notions of femininity" (p. 38). Garland-Thompson (2004) further elucidates the hardships for women who experience disability to fit within societal ideals of femininity and beauty, claiming that "the beautiful woman in the 21st century is sculpted surgically from top to bottom, generally neutral, all irregularities regulised, all particularities expunged" (p. 12). She goes on to explicitly say that this ideal woman is "nondisabled" (p. 12). The near absence of female

characters in children's toys analysed in the present study is, therefore, problematic, holding the power to reinforce stereotypes of femininity and beauty as linked with perfection and normality.

5.1.1.3 Impairment as glasses and pirates

As discussed in Chapter Two, the impairments that can be represented through toys are limited due to only being able to represent visible impairments. Regardless, an overwhelming majority of the bodies analysed depicted a character that wore glasses (57% of the sample). Furthermore, the majority of characters that depicted the second, third and fourth most frequent impairment signifiers, of eyepatches, peglegs and hookhands respectively, were pirates. Eyepatches, in particular, fell by 80 bodies when removing the instances of pirates, thus reflecting the belief that only pirates wear eyepatches.

This mirrors findings of previous content analyses of children's media (Koss, 2015; Hodkinson, 2012). In analysing diversity in children's picture books, Koss found that the small amount number of characters that experience disability either were elderly, wore glasses, or were pirates. Koss recognises that this is due to pirates and glasses being more readily accepted in society, as their impairments are not typically considered stigmas in comparison to other impairments. Similarly, in examining electronic resources made available to young children, Hodkinson found that representations of impairment predominantly portrayed people with glasses and pirates.

These findings, therefore, raise questions about the impacts of the toys analysed within the present study on children's ability to recognise diverse impairments as forms of human diversity in their real, everyday lives.

5.1.2 Impairment and being human

While half of the bodies that represent impairment were identified to depict a human character, many were also found to depict an animal character (23% of the sample) or a fantasy/ superhero character (27%). This was particularly the case for toys found in non-educational websites (27% animal and 47% fantasy/ superhero bodies). Literature has discussed both the positive and negative impacts of depicting disability through non-human characters. In children's picture books, Brittian (2004) has previously criticised this practice as reinforcing the notion of disability being 'other' than human.

Hodkinson (2012) puts this into perspective, postulating that pirates being depicted as villains reinforced negative connotations towards disability. Hunched backs, hook hands, wooden legs and eyepatches (impairments regularly associated with pirate characters) were historically associated with “evil and depravity” (p. 255) in Western culture. This negative image of pirates may in turn influence social understandings of pirate-related impairments. In addition, upon removing the instances of pirate bodies, five of the nine remaining bodies with eyepatches reflected a character from LEGO’s ‘ultimate beast master’ series: a red character with a black eyepatch and a multitude of weapons hanging off his body, who is commonly described as having an “*explosive temper*”. Therefore, even after removing pirate characters, the majority of the remaining bodies still appeared to reflect similar negative connotations.

In contrast, superheroes are commonly associated with ‘good’. Superhero characters that represent disability/ impairment are considered a pitfall, as it portrays people who experience disability as ‘other’ than human (Brittain, 2004). However, Monoyiou and Symeonidou (2016) suggest that these characters may also assist in shifting negative attitudes towards people who experience disability, by affirming impairment as something to be valued.

Approximately half of the bodies (53%) were identified as falling into van Leeuwen’s (2009) category of having a ‘named identity’, as these toys were designed and marketed to have individual names. Through giving toys a ‘named identity’, they are disassociated from generic characters and provided with more of an individual identity, which may enhance the human-like characteristics of the toy. Nameless toys, on the other hand, often appeared to represent genericity, and some were merely identifiable through their physical attribute of impairment, which was particularly the case for the toys sold in educational websites. It is, however, important to note that a toy’s generic status – as van Leeuwen (2009) illustrates for Playmobil - may be shifted within a child’s engagement with the toy: for example, a child may give a nameless toy a name. This observation points to the need for future studies to explore how children and educators actually use toys that represent impairment, and to what extent the generic status of some toys impacts on their use.

In addition, approximately half of the bodies were connected to other media platforms, which may also decrease their genericity, although may also decrease their open-endedness. Although it is beyond the scope of the present study to explore other

types of media representations of disability, exploring these related media platforms would assist in further investigating the identity of characters.

5.1.3 Impairment awareness versus impairment as human variation

In the comparison of the educational versus non-educational websites, the educational websites appeared to serve the purpose of raising awareness of impairments rather than depicting impairment as a form of human variation. The purpose of raising awareness of impairments was evident through the online accessibility, and genericity, of the toys sold within the educational websites. A greater percentage of toys were located through generally searching every toy in non-educational websites compared to educational websites (92% and 73%, respectively). In contrast, a greater percentage of toys were located through searching for a specific impairment signifier, searching categories/ subcategories that indicated disability/ impairment, and searching for the term ‘disability’ or common synonyms in educational websites (14%, 10% and 3%, respectively) compared to non-educational websites (6%, 2% and 0%, respectively). On one hand, it would be more difficult for educators to locate toys that represent impairment in non-educational websites, as the only way to do that is by thorough webpage-by-webpage browsing through the website. On the other hand, not having impairment labels allows impairment to be presented as a form of human diversity. In contrast, categorising the toys on the basis of disability/ impairment reflects the societal categorisation of those who experience disability and those who do not, which may further emphasise people who experience disability as ‘other than normal’. Although it may not have been the intention of the websites to do so, educational websites (through their design) reflect the purpose of impairment awareness rather than regarding impairment as a form of human variation. However, it is important to acknowledge the different audiences that these websites cater for. Future studies should, therefore, consider how educators engage with these websites, and how these educators use the toys with children in early years practice.

Impairment awareness was also evident in comparing the identity of the bodies sold within educational websites and those within non-educational websites. The educational websites were found to have a greater percentage of bodies that depicted human characters (90% versus 35%, respectively, for non-educational websites), and had a more equal amount of female and male characters in comparison to the non-educational website (48% and 49% versus 70% and 23%, respectively, for

non-educational websites). However, almost all were nameless (92%), not connected to other forms of media (93%), and sold in a group (93%) with other characters that represent disability. As such, although they depicted human characters, they were mostly generic characters with little individuality, being often identifiable merely through the physical attribute of impairment. For example, a set of 6 nameless dolls was titled “*people with disability*”, with an accompanying description labeling it as encouraging “*awareness and understanding of others*”. These aspects reflect ‘impairment awareness’ that emphasises impairment characteristics and labels (Cologon, 2013a), rather than the affirmative model where impairment is defined as a form of human variation and celebrated and where the focus is not on labels that present people as specimen but on people as individuals (Swain & French, 2000).

5.2 Educator perspectives (Part II)

5.2.1 Significance for ALL children

The present study included two groups of participants: early childhood educators who reported that their settings had toys that represent impairment (Group A); and those whose reported that their settings did not (Group B). The overwhelming majority of the educators (76% of Group A and 89% of Group B) regarded toys that represent impairment as important and beneficial in the education of young children. Although no previous research could be identified to explore the benefits of toys that represent impairment, a growing body of research (as discussed in Chapter Two) has explored the benefits of children’s picture books that represent disability/ impairment in educating all children about disability and inclusion. As with picture books, the educators in this study reported that toys that represent impairment hold benefits for both children who do and do not experience disability, aligning with Mendoza and Reese’s (2001) widow/ mirror analogy.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Mendoza and Reese (2001) posit that characters that experience disability within books serve as relatable role models for children, thus assisting children to develop a positive sense of self (mirror). Educators in the present study reported the importance of representing children who experience disability within their setting and their community: e.g. “*People with impairments need to see themselves represented in the toys they play with*”. Although none of the educators explicitly mentioned why it is important for children who experience

disability to see themselves represented within toys, some have made an implicit connection between representation and children's positive sense of self through linking representation with feelings of inclusion: e.g. *"we want them [the children who experience disability in their ECEC setting] to be [as] included as every able-bodied child"*.

Occurring simultaneously with 'mirror' effects, Mendoza and Reese also identify a 'window' effect, in that characters that experience disability in children's picture books allow children to indirectly learn about that experience (window). This was a common theme in the educators' responses regarding the usefulness of toys that represent impairment. Educators reported that such toys would assist children to view impairment as a form of human variation: for example, *"It is important to learn to be accepting of diversity/difference and disability"*. These findings suggest that, like picture books that represent disability/ impairment, toys that represent impairment may also have 'mirror'- and 'window'-like effects on young children who do and do not experience disability.

5.2.2 The 'invisibility' of disability

Despite most educators reporting positive views towards using toys that represent impairments in ECEC settings, one educator reported negative views towards such toys. These negative views were attributed to issues with the 'sensitive' and 'serious' nature of impairment/ disability. This educator reported, for example:

"... they [children] have learn about stranger danger, they have to deal with divorce, they have to learn about terrorism, they have to learn about sustainability, they have to learn about obesity, they have to learn to compete... and much more. So let them have fun and laughter with happy toys."

Lalvani (2015) problematises the omission of disability discussions from education, claiming: "When disability is left unmentioned in the classroom, it sends an implicit message to students that this topic has little relevance to them, and furthermore, reifies the notion that disability oppression does not exist" (p. 3). In contrast, discussing disability oppression and positioning impairment as a positive form of human diversity are suggested to encourage children to develop affirmative model perceptions towards disability/ impairment (Lalvani; Connor & Gabel, 2010).

Consequently, these findings raise questions regarding the risk of educators excluding the topic of disability in ECEC settings.

5.2.3 Popular culture as tokenistic, not educational

Although most educators found toys that represent impairment to be important and beneficial for ECE, some regularly questioned the use of toys as a resource in comparison to relationships and other learning resources and experiences. Educators often labeled toys that represent impairment as tokenistic (tokenism was explicitly mentioned 10 times throughout the educators' open-ended responses).

Research (e.g. Lalvani, 2015) has suggested that relationships with people who experience disability and other learning experiences are indeed important in disestablishing ableist views towards disability. However, research reviewed in Chapter Two (e.g. Sutton-Smith, 2009; Barton & Somerville, 2012; Zhang & Haller, 2013; Cologon, 2013b; Marsh, 2005) has also suggested that children's media (including children's popular media) may have a powerful impact on children's attitudes towards marginalised groups in society. Ableist stereotypes regarding disability are perpetuated when disability is absent in children's media (Cologon, 2013b; Bookmark, 2006); which is particularly relevant for the educators in the present study who reported that they did have toys within their setting but did not have toys that represent impairment. In addition, Morrell (2002) states, "popular culture can help students deconstruct dominant narratives and content with oppressive practices in hopes of achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive society" (p. 72). Consequently, while other resources exist, having children's toys that represent impairment may also assist in children's developing inclusive attitudes. Such toys can concurrently send out a message to parents/carers, families, educators and children that a setting supports impairment as a form of human variation, and that there is a demand for particular types of suitable toys in the toy industry.

In their survey responses, educators stressed the importance of discussing the topic of disability/ impairment when children are engaging with toys that represent impairment, and commonly associated discussion with reducing possible tokenism. This aligns with Arthur's (2005) belief that educators have an important role when using popular culture to educate children. Arthur states:

[There are dangers] in simply including children's popular media culture in the curriculum and expecting children to mediate their own understandings. There is an important role for educators in working with children to understand the relationship between texts and children's social worlds. It is vital that children learn to critique the media and consumer culture and to resist the dominant discourses they embody (p. 179).

This importance was also highlighted in Karambatos's (2010) research on using children's picture books that represent disability with 7-year-old children. With the assistance of an educator, children were able to think more critically about issues of social justice. Critical discussions about disability are indeed important (Hackman, 2005; Lalvani & Broderick, 2013), particularly since children are enculturated into a predominantly ableist world. However, according to Cologon (2013a), discussions about people who experience disability become problematic if they revolve around stereotypes and characteristics associated with impairment labels rather than engaging children in discussions on "resisting dominant normative narratives or understandings of disability" (p. 41). Furthermore, Arthur (2005) warns of the negative impacts that stem from taking away pleasure in children's engagement in popular media.

This study also explored whether toys that represent impairment were made available during planned and unplanned experiences, including dramatic play. Although most educators reported that the toys were made available and/or used in all three types of experiences, many stressed the importance of an educator being present to engage in discussion about disability during children's play involving these toys. On the one hand, this may assist in broadening children's knowledge about disability and inclusion if educators help children see impairment as a form of human diversity. On the other, offering these toys only when educators are around and not allowing children to engage freely and independently with these toys may lead children to perceive these toys as 'special', different from other toys, which would reinforce the notion of impairment as 'other' or 'abnormal'.

It is beyond the scope of the present study to observe how educators use the toys in their practice, including the discussions that stem from engaging with these toys. Therefore, it is unknown whether or not educators are using such toys to support children in resisting medical model perspectives of disability, thus facilitating inclusive attitudes.

5.2.4 The impact of medical model perspectives

This study reveals links between teacher beliefs and attitudes towards disability, and reported practices towards the inclusion of children who experience disability. It may seem surprising that, although the majority of educators communicated medical model views in their personal definitions of disability, the majority of educators also had positive views towards using toys that represent impairment for ECE. The findings of this study reveal that the overwhelming majority of the educators (including those who reported that they did not have toys that represent impairment within their setting) viewed such toys as important and useful for ECE, particularly in educating children about disability, inclusion, and diversity. Thus, this study did not reveal a major relationship between educators' perspectives towards toys that represent impairment and their views on disability

This could be due to the fact that, although the language and terminology used by the educators reflected medical models of disability (disability as impairment) (51 out of 55 responses fell into the broad group of 'medical models of disability'), some responses appeared to hint towards non-medical model perspectives. For example, in defining 'disability', one educator reported that, "*[people who experience disability face] physical and mental challenges*", but also reported elsewhere that a toy that represents impairment "*[allows for] the development of disability, inclusion and diversity*". Additional responses aligned with affirmative models of disability, including explicitly linking disability with human diversity, for example: "*Diversity is not just cultural*" and "*We recognise the diversity of culture and family set ups- so why don't we also widely explore the differences of people and disability?*".

All but one of the educators who communicated resistance to the medical model in their personal definitions of disability viewed toys that represent impairment as beneficial for ECE. The one educator who held negative views towards such toys did not have an issue towards disability representations for ECE, but rather towards the possibility of tokenism when using toys in general. It is, therefore, important for research to explore the actual impact of toys that represent impairment in ECEC settings.

Ableist attitudes were still prevalent in the educators' responses, specifically those educators who held medical model views towards disability. In particular, the

view of children who experience disability as being ‘other than normal’ and in need of assistance from those who do not experience disability often arose: e.g. “... *no one is perfect and we need to empathise with our community*”, “[*toys that represent impairment*] *help them understand why some people can and can’t do some things*”, and “... *they [toys that represent impairment] could help children understand their peers’ challenges*”. Srinivasan (2016) theorises that holding the belief that “some groups are naturally superior, or pre-programmed genetically to function better than the rest” may lead to ‘normalising’ and ‘othering’ (p. 5). For teachers who hold this belief, Srinivasan states:

“Identifying ‘difference’ that is not ‘normal’ becomes vital in order to aspire for homogeneity amongst all individuals. Thus, educators desire uniformity, and seek to negate ‘difference’ with an emphasis on scientifically pre-established markers of similarities and differences between and within individuals in categorical groups” (p. 9).

Viewing children who experience disability as ‘different’ or ‘special’ and children who do not experience disability as ‘normal’ may, therefore, lead to pedagogical practices that align with exclusion (assimilation) rather than inclusion (Srinivasan, 2016).

In the present study, all educators who reported resistance to the medical model held a Bachelor level qualification or higher, suggesting a possible relationship between views towards impairment and level of education. As discussed in Section 2.4, previous research has suggested a relationship between inclusive attitudes and inclusive practices (Cologon, 2012; Jung, 2007; Sharma et al., 2008, McHatton & Parker, 2011; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Baglieri, 2008), and future explorations of how toys that represent impairment are used in early childhood settings may reveal that educators with higher levels of education are also more likely to adopt more inclusive practices with these toys.

5.2.5 High costs, low quality and limited accessibility

The present study found that, although most educators viewed toys that represent impairment to be important and beneficial in educating children about disability, inclusion and diversity, barriers continue to hinder their ability to obtain and use these toys in order to educate children. The barriers of monetary constraints, accessibility,

and limited range were the most commonly reported (34%, 17% and 11% of the coded responses, respectively). Although these barriers were discussed separately in Chapter Four, it is acknowledged that barriers may be linked: for example, high costs may be connected to limited availability and fewer suppliers.

The barriers reported by the educators mirror previous research on children's picture books that represent disability/ impairment, which also found representations of disability in children's literature to be insufficient and lacking in quality (Cologon, 2013b; Golos & Moses, 2011; Koss, 2015). This has also been found to be the case for other children's media (Martinez-Bello & Martinez-Bello, 2016; Bond, 2013). Furthermore, the findings for RQ1 reveal that the children's toys researched in the present study also lacked in diversity and quality. Judging by the lack of diverse and high-quality toys that represent impairment, it is not surprising that the toys that are available are costly and/or that educators are finding such toys difficult to find.

Although this study has not examined children's direct engagement with toys, the lack of diverse and high-quality toys that represent impairment that it identified could explain the opposing perspectives educators hold regarding the popularity of these toys among children. Specifically, low-quality toys may not appeal to children's interests. In a study that explored children's perceptions of picture books that represent disability (Bookmark, 2006), for example, children stressed the importance of these books being 'interesting' and representing disability as human diversity, with one child sharing:

"I won't pick up a book about people in wheelchairs because it is full of boring facts but if a book was about for example a person who won a swimming competition I would pick it up and read it because it looked interesting...." (p. 11).

In addition, it was stated, "many students commented on the fact that many programmes are good at raising awareness of [disability] issues but less effective in promoting everyday acceptance" (Bookmark, 2006, p. 11). This further perpetuates the notion that, in representing disability/impairment, children's media should not revolve around stereotypes and characteristics associated with disability labels, nor detract from the potentially pleasurable experience of engaging with such resources.

Personal attitudes were deemed the fourth most commonly reported barrier. As previously discussed, the attitudes of educators towards disability will have an

impact upon the pedagogical practices that they employ (Srinivasan, 2016). As such, holding ableist views about disability and/or disregarding the importance of representations of disability may, in turn, lead to negative views towards the use of toys that represent impairment in ECEC settings. In addition to personal views, educators also reported the views of other teachers and parents to be a barrier. One reason for this may be due to negative views towards utilising children's popular media in ECEC settings. Another reason for this may again be due to ableist views of individuals towards disability. This is not surprising as, according to Cologon (2014), ableism still dominates within society, and it may therefore be difficult for teachers to go against the status quo in order to resist such dominating views.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented an interpretation of the findings of this study. The toys analysed in this study were discussed in relation to their reflection of common disability stereotypes, and of human characteristics. In addition, educational websites were posited to reflect 'impairment awareness' rather than 'impairment as human variation'. Educator perspectives towards toys that represent impairment were contrasted with their perspectives towards disability/ impairment and popular culture, as well as reported barriers. The next chapter provides the conclusion to this thesis.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to bridge the gap in the research on disability depictions in children's media, namely children's toys that represent impairment. In order to achieve this, I examined children's toys that represent impairment, as well as the perspectives of early years educators towards using these toys in early childhood practice.

In this chapter, I will provide a summary of the key findings from the two research questions and a discussion of subsequent implications stemming from these findings, particularly for two main groups: (a) early childhood educators; and (b) toy makers (including relevant website creators, media conglomerates etc.). I will then discuss the contributions of the study; and finally outline some questions for further research raised by the present study.

6.1 Online Accessibility and diversity of toys that represent impairment in Australian online toy stores

6.1.1 Key Findings from RQ1: What is the current situation regarding the online accessibility and diversity of children's toys that represent impairment in online toy stores in Australia?

Three key findings arose from investigating RQ1: (1) educational websites appeared to reflect the purpose of raising awareness of impairments rather than promoting impairment as human variation; (2) the toys that were found to represent impairment tended to support common disability/ impairment stereotypes; and (3) half of the toys that represent impairment were characters that were 'other' than human, unnamed, and not connected to other media platforms.

The toys that represent impairment within the educational websites were identified as being more generic and as lacking individuality. Many of the toys that represent impairment were found through searching for a particular impairment signifier, searching categories/ subcategories that were solely for toys that represent impairment, and searching for the term, 'disability', or common synonyms. Thus, the educational websites appeared to serve a purpose of raising awareness of impairment rather than acknowledging impairment as a form of human variation.

This study further underscored the lack of diverse portrayals of disability in children's media. Most of the toys that were found to represent impairment depicted an adult male. Moreover, most of the toys represent visual impairment through the use of glasses or stereotypical impairments associated with pirates (e.g. pegleg, eyepatch and hook-hand). Representations of other impairments were otherwise essentially invisible in the sample.

In addition, half of the toys that represent impairments also portrayed characters that were not human: i.e. an animal character or a fantasy/ superhero character. Half of the toys were also identified as being named and connected to one or more other forms of media.

6.1.2 Implications for toy manufacturers and distributors

Considering that educational toy websites predominantly aim to serve educators, it is understandable that these websites would categorise toys that represent impairment to increase ease of access. It is, however, important to acknowledge the underlying ableist tone that the categorisation of these toys based on impairment may communicate to educators engaging with these websites. Categorising in this way presents a potential risk of emphasising impairment as 'other than normal' (Cologon, & Thomas, 2014). Inclusion is important for all children, not only for marginalised groups in society, particularly those who experience disability (as this categorisation seems to portray). Online toy distributors are encouraged to take this into consideration in their web design.

Toy manufacturers and relevant media conglomerates are encouraged to work towards creating characters that reflect a wider range of impairments, in order to be representative of the rich diversity amongst the disability population. This may assist in reducing the stigma associated with certain impairments. Child representations have been suggested to resonate more with children in comparison to adult representations (Bond, 2013; Matthew & Clow, 2007; Dubow et al., 2007). Therefore, more depictions of child characters that have impairments are also needed. In line with this, it is essential that female characters with impairments are represented, to address the stereotype of femininity and beauty being linked to the ableist construction of normality. These implications should be considered if toys that

represent impairment are to serve as a ‘window’ and ‘mirror’ for children who do and do not experience disability (Mendoza & Reese, 2001).

In addition to increasing the quantity of toys that represent impairment, toy manufacturers should also think critically about the quality of these toys. Media representations that depict people who experience disability as ‘other’ than human have been deemed as problematic, for fueling negative constructs of disability (Brittain, 2004; Hodkinson, 2012). However, media representations must also acknowledge people who experience disability as complex beings. As Ellis (2016, p. 8) states, “it is important that we see people with disability along the full spectrum of human experience and popular culture characterization – as good, bad, right, wrong, strong and weak”. Therefore, it is insufficient to merely label these representations as negative without first understanding the context: e.g. if all of the characters within a group were superheroes and the only human character was a person who had an impairment, this would not necessarily make it a positive portrayal. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to delve into contextual complexities that surround toys that represent impairments, it is acknowledged that disability portrayals cannot be simply divided into a “positive and negative binary opposition” (Ellis, p. 8). This complexity should be considered when creating and marketing toys that represent impairments.

Providing toys with a ‘named identity’ (van Leeuwen, 2009) may assist in addressing the genericity of toys, enhancing their human-like characteristics. Furthermore, media conglomerates are encouraged to assess the way in which disability/ impairment is represented through other media forms. Half of the toys were found to connect to other media platforms, which may influence children’s engagement with associated toys.

6.1.3 Implications for early years educators

The findings summarised in Section 6.1.1 hold implications for educators aiming to instill inclusive attitudes amongst children, particularly in relation to critical teaching. Young children’s understandings and attitudes about disability are established in the early years (Innes & Diamond, 1999; Dyson, 2005). Therefore, and as this study and research reviewed in Chapter Two have stressed, young children need to be taught to

be critical of media portrayals that present such stereotypes. This is important in promoting the practice of resisting ableist ideologies.

As the toys within educational websites seem to categorise impairment, educators are encouraged not to reflect this in their practice. Educators must instead use these toys in both encouraging critical thinking about ableism and positioning impairment from an affirmative model. The toys sold in educational websites that represent impairment are largely sold in groups (e.g. a set of dolls with impairments); however, it is crucial for educators to present these toys to children in ways that do not perpetuate this ‘medical model’ practice of categorising on the basis of impairment. In order to realise an affirmative model of disability, impairment must be positioned as a form of human diversity (Garland-Thompson, 2004; Cologon, 2014).

6.2 Educators’ perspectives on toys that represent impairment in early childhood settings and on disability

6.2.1 Key Findings from RQ2: What are early childhood educators’ perspectives on toys that represent impairment in early childhood settings and on disability?

Three key findings arose from investigating RQ2: (1) overall educators regarded toys that represent impairment as important and beneficial in the education of young children; (2) educators deemed merely having toys that represent disability in ECEC settings insufficient in educating children about disability, inclusion and diversity, yet most defined disability in medical model terms; and (3) various barriers (namely monetary constraints, accessibility, and limited range) impeded educators’ ability to obtain and use toys that represent impairment in ECEC settings.

Most of the survey respondents revealed positive attitudes towards using toys that represent impairment in educating young children about disability, diversity and inclusion. Regardless of whether such toys were available at their setting, educators overwhelmingly expressed the view that such toys can have advantageous impact on all children, including children who do not experience disability.

Their stated views about these advantages aligned with Mendoza and Reese’s (2001) window and mirror analogy for books that represent disability/ impairment. Applying this analogy to toys that represent impairment, in particular, the educators regarded such toys as assisting children who experience disability with developing a positive sense of self. Concurrently, participants acknowledged the benefits that these

toys have in assisting to ‘normalise’ impairment, thus also assisting children who do not experience disability in viewing impairment as a form of human variation.

Despite this finding, the present study revealed that many educators found it important to have an educator present with children whilst they are engaging with toys that represent impairment. These educators found it important to engage the children in discussion about “disability”, in order to avoid instances of ‘tokenism’. Having the toys available throughout the day for free play, dramatic play and planned experiences is, therefore, viewed as insufficient for teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity.

However, the majority of educators held definitions of disability that aligned with medical models of disability, suggesting an understanding of disability as impairment or disability as resulting from impairment. These attitudes must be considered, as research has revealed links between educator beliefs, and attitudes towards disability and practices towards the inclusion of children who experience disability (see Srinivasan, 2016).

Although most educators in this study expressed the view that toys representing impairment are beneficial in educating all children, almost half reported that they experienced barriers in obtaining such toys. Monetary constraints, limited access, and limited range were the most commonly reported barriers.

6.2.2 Implications for early years educators

Educators who do not have toys that represent impairment within their setting are encouraged to consider making these toys available to the children within their setting. This may assist in educating all children about disability, and thus assist in the inclusion of children who experience disability.

As this study did not explore the actual use of toys that represent impairment in ECEC settings, it is unclear whether the educators’ discussions would assist in teaching children about disability in a way that encourages thinking about inclusion and resisting ableism, rather than merely highlighting impairment and possible stereotypes surrounding certain labels. Educators are encouraged to engage in the former practice, keeping in line with the values of social justice education. Educators should steer away from the latter practice, in order to avoid the dangers of evoking feelings of pity towards people who experience disability and/or encouraging the view

of disability as ‘other’. These dangers commonly stem from educational practices that focus on raising awareness of impairment rather than on disability oppression and discrimination (Lalvani & Broderick, 2013). These suggestions are particularly relevant as the educators in this study and previous studies (e.g. Lalvani, 2015) reported beliefs that were consistent with medical model perspectives on disability.

In addition to these practices, considering the viewpoints of Arthur (2005) and Sutton-Smith (2009), educators are encouraged to also refrain from hindering the potential for children to experience pleasure in their engagement with toys, and must also permit children’s autonomy and individual exploration of disability through these toys. Positioning these toys as different from any other toy due to the risk of tokenism may instead reinforce ableism rather than assist in preventing it.

6.2.3 Implications for toys creators and toy providers

Considering the present study’s findings for RQ1, it is not surprising that educators experienced difficulties in accessing toys that represent impairment that are affordable, accessible, and diverse in range. Toy manufacturers and relevant media conglomerates should consider the apparent need for these toys, and tap into this essentially untapped market. Furthermore, toy makers are encouraged to create toys that represent a wider range of impairments through various characters, which will assist in disestablishing the barriers of accessibility and limited range.

Simultaneously, this finding should also encourage relevant stakeholders to consider allocating more funding to increasing the representation of children who experience disability in their educational settings, particularly since increasing research (including the present study) is deeming this important for the inclusion of children who experience disability (as discussed in Chapter Two). This is particularly important in a context where children who experience disability are continually being excluded and where ableism is still pervasive within society.

6.3 Key study contributions

This study has made three key contributions to existing research, which are particularly relevant for ECE and understanding media portrayals of disability.

Firstly, the present study builds on existing research on children’s media portrayals of disability/ impairment by addressing the need for research on toys that

represent impairment. It has provided evidence revealing the overall scarcity of portrayals of different types of impairment in the world of children's toys.

Secondly, this study has developed knowledge about educators' perspectives on disability and toys that represent impairment. Awareness of these perspectives is an essential first step towards understanding how such toys can be used to promote inclusion in ECEC settings. In taking this step, I have acknowledged the crucial role of educators in either shifting or reinforcing the ableism that is deeply entrenched within powerful media discourses. This study has thus raised awareness that teaching is never a "politically neutral undertaking" (Bartolome, 1994, p. 178), and that educators are always teaching children something about disability, even if they choose to refrain from the topic altogether.

Thirdly, this study has contributed methodologically, in three ways: (1) establishing a method for investigating online toy stores; (2) combining elements of critical multimodal discourse analysis with content analysis; and (3) adopting resistance theory. Firstly, this study has established a method for accessing ability online, which is especially relevant in a context where toys are increasingly being made available through online platforms, and educators are accessing toys in this way. Secondly, combining the method of content analysis with elements of critical multimodal discourse analysis has suggested its usefulness as a methodological tool for underlining inherent ableist messages within toys that represent impairment. Thirdly, in adopting resistance theory, the importance of social justice education through critical pedagogy, as well as the role of educators in shaping children's attitudes and beliefs about disability, are acknowledged.

6.4 Key implications for future research

Four key avenues for future research were identified in the present study. The first key avenue is exploring children's engagement with toys that represent impairment. Although it is beyond the scope of the present study to explore children's actual engagement with toys, it is acknowledged that children hold autonomy in their play. According to Sutton-Smith (1986, p.205), "... the child players control the play rather than the other way around ... [Toys] are the agencies of the players. They are controlled rather than controlling". Thus, "the nature of the toy alone cannot tell us whether the player will use it largely to mimic nature or largely to parody it or both".

Despite the lack of diverse and authentic portrayals of disability in the toys that were assessed in the present study, it is unknown whether children are in fact playing with these toys in a way that follows dominant medical model understandings of disability, or in contrast, whether children are resisting ableism through their play. Subsequently, future research is needed to explore children's play with these toys, exploring the narratives that they create with these toys and (if disability is a theme within their play) how disability is explored within these narratives.

The second is examining the media that toys are connected to. This study found that almost half of the children's toys that were assessed were connected to other forms of media. Through solely focusing on the toys, this study captured only one aspect of the multifaceted bigger picture of how disability is portrayed in children's media. Children's understandings of the characters that are depicted in these toys may have been influenced also by these external media depictions (e.g. children's television shows, children's movies, children's picture books, etc.). It would therefore be beneficial to analyse these toys in the context of the narratives communicated by these media platforms.

The third is researching actual practices of educators. The present study found that most of the educators who completed the survey held positive attitudes towards using toys that represent impairment within the ECEC setting; however, many also reported that discussion about disability should be implemented whilst children engage with such toys. These findings highlight the necessity to clarify educators' practices using these toys, including investigating the discussions that they have with children about disability. Doing so will illuminate whether these discussions perpetuate medical model attitudes towards disability, or whether children are supported in affirming disability and in critically thinking about ableism. This is particularly important as most of the educators within the present study suggested medical model attitudes towards disability in defining the term.

Finally, the fourth is researching how toys that represent impairment are actually used in ECEC settings, which may also reveal the ways that toys can be used to support children's affirmation towards disability without detracting from the enjoyable nature of toys (Sutton-Smith, 2009; Arthur, 2005). This may also reveal any valuable intentional teaching practices that educators may use to assist in critically thinking about acknowledging and disestablishing ableism through children's play

with these toys: e.g. exploring with children how toys with wheelchairs can access a building without ramps.

Disability representations must work to advance the view of disability identity as being positive, empowering and adding to the richness of human diversity, to assist in combating ableism. If toys both passively and actively impact societal beliefs and attitudes towards disability, what does the ‘invisibility’ of certain impairments imply about disability? If Sutton-Smith’s (2009) notion that “[t]oys are meant to teach something about the world” (p. 152) holds true, it is important to continually assess what the presently available toys are teaching (or not teaching) children about disability, and the crucial role that adults (particularly educators) play in ‘using’ these toys in supporting children’s ability to resist ableism.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, J., & Boyle, C. (2015). Inclusive education in Australia: Rhetoric, reality and the road ahead. *Support for Learning*, 30(1), 4-22. doi: 10.1111/1467-9604.12074
- Arthur, L. (2005). 'Popular culture: Views of parents and educators'. In J. Marsh (Ed.), *Popular Culture, New Media and Digital Literacy in Early Childhood* (165-182). Routledge: USA.
- Atkinson, R. (2016a). #ToyLikeMe - celebrating disability in toys! Retrieved from <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/toylikeme-celebrating-disability-in-toys>
- Atkinson, R. (2016b). *Playmobil: Please make disability toys and help generations of kids, grow up with a positive attitude to human difference!* Retrieved from <https://www.change.org/p/playmobil-please-make-disability-toys-and-help-generations-of-kids-grow-up-with-a-positive-attitude-to-human-difference>
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2012). *Australian Curriculum*. ACARA: Sydney. Retrieved from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) (2011). *Guide to the National Quality Standards*. ACECQA: Canberra. Retrieved from <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf>
- Ayala, E. C. (2010). "Poor little things" and "Brave little souls": The portrayal of individuals with disabilities in children's literature. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 39(1), 103-117. doi: 10.1080/19388079909558314
- Baglieri, S. (2008). 'I connected': Reflection and biography in teacher learning toward inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12(5), 585–604. doi: 10.1080/13603110802377631
- Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. St. Albans: Paladine.
- Bartolome, L. (1994). Beyond the methods fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(2), 173-195. doi: [10.17763/haer.64.2.58q5m5744t325730](https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.64.2.58q5m5744t325730)

- Barton, C., & Somerville, K. (2012). Play things: Children's racialized mechanical banks and toys, 1880- 1930. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 16(1), 47-85. doi: 10.1007/s10761-012-0169-y
- Beaumont-Thomas, B. (2016). *Lego unveils first ever minifigure in wheelchair*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/jan/27/lego-unveils-disabled-minifigure-promobricks-nuremberg-toy-fair>
- Bond, B. J. (2013). Physical disability on children's television programming: A content analysis. *Early Education & Development*, 24(3), 408-418. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2012.670871
- Bookmark. (2006). *The Quentin Blake Award Project Report. Making Exclusion a Thing of the Past: Children's Views on Disability in Books*. UK: The Roald Dahl Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.scope.org.uk/Scope/media/Documents/Support/Childrens-views-on-disability-in-books.pdf>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Brittain, I. (2004). An Examination into the Portrayal of Deaf Characters and Deaf Issues in Picture Books for Children. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 24(1). doi: 10.18061/dsq.v24i1.841
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Caldas-Coulthard, C., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). Baby's first toys and the discursive construction of babyhood. *Folia Linguistica*, 35(1-2). doi: [10.1515/flin.2001.35.1-2.157](https://doi.org/10.1515/flin.2001.35.1-2.157)
- Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., & van Leeuwen, T. (2002). 'Stunning, shimmering, iridescent: Toys as the representation of gendered social actors'. In L. Litosseliti & J. Sunderland (Eds.), *Gender Identity and Discourse Analysis: Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture* (pp. 91-108). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., & van Leeuwen, T. (2003). Teddy bear stories. *Social Semiotics*, 13(1), 5-27. doi: 10.1080/1035033022000133490
- Campbell, F. K. (2009). *Contours of ableism: The production of disability and abledness*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Cecchini, M. E. (2008). *How dramatic play can enhance learning*. Retrieved from http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=751
- Cologon, K. (2012). Confidence in their own ability: Postgraduate early childhood students examining their attitudes towards inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(11), 1155–1173. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2010.548106
- Cologon, L. (2013a). *Inclusion in education: Towards equity for students with disability*. Children with Disability Australia, Issues Papers. Retrieved from www.cda.org.au/_literature_159457/Issues_Paper_on_Inclusion_-_PDF
- Cologon, K. (2013b). Growing up with 'difference': Inclusive education and the portrayal of characters who experience disability in children's literature. *Write4Children: The International Journal for the Practice and Theories of Writing for Children and Children's Literature*, 4(2), 100-120. Retrieved from <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/academicdepartments/EnglishCreativeWritingandAmericanStudies/Documents/w4cJune2013Diversity.pdf>
- Cologon, K. (2014). 'Constructing inclusion: Putting theory into practice'. In K. Cologon (Ed.), *Inclusive education in the early years: Right from the start* (521-539). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Cologon, K., & Thomas, C. (2014). 'Ableism, disableism and the early years'. In K. Cologon (Ed.), *Inclusive education in the early years: Right from the start* (27-48). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Connor, D. J., & Gabel, S. L. (2010). 'Welcoming the unwelcome: Disability and diversity. In 'T. K. Chapman & N. Hobbel (Eds.), *Social justice pedagogy across the curriculum* (pp. 201-220). New York: Routledge.
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) (2011). *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/NDS%20PDF.pdf>
- De Boer, D., Pijil, S. J., & Minnart, A. (2012). Students' attitudes towards peers with disabilities: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 59(4), 379-392. doi: 10.1080/1034912X.2012.723944
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (DEEWR) (2009).

- Belonging, being and becoming: An early years learning framework for Australia*. Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra.
- De Vaus, D. (2013). *Surveys in social research* (6th ed). New York: Routledge
- Devotta, K., Wilton, R., Yiannakoulis, N. (2013). Representations of disability in the Canadian news media: A decade of change? *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 35(22), 1859-1868. doi:10.3109/09638288.2012.760658
- Dickie, J., & Shuker, M. J. (2014). Ben 10, superheroes and princesses: Primary teachers' views of popular culture and school literacy. *Literacy*, 48(1), 32-38. doi: 10.1111/lit.12023
- Dubow, E. F., Huesmann, L. R., & Greenwood, D. (2007). 'Media and youth socialization: Underlying processes and moderators of effects'. In J. E. Grusec, & P. D. Hastings (Eds.), *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research* (pp. 404-430). New York: Guilford Press.
- Dyson, L. L. (2005). Kindergarten children's understanding of and attitudes toward people with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 25(2), 95-104. doi: 10.1177/02711214050250020601
- Ellis, K. (2015). *Disability and popular culture: Focusing passion, creating community and expressing defiance*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Favazza, P. C., & Odom, S. L. (1997). Promoting positive attitudes of kindergarten-age children toward people with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 63(3), 405-418. doi: 10.1177/001440299706300308
- Finkelstein, V. (1975). Phase 2: Discovering the person in 'disability' and 'rehabilitation'. *Magic carpet*, 27(1), 31-38. Retrieved from <http://pf7d7vi404s1dxh27mla5569.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/files/library/finkelstein-finkelstein4.pdf>
- Foss, K. A. (2013). (De)stigmatizing the silent epidemic: Representations of hearing loss in entertainment television. *Health Communication*, 29(2), 1-13. doi: 10.1080/10410236.2013.814079
- Friere, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International.
- Gabel, S., & Peters, S. (2010). Presage of a paradigm shift? Beyond the social model of disability toward resistance theories of disability. *Disability & Society*, 19(6), 585-600. doi: 10.1080/0968759042000252515
- Garland-Thomsan, R. (2004). 'Integrating disability: Transforming feminist

- theory'. In B.G. Smith and B. Hutchinson (Eds), *Gendering Disability* (73-103). New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press
- Gersten, R. (2001). Sorting out the roles of research in the improvement of practice. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 16(1), 45-50. doi: 10.1111/0938-8982.00005
- Giroux, H. A. (2011). *Theory and resistance in education: Towards a pedagogy for the opposition*. Wesport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.
- Golos, D. B., & Moses, A. M. (2011). Representations of deaf characters in children's picture books. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 156(3), 270-282. doi: 10.1353/aad.2011.0025
- Graham, L. J., & Sweller, N. (2011). The Inclusion lottery: Who's in and who's out? Tracking inclusion and exclusion in New South Wales government schools. *International journal of inclusive education*, 15(9), 941-953. doi: 10.1080/13603110903470046
- Hackman, H. W. (2005). Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 38(2), 103-109. doi: 10.1080/10665680590935034
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage, in association with The Open University
- Haller, B. A. (2010). *Representing disability in an ableist world: Essays on mass media*. Louisville, Kentucky: The Avocado Press, Inc.
- Hamm, E. M., Mistrett, S. G., Ruffino, A. G. (2006). Play outcomes and satisfaction with toys and technology of young children with special needs. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 21(1), 29-35. doi: 10.1177/016264340602100103
- Hodkinson, A. (2012). Inclusive education and the cultural representation of disability and disabled people within the English education system: The influence of electronic media in the primary school. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 12(4), 252-262. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-3802.2011.01208.x
- Hsieh, H. C. (2008). Effects of ordinary and adaptive toys on pre-school children with developmental disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 29(5), 459-466. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2007.08.004
- Hsieh, H. C. (2012). Effectiveness of adaptive pretend play on affective expression and imagination of children with cerebral palsy. *Research in Developmental*

- Disabilities*, 33(6), 1975-1983. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2012.05.013
- Innes, F. K., & Diamond, K. E. (1999). Typically developing children's interactions with peers with disabilities: Relationships between mothers' comments and children's ideas about disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 19(2), 103-111. doi: 10.1177/027112149901900204
- Jung, W. S. (2007). Preservice teacher training for successful inclusion. *Education*, 128(1), 106-113.
- Karabon, A. (2016). They're lovin' it: how preschool children mediated their funds of knowledge into dramatic play. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(5-6), 896-909. doi: [10.1080/03004430.2016.1234467](https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1234467)
- Karambatsos, S. (2010). *Under the cover: Disability and children's literature* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing: <http://simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/docview/748285031?accountid=12219>
- Killoran, O., Panaroni, S., Rivers, Y., Razack, D., Vetter, D., & Tymon, D. (2004). Rethink, revise, react. Using an anti-bias curriculum to move beyond the usual. *Childhood Education*, 80(3), 149-156. doi: 10.1080/00094056.2004.10522794
- Koss, M. D. (2015). Diversity in contemporary picturebooks: A content analysis. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 41(1), 32-42.
- Lalvani, P. (2015). "We are not aliens": Exploring the meaning of disability and the nature of belongingness in a fourth grade classroom. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 35(4). doi: 10.18061/dsq.v35i4.4963
- Lalvani, P., Broderick, A. A. (2013). Institutionalized ableism and the misguided "Disability awareness day": Transformative pedagogies for teacher education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 46(4), 468-483. doi: 10.1080/10665684.2013.838484
- Lindon, J. (1998). *Equal opportunities in practice*. United Kingdom: Hodder Education.
- Marsh, J. (2005). 'Introduction: Children of the digital age'. In J. Marsh (Ed.), *Popular Culture, New Media and Digital Literacy in Early Childhood* (1-11). USA: Routledge.
- Martinez-Bello, V. E., & Martinez-Bello, J. T. (2016). Bodies displayed on walls: Are children's bodies represented in an inclusive way in the pictures on the walls

- in their early childhood educational environments? *Early Years*, 37(2). doi: 10.1080/09575146.2016.1165186
- Matthew, N., & Clow, S. (2007). Putting disabled children in the picture: Promoting inclusive children's books and media. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(2), 65-78. doi: 10.1007/BF03178225
- McLean, M. (2008). Teaching about disability: An ethical responsibility? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12(5), 605–619. doi: 10.1080/13603110802377649
- McCray, E. D., & McHatton, P. A. (2011). "Less afraid to have them in my classroom": Understanding pre-service general educators' perceptions about inclusion. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 38(4), 135-155. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ960622.pdf>
- McHatton, P. A., & Parker, A. (2013). Purposeful preparation: Longitudinally exploring inclusion attitudes of general and special education pre-service teachers. *The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children*, 36(3), 186-203. doi: 10.1177/0888406413491611
- McQuail, D. (1989). *Mass communication theory*. London: Sage.
- Mendoza, J., Resse, D. (2001). Examining multicultural picture books for the early childhood classroom: Possibilities and pitfalls. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, 3(2), 1-21. Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/>
- Monoyiou, E., & Symeonidou, S. (2016). The wonderful world of children's books? Negotiating diversity through children's literature. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(6), 588-603. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2015.1102338
- Morgan, H. (2009). Picture book biographies for young children: A way to teach multiple perspectives. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(3), 219-227. doi: 10.1007/s10643-009-0339-7
- Morrell, E. (2002). Toward a critical pedagogy of popular culture: Literacy development among urban youth. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 46(1), 72-77.
- Mulshine, M. (2015). *Major toy companies have started making disabled dolls after a huge push by parents through Facebook*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/playmobil-and-makies-disabled-dolls-created-through-3d-printing-2015-6>
- Oliver, M. (1981). 'A new model of the social work role in relation to disability.' In J.

- Campling (Ed.), *The handicapped person: A new perspective for social workers?* (pp. 20-39). London: RADAR.
- Oliver, M. (1996). *Understanding disability: From theory to practice*. London: Macmillan
- Oliver, M. (2004). 'If I had a hammer: The social model in action'. In J. Swain, S. French, C. Barnes & C. Thomas (Eds). *Disabling barriers- enabling environments* (2nd ed.) (pp.7-12). London: Sage
- Oliver, M., & Barnes, C. (2012). *The new politics of disablement*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan
- O Malley-Keighran, M., & Coleman, M. (2014). 'I am not a tragedy. I am full of hope': Communication impairment narratives in newspapers. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 49(2), 174-188. doi: 10.1111/1460-6984.12066
- Ostrosky, M. M., Mouzourou, C., Dorsey, E. A., Favazza, P. C., & Leboeuf, L. M. (2015). Pick a book, any book: Using children's books to support positive attitudes toward peers with disabilities. *Young Exceptional Children*, 18(1), 30-43. doi: 10.1177/1096250613512666
- Prater, M. A. (2003). Learning disabilities in children's and adolescent literature: How are characters portrayed? *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 26(1), 47-62. doi: 10.2307/1593684
- Saha, S., Doran, E., Osann, K. E., Hom, C., Movsesyan, N., Rosa, D. D., Tournay, A., & Lott, I. T. Self-concept in children with Down syndrome. *American Journal of Medical Genetics*, 164(8), 1891-1898. doi: 10.1002/ajmg.a.36597
- Samsel, M., & Perepa, P. (2013). The impact of media representations of disabilities on teachers' perspectives. *Support for Learning*, 28(4), 138-145. doi: 10.1111/1467-9604.12036
- Scherman, E. L. (2011). *Delightful disruptions: Rhetorical and semiotic constructions of disability in children's cinema*. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing:
<http://simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/docview/930805439?accountid=12219>
- Solis, S. (2007). *Coloring outside the line: Problematizing disability representations in children's picture books*. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing:
<http://simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/simsrad>

[.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/docview/304864451?accountid=12219](http://net.ocs.mq.edu.au/docview/304864451?accountid=12219)

- Spain, H., Kraft, S., Anson, C., Wagor, C., Futrell, N., Coker-Bolt, P. (2015). The effects of low-cost, adapted ride-on-toys: A case series with toddlers with neuromuscular disorders. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 69(1), 6911515166p1. doi: 10.5014/ajot.2015.69s1-po5049
- Srinivasan, P. (2016). What we see is what we choose: Seers and seekers with diversity. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 7(2), 1-15. doi: 10.1080/14681366.2016.1255243
- Sutton-Smith, B. (1986). *Toys as culture*. New York, NY: Gardner Press.
- Sutton-Smith, B. (2009). *The ambiguity of play*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Swain, J., & French, S. (2000). Towards an affirmation model of disability. *Disability & Society*, 15(4), 569-582. doi: 10.1080/09687590050058189
- Symeonidou, S., & Phtiaka, H. (2009). Using teachers' prior knowledge, attitudes and beliefs to develop in-service teacher education courses for inclusion. *Teaching and teacher education*, 25(1), 543-550. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.001
- Thomas, C. (2004). 'Disability and impairment'. In J. Swain, S. French, C. Barnes, & C. Thomas (Eds.), *Disabling barriers – enabling environments* (2nd ed.) (21-27). SAGE Publications: London.
- Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). (1976). Fundamental principles of disability. Retrieved from <http://disabilitystudies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/UPIAS-fundamental-principles.pdf>
- UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html> [accessed 19 May 2017].
- UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106, available at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf> [accessed 19 May 2017].
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2009). The world according to Playmobil. *Semiotica*, 173, 299-315. doi: 10.1515/semi.2009.013

- Wardell, S., Fitzgerald, R. P., Legge, M., & Clift, K. (2014). A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the New Zealand media portrayal of Down syndrome. *Disability and Health Journal*, 7(2), 242-250.
- Wolf, N. (1993). *The beauty myth*. London: Vintage.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2017). *Disabilities*. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>
- Zhang, L., Haller, B. (2013). Consuming image: How mass media impact the identity of people with disabilities. *Communication Quarterly*, 61(3), 319-334. doi: 10.1080/01463373.2013.776988

APPENDIX 1

List of toys⁶ included in analysis

Website and type (bracketed)	Toy name
A (Educational)	<p> Emotion Game Beleduc Tell Me Responsibility Game Inclusions Puzzles Multicultural Family BBQ Puzzle Step Brother Family Puzzle Asian Family Baking Puzzle World Religion Puppets Set of 5 People with Disability Set of 6 All Kinds of Play Puzzles Set of 8 Emotions Puzzle Set 1, Set of 4 Solid Bright! Caring for Myself Puzzles Set of 4 Mobilo® 6 Mixed Figures Light Mobilo® 6 Mixed Figures Brown Mobilo® 6 Mixed Figures Dark Brown Professionals Hand Puppets Set of 6 Hape Wooden Doll Grandfather Hape Wooden Doll Grandmother The Village People 38 Pieces What Do You Say 6 Brain Builder Board Games Beleduc Tell Me Responsibility Game Our Soft Character Friends Set 2 First Friends Grandfather First Friends Grandmother Hospital Play Set Emergency Services Action Puzzles and Posters Set Multicultural Family BBQ Puzzle Asian Family Baking Puzzle 7 Questioning Skills Board Nursery Rhymes Puzzles Set of 6 Little Red Riding Hood Wooden Puzzle 12 Pieces Supermarket Puzzle 81 Pieces Days of the Week Puzzle 29 Pieces Bus Floor Puzzle 20 Pieces Above and Beneath the City Puzzle 120 Pieces Pinocchio Puzzle Wooden Puzzle 12 Pieces Opposites 15 Puzzle Set Set of 15, 30 Pieces What Do I Do? 15 Puzzle Set Set of 15, 30 Pieces 4 x Puzzle - Thumbelina 8, 12, 15, 20pc Snow White Puzzle 30 Pieces Construction Site 40 Pieces Every-Day Reality Maxi Puzzle 20 Pieces Everyday Outings Puzzle Set of 4 Bakery Puzzle 81 Pieces Accident Layer Puzzle 66 Pieces Blending Consonants Desk Games 6 Grammar and Sentences Board Games </p>

⁶ Each packaged toy included one or more bodies for analysis

B (Educational)	Differing Abilities Puzzles Set of 6 Diverse Abilities Block Play Set Melissa & Doug – Disability Awareness Puzzle 4 Inclusion Block Play Set – 9pc LEGO DUPLO Community People – 21 pieces LEGO DUPLO World People – 16 pieces Wooden Multicultural People – Set of 38 Careers Finger Puppets – 10pcs Caucasian Family and Friends Finger Puppets -10pc Bendable Wooden Pirates – 6 pieces Hospital Set with Mat – 28 pieces Kinds of Family Set of 4 Life Wooden Puzzles – Dishwashing Block Play People Differing Abilities – 6pcs WOW Toys – Robin’s Medical Rescue Schleich – Captain Papa Smurf Schleich – Brainy Smurf LEGO DUPLO Multi Vehicles – 32 pieces WOW Toys – Sidney School Bus Careers Puzzle Set of 12 Emotionoes Board Game Feelings & Emotions Matching Pairs 56pce Mobilo Family – Light Family – 6 pieces Mobilo Family – Dark Family – 6 pieces Rburg – Tell-A-Story Game Orchard Toys – Pick n Mix People Game Orchard Toys – Tell The Time Lotto Orchard Toys – Crazy Chefs BOPal – Travel Who’s Who Game TPC – People Who Help Us Puppets Set of 9 Caucasian Family Block Play People – 8 pieces Multicultural Community Workers – 16 pieces Cardboard Puppet Dolls 22cm – Pack of 10 Asian Family and Friends Finger Puppets -10pc Careers Hand Puppets 10 Pieces Viking – Ambulance Helicopter w 3 fig Playmobil – Pirates Captain Playmobil – Blue Interactive Cannon with Pirate Schleich – Ship’s Cook Smurf Schleich – Sales Smurf Multicultural Families Puzzle & Poster Set 8 Weather Jigsaws set of 8 Orchard Toys – Big Bus Shaped Floor Puzzle – 15pcs
C (Non-educational)	Orchard Toys - Crazy Chefs Lotto Game Djeco Magic Plastic Peppa Pig Memory Cards Lamaze Yo Ho Horace Pirate Bello The Black Dragon Pirate Ship Miniland Emotiblocks Peppa Pig Holiday Splash Speedboat Sylvanian Families Chocolate Rabbit Grandparents Terraria Basic Pack- Assorted Tomy Pop Up Pirate Loot Card Game Magna Junior Boys In Town University Games Murder Mystery Mansion Jimmy Jack Pirates 36 Piece Puzzle TCG Who's There? Le Toy Van Barbarossa Pirate Ship Pirates 2000 Beads Set

D (Non-educational)	LEGO Angry Birds Piggy Pirate Ship 75825 LEGO City Great Vehicles Pickup Tow Truck 60081 LEGO Minifigures The Disney Series 71012 LEGO Minifigures Series 15 71011 LEGO NEXO Knights Ultimate Beast Master 70334 LEGO Star Wars Battle on Takodana 75139 Electronic Guess Who Extra Finding Dory Pressomatic Guess Who? Classic Game Zuru Nemo Dory Baby Dory Marlin
E (Non-educational)	Kawaii Crush - Large Doll - Zoey Boey Fru Fru Mr Potato Head - Silly Suitcase Wild Republic - Nature Tube – Pirates Lalaloopsy Littles - Sew Cute Patient Peppa Pig - 12 Piece Frame Tray Puzzle - Town Fair Monster High - Jane Boolittle Doll BJF62 LEGO - The Angry Birds Movie - 75825 Piggy Pirate Ship Jake and the Never Land Pirates - Hook's Adventure Rock Orchard Toys - Crazy Chefs Game Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom - Memory Cards Inside Out - Sadness Figure with Memory Sphere Disney Pixar - Inside Out - Large Sadness Figure with Mind Manual Dumb Ass Board Game LEGO City - 60116 Ambulance Plane LEGO City - 60119 Ferry LEGO Minifigures 71009 - The Simpsons Series 2 LEGO Minifigures 71011 - Series 15 LEGO Minifigures 71012 - The Disney Series Orchard Toys - Pick and Mix People Peppa Pig - Bath Figures - 4 Pack Peppa Pig - Memory Cards Peppa Pig - Snap Card Game Peppa Pig - Pairs Card Game Peppa Pig - Wooden Block Cart with Game Pop-Up Pirate Shopkins - Season 2 - 5 Pack of Shopkins Shopkins - Season 4 - 12 Pack of Shopkins Despicable Me 2 - Minion Surprise Figures LEGO Minifigures 71005 - The Simpsons Mighty Beanz - Series 2 - 3 Pack Monsters University - 230mm Play Ball Scooby Doo - 230mm Play Ball Electronic Guess Who? Extra Dumb Ass Board Game Guess Who - The Game Mr Potato Head - Silly Suitcase Mrs Potato Head - Silly Suitcase Peppa Pig - Press-O-Matic Game The Game of Life - Despicable Me Toy Story 3 - Ropes and Rockets Infantino - Purrcilla the Witty Kitty Disney Pixar - Inside Out - Headquarters Playset Hello Kitty - Family Figures Kawaii Crush - Betty Teddy Zoom Zoom Lalaloopsy - Mini Littles - A-Lot Sisters Giggle and Hoot - 7 Piece Peg Puzzle - Fun with Buttons Peppa Pig - 12 Piece Frame Tray Puzzle - Classroom Fun Peppa Pig - 12 Piece Frame Tray Puzzle - Family Meal Peppa Pig - 12 Piece Frame Tray Puzzle - Muddy Puddles Ravensburger - Mickey's Birthday - 1000 Piece Puzzle

	<p> The Wiggles - 12 Piece Frame Tray Puzzle - At the Docks The Wiggles - 12 Piece Frame Tray Puzzle - Fun at Home The Wiggles - 12 Piece Frame Tray Puzzle - Park Fun Peppa Pig - 7 Piece Peg Puzzle – Family Play School - 8 Piece Peg Puzzle Postman Pat - 6 Piece Peg Puzzle – Green Postman Pat - 25 Piece Puzzle - With Friends Postman Pat - 6 Piece Peg Puzzle – Yellow The Wiggles 60 Piece Puzzle - Party Time The Wiggles 60 Piece Puzzle - Sydney Backdrop Wasgij Destiny - #9 Super Models - 1000 Piece Jigsaw Puzzle Wasgij Mystery - #7 Everything Must Go - 1000 Piece Jigsaw Puzzle Zootopia - Judy Hopps & May Bellwether Pack Fisher Price - Little People - Tube Figures - Maggie Hedgehog and Camp Fire Monster High - PVC Play Ball - 230mm Monopoly - Despicable Me 2 </p>
F (non-educational)	<p> LEGO Simpsons Minifigures - Series 2 71009 Inside Out Core Figure Sadness Monster High Zombie Monster 2 Pack Tube Heroes - Captain Sparklez Figure Monster High: Sweet Screams Ghoulia Yelps Bratz #SelfieSnaps Doll – Jade Playskool Mr Potato Head Suitcase – Assorted LEGO Angry Birds Piggy Pirate Ship 75825 Schleich Captain Papa Smurf Children'S Wooden Pin Puzzle Cardboard Puzzle Minions/Despicable Me Blind Bags – Assorted Playmobil Pirates Attack Ship LEGO Minifigures Series 15 71011 LEGO Ideas The Big Bang Theory 21302 LEGO Nexo Knights Ultimate Beast Master 70334 LEGO City Pickup Tow Truck 60081 Krooom Cooper's Pirate Ship LEGO Nexo Knights Beast Master's Chaos Chariot 70314 Shopkins Kinstructions Supermarket Set Journey Girls 45cm Dana – Assorted Monster High Ghoulebrities in Londoom Dolls You & Me Lil Friends – Assorted Project Mc2 Core Doll – Assorted Monster High New Entertainment Serpent Doll Disney Zootopia Action Figure – Assorted Minions Figures 10 Pack How To Train Your Dragon 57cm Giant Toothless Dragons Deluxe Nightstrike Toothless Ghostbusters 6-Inch Figures – Assortment Marvel Avengers Legends Agents of Shield 3-Pack How to Train Your Dragon Battle Dragons – Assorted Action Dragons 15cm Figure Single Pack – Assorted Marvel Avengers Infinite Figures – Assorted Captain America Civil War Metals Diecast Winter Soldier Dragons 20cm Basic Plush – Assorted Dragons Deluxe Dragon & Riders – Assorted Avengers St Force Figure – Assorted Ghostbusters Classic 6-Inch Figures – Assortment Batman 12' Figure – Assorted Speedy Doc Guess Who? Re-Invention Tomy Pop Up Pirate Children's Wooden Pin Puzzle </p>

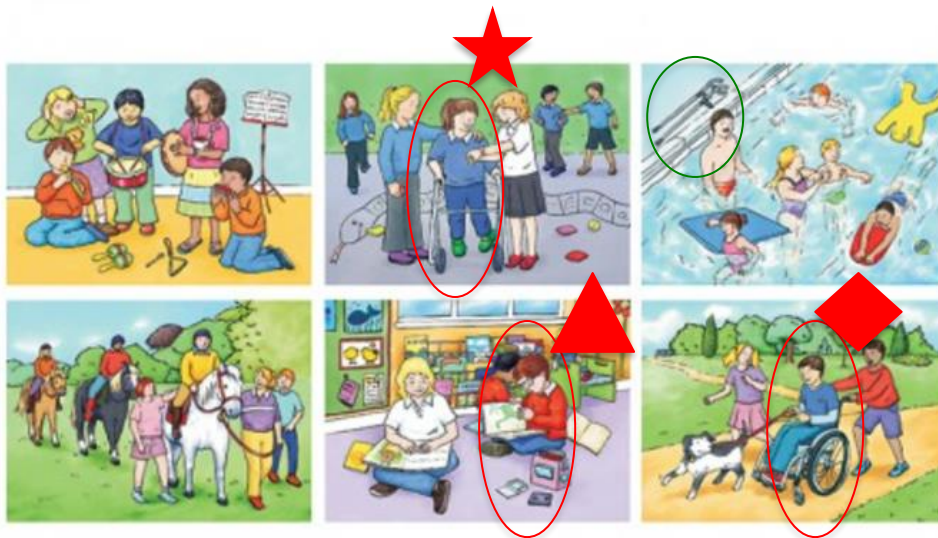
	<p> Guess Who? Card Game How To Train Your Dragon 4 puzzles in Carry Case Brain Quest Find Your Friends Children's Card Game Sizzlin Cool Water Table Pirate Lamaze Captain Calamari Lamaze Yo Yo Horace Hey Duggee Squirrel Soft Toy – Assorted Munchkin School Of Fish Octonauts Figure & Creature Set – Assorted Peppa Pig Little Learning TV Octonauts Assorted Gup-D Vehicle & Figure Set – Assorted Peppa Pig's Push N' Go Car Octonauts Plush Toy – Assorted Octonauts Squirter – Assorted Scooby-Doo 25cm Soft Collectibles – Assorted Ella The Elephant Basic Plush – Assorted Ella The Elephant 4 Pack Figures Smurfs Movie 27cm Soft Toy – Assorted Doc McStuffins Make Me Better Playset – Assorted Sylvanian Families Chocolate Rabbit Grandparents Nemo 24 Inch Jumbo Plush Disney Windups – Assorted Micro Lites Finding Dory – Assorted Finding Dory Swimming Fish – Assorted Finding Dory Squishy Pops - 5 Pack Fisher-Price Little People Shop 'N Roll Ride-On </p>
G (non-educational)	<p> Octonauts Gup Speeders Launcher LEGO Minifigures Series 15 (Single Pack) – 71011 LEGO Minifigures Series 14 Monsters 71010 LEGO Ideas The Big Bang Theory 21302 LEGO Minifigures The Simpsons Series 2 Asst (1 Only) 71009 LEGO Angry Birds Piggy Pirate Ship 75825 LEGO Nexo Knights Ultimate Beast Master 70334 LEGO City Ambulance Plane – 60116 LEGO City Ferry – 60119 LEGO City Space Port Space Starter Set 60077 LEGO City Pickup Tow Truck 60081 LEGO Juniors Pirate Treasure Hunt 10679 LEGO 60036 Arctic Base Camp LEGO Mixel Wave 8 - Skulzy 41567 LEGO DUPLO Ambulance 10527 LEGO Agents Toxikita's Toxic Meltdown 70163 LEGO Bike Shop & Café 31026 LEGO The Simpsons Minifigures 71005 LEGO Beach Racing 10539 LEGO Scooby Doo Mystery Mansion 75904 Dragons Dragon Riders And Dragon Asst The Game Of Life Despicable Me Dragons Real Flying Toothless - Random Dragons Or Dragons 2 Edition Sent Dragons - Giant Fire Breathing Toothless Ghostbusters 6" Figures Asst Terraria – Pirate Star Wars E7 Takodana Encounter Zootopia Charaters Asst How To Train Your Dragon 2 - Power Racing Toothless Terraria - Goblin Tinkerer Finding Dory Swiggle Fish Assortment – Nemo Smurfs Classic Figure 2-Pack Wave 1 Monster High Geek Shriek - Character Assortment </p>

	<p> Monster High Great Scarrier Reef Peri & Pearl Monster High Great Scarrier Reef - Character Assortment Monster High Frights Camera Action Doll Assortment Peppa Pig Daddy Pig Project Mc2 Adrienne's Perfume Sylvanian Families- Chocolate Rabbit Grandparents Peppa Pig - Push Go Car Doc McStuffins Pet Vet On the Go Pet Carrier Dog Peppa Pig Plush - Pedro Pony Monster High Vinyl Figure -Character Assortment Project Mc2 Doll- Adrienne Attoms Peppa Pig Princess Royal Family Figures Barbie Game Developer Monster High Swim Doll Assortment Monster High Scaris Doll Assortment Project Mc2 Adrienne Attoms Monster High Freak Du Chic Frankie Stein Doc Mcstuffins Happy Smiles Dentist Peppa Pig - Grandad Dogs Recovery Set Peppa Pig Figures Peppa Pig Adventure Buggy Fisher Price Little People - Character Assortment Octo Squirter 3 Pack Assortment Peppa Construction 4 Figure Family Pack Octonauts Gup t Rescue Rover Octonauts On The Go Pod Assortment Playskool Mr Potato Head Silly Suitcase Mr Potato Head Suitcase Asst Peppa Pig Holiday Medium Vehicle - Motor Boat with Waterski Finding Dory Water Squirters – Nemo Jake And The Neverland Pirates Character Assortment Jake Neverland Pirates Hook's Adventure Rock Octonauts Gup Speeders Octopod Launcher Octonauts Gup Speeders Launcher Jake And The Neverland Pirates Hook's Battle Boat Play Go Water Piracy Mega Bloks First Builders Pirate Ship Mega Bloks Spongebob Squarepants Micro Action Figure Guess Who – Reinvention Finding Dory Press-O-Matic Finding Dory Fish Card Game Electronic Guess Who Extra Peppa Pig Peg Puzzle - Oink! Peppa Pig Memory Cards TOMY Pop Up Pirate – Travel Orchard Toys - Crazy Chefs Times Past Sweet Shoppe 1000pc Jigsaw Puzzle Pin Puzzles Jeannette Rowe – Underwater Get Well Soon! Jigsaw Puzzle Crisp - Lighthouse Crash! 1000pc Jigsaw Puzzle Wasgij? Mystery 11 Childcare! Jigsaw Puzzle WASGIJ 21 Soccer Twin 2 x 1000pc Wasgij Destiny 14 1000pce puzzle The Office 1000pc Puzzle WASGIJ Destiny 9 Battle Of The Beauties Puzzle Peppa Pig Save The Balloon 3D Game Don't Rock The Boat Peppa Pig Save The Balloon 3D Game WASGIJ? Mystery 7 Sale Sale! Puzzle Peppa Pig Snap Card Game </p>
--	---

	<p> Jeannette Rowe 12pc Assorted - Randomly Assorted - One Only Wasgij Mystery 10 1000pce puzzle Spring has sprung. Who Is It? Travel Game Peppa Pig Card Game Asst Peppa Pig 12 Pc Frame Tray Asst Brain Quest Find Your Friends Toy Story Giant Card Games Yahtzee - Family Guy Hindenpeter Edition Peppa Pig Bicycles And Balloons Board Game Jake And The Neverland Pirates Activity Pack Wind Up Zombie Speedy Doc Harry Potter- Harry with sorting hat Pop Harry Potter w/ Sword of Gryffindor Pop! Vinyl Family Guy Peter Pop! Vinyl American Horror Story Tattler Twins Pop! Vinyl Breaking Bad - Gustavo Fring Pop! Vinyl DC Comics - Classic Cyborg Pop! Vinyl Figure Pop Vinyl Disney Pixar 73 Nemo Pop Vinyl The Walking Dead 15 RV Walker Octonauts Hopper Ball The Hive Barnabee 6.5 inch Plush </p>
--	---

APPENDIX 2

Example of toy coding for Part II



Body 1: Indicated by red star

Inclusion Puzzles Set of 6

Code 252783

[Write a Review](#)

Availability: **In Stock**

\$59.90 ex GST

Qty: 1

ADD ITEM +

\$65.89 Incl GST

[+ add to shopping list](#)

Depicts people with additional needs integrated into everyday life. Supporting fine motor development, this resource can also be used to foster communication and social and emotional skill building. 12 pieces per puzzle. Measures 20 H x 30cm W. Ages 3yrs+

Body 2: Indicated by red triangle

Body 3: Indicated by red diamond

The bodies with a visible impairment in this packaged toy are indicated with a red circle. Although there may be more bodies that are intended to represent disability/ impairment, this study sought to assess bodies that visibly presented impairment. In terms of the crutches (highlighted in green), this was also not included as it was considered an ‘accessory’ that is not clearly intended for any body in the image. Therefore, whilst other bodies may have been designed to represent disability/ impairment, they have not been included within the analysis.

Coding into categories and subcategories

Body	Age				Gender			Type of character			Name		Individuality		Connected to other media	
	Child	Adult	Elderly	Unclear	Male	Female	Unclear	Human	Animal	Fantasy/ Superhero	Named	Nameless	Individual	Group	Connected	Not connected
Body one	1					1		1				1		1		1
Body two	1				1			1				1		1		1
Body three	1				1			1				1		1		1

Body	Accessibility				Impairment signifier										
	1	2	3	4	Glasses	Walking stick	Cast	Wheelchair	Walking frame	Eyepatch	Blindness	Leg Braces	Hook hand	Pegleg	Stretcher
Body one		1	1	1					1						
Body two		1	1	1	1										
Body three		1	1	1				1							

Appendix 3 of this thesis has been removed as it may contain sensitive/confidential content

APPENDIX 4

Survey

More than just toys

Information and consent form



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY • AUSTRALIA

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr. Kathy Cologon

Participant information and Consent Form

Name of project: More than just toys.

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for considering participating in this survey. We are wanting to find out the views of early childhood staff who engage with the children for the majority of the day. We would like to hear from one staff member per room in your centre. Through your participation, you will be helping us to understand the prevalence and use of toys that represent disability within early childhood centres. This information aims to assist in the greater inclusion of children who experience disability within society.

This research is being conducted by Dr. Kathy Cologon and Aliza Salvador from Macquarie University (please see our contact details at the end of this form). The project will be undertaken as part of the requirements of the Masters of Research, under the supervision of Dr. Kathy Cologon. In this survey, you will be asked to provide some brief background information regarding your role, as well as general information regarding the centre you are currently working in. You will then be asked questions regarding the use of toys within the centre, the diversity of these toys, and about the prevalence and use of toys that represent disability within your centre, as well as your own views towards toys that represent disability. Lastly, you will be asked two general questions regarding your views about disability and inclusion.

The survey should take you approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Please note that participation in this survey is completely voluntary, and you should only take part in this survey if you would like to do so. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of the survey please provide an email address at the end of the survey.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law, and only Kathy Cologon and Aliza Salvador will have access to this data. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. The results of this research will be disseminated in relevant publications following the completion of the research. Any personal information provided will be removed prior to publication.

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Chief Investigator

Kathy Cologon
Institute of Early Childhood

Co-Investigator

Aliza Salvador
Institute of Early Childhood

Please click on the 'next' button below if you choose to complete the survey. (Clicking on this button indicates that you agree to consent to participating).

More than just toys

Background information: Teacher

What is your role in the centre?

What is the age group of the children that you are currently teaching? (Choose one or write down age group)

What is your highest level of education?

How long have you worked in the Early Childhood Education field? (Please specify years and months)

More than just toys

Background information: Centre

What is the postcode of your centre?

What type of service is your centre? (E.g. a long day care, OOSHC, family day care, etc.)

How many children are enrolled within your class/ room/ group?

Are there any children labelled with an impairment/ disability within your centre?

More than just toys

General questions regarding toys

Where does your centre obtain educational materials (including toys, crafting materials, books, etc.)? Note: If your centre obtains educational materials from particular suppliers/ stores, please include the name(s) of these suppliers/ stores.

1a) My centre has a lot of toys available to the children to play with throughout the day

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

☐☐☐☐☐

1b) How are toys utilised within your daily curriculum?

1b.i) At what points in the day are children engaging with toys?

1b.ii) Are they usually made available during free play?

1b.iii) Do the children use the toys during their dramatic play?

1b.iv) Are toys usually utilised in planned experiences?

1c) Which of the toys are most commonly played with/ appear to be the most 'popular' by the children in their daily play?



More than just toys

Questions regarding diversity in toys

2a) The toys that are made available to the children represent diversity (i.e. reflect different cultures, reflect differences, etc.)

Strongly disagree

☐

Disagree

☐

Neutral

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly agree

☐

2b) Please comment on your answer to the previous question.

More than just toys

3a) My centre has toys that represent disability/ impairment.

NB: Participants who answered 'yes' moved on to question 3b, whereas participants who answered 'no' were directed to question 3f.

More than just toys

My centre has toys that represent disability/ impairment: Yes

3b) Please comment on your answer to the previous question (Please be detailed/ specific in your answer and include examples where possible)

3c) Please list and describe all of the toys that you can think of that represent disability/ impairment within your centre.

3c.i) How are these toys utilised?

3c.ii) Are they usually made available during free play?

3c. iii) Do the children use the toys during their dramatic play?

3c. iv) Are toys usually utilised in planned experiences?

3c. v) How popular are these toys?

NB: Questions only for participants who answered 'yes' to question 3a.

3c. vi) Which of the toys that you have listed are the most popular?

3c. vii) Which of the toys that you have listed are the least popular?

3c. viii) Do the children play with these toys as much as they play with other toys?

3d) Are these toys helpful in educating the children about disability/ difference?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

☐☐☐☐☐

3e) Please provide reasons for your answer to the previous question.

3e.i) Do you believe that it is important for toys that represent disability to be made available to the children within your centre? Why/ why not?

3e.ii) Do you believe that toys that represent disability would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity? Why/ why not?

More than just toys

My centre has toys that represent disability/ impairment: No

3f) Please list and describe any toys that you can think of that represent disability/ impairment.

3g) How could toys that represent disability be utilised within your centre?

3h) Would having these toys within the centre be helpful in educating the children about disability/ difference?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

☐☐☐☐☐

3i) Please provide reasons for your answer to the previous question.

3i. i) Do you believe that it is important for toys that represent disability to be made available to the children within your centre? Why/ why not?

3i. ii) Do you believe that toys that represent disability would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity? Why/ why not?

NB: Questions only for participants who answered 'no' to question 3a.

More than just toys

3j) Do you think your centre needs more toys that represent disability/ impairment?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

☐☐☐☐☐

3k) If you believe that your centre needs more toys that represent disability/ impairment, what do you see as the barriers to making such toys available to the children in your centre?

NB: Questions only for participants who answered 'no' to question 3a.

More than just toys

General questions regarding disability and inclusion

4. What do you understand 'disability' to mean?

5. What do you understand 'inclusion' to mean?

More than just toys

Additional questions

6a) Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make?

6c) Would you like to receive a summary of the outcomes of this research? If yes, please provide an email address.

6d) Would you be interested in being contacted regarding future research in this area?

Appendix 5 of this thesis has been removed as it may contain sensitive/confidential content

APPENDIX 6

Survey invitation sent via email to early childhood settings

Invitation to participate in Macquarie University research study: 'More than just toys'

Dear Directors,

We are writing to invite the staff in your centre to participate in a survey for a study about diversity and toys in Early Childhood. We are wanting to find out the views of early childhood staff who engage with children directly for the majority of the day. We would like to hear from one staff member per room in your centre. The responses to this study will help us to understand the prevalence and use of toys that represent disability within early childhood centres. This study, entitled 'More than just toys', aims to contribute to assisting in the greater inclusion of children who experience disability within society.

This research is being conducted by Aliza Salvador from Macquarie University (please see our contact details at the end of this email) as part of the requirements of the Masters of Research, under the supervision of Dr. Kathy Cologon. In the survey, Early Childhood staff will be asked to provide some brief background information regarding their role, as well as general information regarding the centre. Participants will then be asked 6 questions (some with sub-questions) regarding the use of toys within the centre, the diversity of these toys and, in particular, about the prevalence and use of toys that represent disability within the centre. Lastly, participants will be asked three general questions regarding their views about disability and inclusion.

The survey should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary.

A summary of the results of the survey will be provided on request.

If you wish to pass this on to potential staff who may be interested in participating, we thank you in advance for your contribution to this study.

Chief Investigator
Kathy Cologon
Institute of Early Childhood

Co-Investigator
Aliza Salvador
Institute of Early Childhood

APPENDIX 7

More than just toys: Toys that represent impairment, their online accessibility and diversity in Australia, and early childhood educators' perspectives towards them

Educators' responses to the survey's open-ended questions in Part II

1b) How are toys utilised in your daily curriculum?

Free play set up on tables for children to access.
Toys are used in conjunction with children's interests and are added to the program accordingly
We have learning centres and these reflect the interest of the children.
We have limited unnatural resources. We believe that children should be given natural experiences. We encourage sustainability by using as much recycled materials as possible (i.e instead of counters we collect milk lids). Toys that are utilised are organised into learning areas and are available for children to access as they please.
Toys must be educational and have a purpose to their play or interest
Children's interest
Available for self select, educators suggest ideas for play and role model and guide.
Depending on the children on that day, their current interests and also a range of other toys/equipment are available for the children.
Toys and resources are made available for the children to use as they please. Lots of "loose parts" are commonly used.
Specific toys are taken out to develop key learning area
Through planned experience and children's interest.
They are set up according to the children's interests
Mostly for free choice
Toys are provided as per the children's interests and as requested throughout the day
As a choice for children to use in addition to the experiences they choose to play with
Learning spaces set up with shelf for choice
Children have access to a variety of toys during the day based on their interests and the experiences programmed through planned and spontaneous experiences. Children have access to a resource catalogue where they can see all resources available at centre
Child led/interest programming
According to children's ideas, celebrations and learning outcomes
Children have choices and can pick from a variety of activities throughout the day
Toys are available indoors and outdoors with free access
Games for groups, manipulative practice, building and creativity for individuals or 2 or more, role play, Teacher/ child activities, free choice during activity time, welcome to class time filler while others arrive, outdoor play.
Educational Open Ended Resources (toys) support play based learning centres, very careful considerations on purchases for number reasons- budget, longevity, multiuse, educational etc
Our environment is the 3rd teacher so 'toys' and equipment (such as dramatic play,

manipulative equipment, dolls etc etc are the base of all playbased learning
to many to count
Toys are always given as an option but play in a variety of areas with different resources is encouraged. Toys generally are very carefully selected to extend individual or group interests or friendships.
free choice as well as planned experiences.
Engaged and investigated with
Some children engage with barbies and babies. We have toy cars out occasionally
As exploratory tools for learning - open ended mostly.
We have over many years worked to cull the toys that only have one use or are single purpose toys. We now use a variety of open ended recycled materials that support loose parts play and exploration enabling the child to really unleash their imagination and drive their learning.
Not very often.
Left out for free play, Setup to relate to particular themes, books, topics or celebrations. Eg Little red hen - farm animals, playdough with cooking equipment, etc
Based on children's interests
Resources are set up according to current learning topics which are inspired by children's interests. Children may also request other toys which have not been set up.
Activities are set up using toys toys are able to be accessed by the children
Placed out for the children and a few kept on the shelves for them to access
Toys are used at any opportunity that arises both planned and spontaneous
Some things are always available, such as, construction (lego, blocks, mobile and connectors) Play Kitchen (including toy food and utensils, drawing/colouring, Dolls house and dolls Computers (15min per child time limit) balls, skipping, cars, music, blackboard, craft and game table (including chess, board games, cards etc) and books. Other toys Dress-up, climbing equipment, sand pitt Table Tennis, playdough, Hula hoops, pogo sticks and sport games (tennis, cricket, netball, golf etc).
They are placed around the room to add to a learning area if it is seen as a positive addition, or to extend on a child's interest that they may bring from home.
Experiences are set up based on the current program and children's interests. However, this is flexible, with children requesting specific resources experiences alongside planned one
Through a mixture of programming & observations based on their interests and educators introducing new toys to observe how the children approach these
Programmed and well as for intentional teaching, arranged on shelving that chn have access to.
Resources are utilised based on child's specific interest and intentional teaching.
On a regular basis.
Toys are used indoors freely from 7.30 am - 8.30 am. & 4.45 pm - 6.30 pm.
Toys and equipment are available for children to select and use as they please
Always available. Some are for intentional use based on children's interest. Some are free/choice experience for all
Children have access to toys and are able to choose what they would like to play with, at times throughout the day both inside and outside.
They are used in planning for focus projects. We have most areas as 'set' play spaces and thus consistent 'toys' are available - home corner, block corner, lightbox, dollhouse, puzzles.
It is placed on open shelf easy access for the children

Based on the program, children's interest and teacher initiated experiences, toys are used for set ups etc.
Toys are arranged in areas such as construction, book corner, games corner, dress ups etc
They are used as the foundations of learning and to engage children in their interests.
some are set out as a response to children's requests, others are set out to target specific skills
On shelves for free selection and in cupboards
On the shelf in room and storeroom. Pulled at as interest or need for children

1b.i) At what points in the day are children engaging with toys?

Open-Ended Response
Indoor and outdoor play
at most points in the day besides key times such as meal times, rest times or during group discussions
All day
Throughout the day (apart from meal and rest times)
Depending on what you call toys - blocks, construction, puzzles etc are encourage at all times to extend their interest and learning
Majority of time
Morning and afternoon
All day, they are freely available.
Morning and afternoon play
Free play periods- approx times... Outdoors 7:30-9:30ish Indoors 10:15-11:30ish Indoors 1:30-2:30 Outdoors 3:30-5:30
Through out the whole day
Morning and afternoon rotational activities.
Free play time throughout the day
Throughout the day
Throughout the day for all inside / outside play
All aspects of the day
Free play based curriculum through indoor/outdoor of whole service
All day apart from transitional times such as group times and meals
Choices available all day except mealtimes
During most long periods of unhurried play: 2hrs at a time
All day
All the time
On arrival, activity time in groups x 2 per day, outdoors.
Continual- again definition of toys!
At Before School Care and After School care ALL the time(minus roll time morning and afternoon Tea and homework time)
Most of it
Usually one session. We are a traditional 9-3 preschool with an indoor session, an outdoor session, and a short indoor group session before home. Toys are usually a part of the inside routine and sometimes outside.
All day except meals and rest time.
Majority of the day
Through free play. I need a definition of toys for this survey. Is a marble run a toy? What is classified as a 'toy'?
Throughout the whole day
The resources are available for children to play with throughout the entire day.
Before and after school
7am-9am, 10:30-11:30, 3:30-4:30, 5-6pm
Most of the day
Children have access to toys/resources for majority of the day. Excluding meal times. However, there are cases where children may still access toys at these times.
All throughout the day

Most of the day
Toys available at all times
All the time apart from meals, rest time and group time
Before School - 6.45 - 8.45am After School - 3.20 - 6.30pm
Throughout the day if you consider a shovel a toy when used in the dirt patch or garden. Or a car in a rest time activity box.
All day other than rest time and meal times
7.30-9, 10.30-11, 1.30-2.30, 3-4.30 (indoor/outdoor) 5.15-6 indoors. 9.30-10.30, 3-4.30 outdoors
During our free play times
Throughout the day children have unlimited access to a variety of resources. We do not stop interactions for feeding or nappy change times if a child is engaged in an activity or resource.
The whole day.
Children engage in imaginary play/ interactive play during the above mentioned times which are considered as 'free play' times.
Throughout the day
All the times expect group/intentional group experiences. We utilise toys for specific group experiences as well
All day.
Throughout the whole day
In the morning and in the afternoon.
Majority of the day, throughout most of the morning and afternoon. Only time they are not is rest time and group times, which make up max 2 hours of the day. Children usually attend between 9 -10 hours per day.
Children are engaging with toys during play time i.e 7-8:30 and 4-5 and 5:45-6
All day in some capacity.
Most of the day
8-11 3-5
Mostly morning and afternoon free play.

1c) Which of the toys are most commonly played with/ appear to be the most 'popular' by the children in their daily play?

Mobilo blocks, dress ups and cooking equipment, wooden blocks, train set and magnetic trains, dolls.
Construction toys including tools, cars and other props. Dramatic play toys including provocations such as dress ups, cooking utensils furniture etc.
Cars, blocks, home corner, dress up, Lego, play dough equipment, sand toys, magnetic toys, small group games
Depends on the gender, age and interests of the child. Generally speaking; the girls are quite engaged with the home corner area (kitchen, dolls etc.) and boys engage with things like dinosaurs and cars.
Construction material and natural materials to extend their learning
Lego blocks
Cars and trains. Miniatures.
Construction blocks, jigsaw puzzles, books, dramatic play and home corner
Scooby Doo cars and figurines
Loose parts are often used in most play experience.
Counters, polyMs, lego, food and kitchen items, paper and art supplies
Construction - i.e lego, mobilo etc.
Construction and home corner
Blocks and bricks, the toys in the home corner (ie dolls, kitchen equipment), sand pit toys - ie shovels, spades
Home Corner - kitchen / dining / lounge room. Blocks with resources added such as cars, houses, dolls, open ended items such as boxes, lids,
Trucks, Blocks, Home corner cooking items. Sand play Dolls Puzzles
Changes but usually fine motor based experience
Drawing puzzles baby dolls and barbie
Construction Dramatic play Toys used with craft materials
Imaginary: dress ups, dolls, tea set Construction: various blocks, cars, animals
Drawing/creative: pencils, textas, paint
Blocks cars Home corner Dolls
Transport toys, Dramatic Play such as dolls, home corner stuff, balls, animals, Nesting toys, Puzzles, musical instruments, sensory toys and Nature corners
Dress ups, home corner items e.g. phones, cooking, building e.g.blocks, Duplo, Magformers, vehicles, dolls and soft toys
Endless list- resources or toys definition, dolls house, sandpit vehicles, duplo, tooo
Baby dolls and accessories. Barbie/action man dolls Manipulative equipment such as lego, mobile All craft(this is all open and available) Puppets Balls,sports equipment
Card and board games
Dolls, construction
Props/toys in dramatic play and construction toys; Lego, wedgit blocks, magnetic geometric blocks etc.
Sensory play such as finger paint, dough, climbing equipment, pedal bikes.
Loose parts Ropes spindles and tyres
Costumes, trucks, cars, trains
Logs, stones, role play items such as play food, dolls, role play that involves small world play, play dough, clay, mud, sand, water

The toys that can be transformed to become whatever their heart desires.
Construction and home corner toys along with puppets.
Lockons, playdough, home corner
Construction home corner dress ups
The most popular items are: Mobilo Dress Ups Blocks Drawing activities (pencils, crayons etc)
Balls musical instruments home corner books
Transport toys and kitchen area
Natural materials
Anything that can be used to engage in imaginative play
Construction, such as, Leggo and Mobilo
Duplo, puzzles. A shopping basket maybe in the home corner (which can end up anywhere). A few toy tools in with the blocks.
Manipulative play (e.g. lego, magnets, mobilo) and dramatic play with animals
Toys with wheels, Home corner toys (indoors) gross motor obstacles & bikes (outdoors)
Dress ups cars/trucks sandpit & toys
Our selection of wooden discover blocks and standard wooden blocks seem to be the most popular resource.
Cooking and sensory activities
Cooking toys, toy cars & trains, wooden blocks, toy computers, retail items such as cash registers, musical equipment. Percussion toys. Colourful cushions. Dress ups.
Loose parts eg natural items seed pods, pine cones, shells, sticks, logs, flowers, shells, other small and large open ended items that can be used in multiple ways balls, hoops, ropes, planks and trestles are also popular with children using them as they see fit. Books, blocks and 'dress up clothing' are also very popular with children.
Cars, dolls, books, drawing/writing, strollers, marble run,
Outdoors: a 3D construction type toy (not sure if the original name) Train set. Marble run.
The fairy puppets in the fairy garden. Plastic/ceramic plates and food in home corner. Block corner.
wooden blocks, cars and kitchen corner
Home corner experiences - such as kitchen set up, dolls, dress ups. Books, doll house, blocks and lego.
Lego! Doll houses other construction toys board games kitchen toys dress ups computers sports equipment
Home corner, cars, construction (e.g. Lego).
construction type toys
construction and open ended toys puzzles and dramatic play
Cars, trains, trucks, dress up home corner doll house

2b) Please comment on your answer to the previous question (The toys that are made available to the children represent diversity).

Mainly in dramatic play - need to extend and represent cultures in different learning centres within the room.
We have toys that reflect the cultures found at our service for example, international foods, cultural dress ups, dolls of differing cultures and abilities.
The environment and toys have been selected in consultation with parents and with consideration to cultural, physical, gender, developmental etc. diversity of children.
Some of them are and some toys are for different reasons
My centre is not well resourced in general. Toys are mostly neutral.
Our babies (dolls) are all multicultural including male/female. This also includes our book library.
Some of the toys show diversity and different cultures
We take great pride in setting our play spaces to represent the diverse cultures within our service and the wider community.
multicultural puzzles, people, dressups, art activities
Cultural diversity/reflect difference is more involved in literature and other sources.
Puzzles
While the dolls in the doll corner are of different skin colours, the clothes are mostly western style clothing.
Dress Ups / different culture dolls, puzzles, resources
We have a variety of dolls from different cultures. Puzzles of people with disabilities and challenge gender stereotypes.
Where possible but not always able to source
The resources are Respectful of all family's and children's cultures through different coloured dolls and toys respectful of certain culture
Daily inclusive in many areas
We provide toys that promote diversity and inclusion and often discuss reasons for this with the children
We try to reflect all our families in our environment
Dolls of different cultures, different skin and hair, scarfs, musical instruments, music CDs
lots of choices that are put out upon request by children or alternated by adults to keep fresh/try new things or in new ways
Range is not extensive with dolls available and puzzles and role play based resources again always seem more expensive and at times tokenistic.
Sourcing more multicultural resources is difficult and expensive. I recently bought some Asian baby dolls on ebay, African dolls on aliexpress and 'brown' barbie like doll on gumtree. I do a lot of research to try and find balance is the diversity of toys for the children
dolls are cultural
I completed ECH333 so am aware of the resources we have available and who is privileged and silenced within our setting. I try to represent a diverse group of people through discussion and toys etc in our setting but there is always room to improve
we have dolls with different hair/ skin/ clothes, small plastic people with differing abilities (wheelchair, calipers etc), handmade picture books depicting different ways children eat (including PEG feeds, using fingers, chopsticks, modified utensils),

books with different family makeup (living with grandparents, 2 mummies etc), cultural artefacts such as fabric, bowls, dress-ups, musical instruments from different countries.
Not many diverse toys. Only two aboriginal dolls. We have diverse musical instruments
We have toys and equipment that show diversity in age, gender, physical appearance and ability, culture, religion, family units etc.
we have many resources, fabrics, music, photographs and spaces such as yearning circles that are throughout the environment and the educators are intentional in their conversations with children about diversity and difference.
this is an area that we are wording on
Most toys are neutral. Where there are specific human figures, we have diversity. Kitchen equipment has some diversity, although we could use more multicultural utensils, etc. They are more expensive though.
we have toys that represent different cultures mainly in home corner
We aim to make available toys and other items that reflect a variety of cultures, designs/tastes, time periods and more.
the toys we offer, reflect the toys available. These are not tokenistic.
We have a wide variety of toys that cover a wide range of diverse outcomes
Centre is privately owned and there is minimal budget allowance for resources
I would say that most of our toys/activities are neutral, however, we have artifacts around our rooms that represent different cultures, such as dolls from around the world and we take any opportunity to celebrate cultural events like during the Olympics or a special time like NAIDOC day, Eid, etc. We have some books that are in different languages and show different cultures.
One of the children gave us a few barbie dolls once so I went and added a mixture culturally diverse dolls that reflects our room.
Toys are generally open-ended and can be used in different ways and at different levels. They are not specifically linked to a 'culture', but reflect differences in their different levels of engagement
Most of the toys are neutral (no culture based, can Reflect all cultures) but we have dramatic play toys & puzzles & books & instruments that promote culture diversity by featuring elements of other cultures & people of various nationalities
with the resources we have we try to add items from different cultures if we can access them.
We offer a range of cultural babies and cultural baby clothes for the children to use in the dramatic play area and these represent diversity together with other resources on offer on a daily basis.
there are visual cards, puzzles and dolls.
All free play toys accessible to children are commonly used in all cultures and families that attend the service.
the beauty of natural resources are that wherever children are from they can identify with them and use them how they like. We ensure the fabrics and textiles etc in our dress ups reflect the diversity of our cultures and additional props e.g. dolls, artefacts etc are added that reflect our families and communities diversity and differences.
dolls with multiple colours, dress ups, aboriginal puzzles and toys
Dolls from various backgrounds, reflecting our community, dress ups/home corner toys/accessories also reflecting the community.
We don't really have much that is highly representative of different cultures. We have

general basic food in home corner and cutlery (no chopsticks or other eating utensils). Most of the areas are sort of general and basic - not overly reflective of any particular culture.
there are a wide range of multicultural dresses and cooking utensils in the kitchen corner that represent the different cultures in our service.
We are quite limited in our range of toys and resources and there are not really any multi cultural resources available to us on a daily basis. Unless we seek these out and have a reason to purchase them (usually using our own money) we don't have them available.
We do have a variety of toys although we don't have a lot of toys that represent different cultures
Our toys reflect different diversity by having puzzles that engage conversation about similarities and differences (Indigenous traditional and modern, disability, cultural celebrations, etc.) We set up for e.g. the doll house with the family members in different settings e.g. one parent, grandparents, mixed cultures).
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ARE DETERMINANTS IN SELECTION OF EQT
Toys are for all children. Chosen for the children according to their likes.

GROUP A: 3b) Please comment on your answer to the previous question (My centre has toys that represent disability/ impairment.)

we have access to puppets and soft toys that reflect disability, for example the Bravehearts program. We also have books and dolls that feature people with a range of abilities
Books, felt board stories, figurines etc
We often spend time looking at footage and images of people and children with disabilities and impairments. Recently we have been following the lead up to the Paralympics!
Puzzles, Dolls in wheelchairs Story books
Toys in the doll house that are in wheel chairs or with missing items dolls with different eyes
Ramps Dolls Games and language
We have a philosophy that supports acceptance and inclusion of all children and families, regardless of abilities
Like wheel chairs, crutches, glasses, hearing aids etc
glasses, dolls house props, house, books, Cost is barrier, availability barrier, choice limited, longevity and balancing PD Teaching resources or specific items.
We do have diverse dolls; dolls with disabilities, representing different cultures etc. We could have more toys though. More dolls representing a more diverse group of people and other toys that aren't dolls. Duplo sets are very 'basic' when it comes to representing disability and impairment.
Puzzles and books and dolls Visually represented.
We have figurines that depict people of various cultural backgrounds with varying abilities. We also use a variety of other resources such as stress balls, weighted blankets, resistance materials
We have some (very few) toys that represent disability/impairment. Mostly because we do not have children/families like that at our centre. We ensure that we have toys that represent our children and families as well as a few that extend beyond that.
We have specific toys that represent people with additional needs e.g. figurines with physical disabilities. We have a variety of books that explore differences in people and families etc. We aim to have open ended toys that can be used in a variety of ways by different individuals.
figurines include people with special needs
different impairment/disability figurines with occupational toys
Some toys, e.g. figures of people with disability, books about disability. We are also having an author visit to specifically discuss disability through her picture book.
Books on these topics or featuring characters with disabilities shown in a positive light and dolls of a mixture of disabled/non disabled people. However these toys are more available to older children
people figurines, dolls from different cultures in dolls house. felt board puppets
We offer a range of resources that represent disability/impairment and they are available to the children on a daily basis.
dolls with wheel chairs, books with people with additional needs. dolls with guide dogs and glasses.
Puzzles with people with differing abilities, books on the same and autism, posters that represent all people's abilities, dolls (wooden).

We have stories, jigsaw puzzles about physical impairment and a doll in a wheelchair
WOODEN PEOPLE, PROPS, WHEELCHAIR , HEARING AIDS FOR DOLLS, CALLIPERS , ETC

3c) Please list and describe all of the toys that you can think of that represent disability/ impairment within your centre.

Doll house figurines - wheelchair, leg brace, people with glasses Books
The Bravehearts Puppet show, the puppets are part of the Bravehearts program. We also have a set of plush toys purchased in Cambodia, they reflect disabilities such as deafness, blindness, ADD, amputees etc. they also have stories that can be acted out for each toy.
Wheel chairs, dolls with walking frames, visually imparied dolls, guide dogs
construction material, ramps for children, dolls, posters
Dolls with hearing aids, glasses. We also visit local retirement village on a weekly basis where we discuss the elderly impairments- walking aids, wheel chairs, etc.
As above
Books Puzzles Dolls Ramps Games and language experiences
Figurines, puzzles, pictures,
AS Above
glasses, props dollhouse, books, posters,
Puzzles; large variety of 'anti bias' images and other images showing children and adults with a disability/impairment. Dolls; both life sized babies and small doll house sized dolls. We have plenty of books although I wouldn't consider them a toy.
Aside from the above - open ended nature of most experiences provides catering to all levels of development but also staging activities in the floor of size adjustable tables for accessibility, light, sound, Braille etc or using grip adapted implements etc
As above
Puzzles, card matching game, including children in wheelchairs, books
-Figurines: Person in wheelchair; person with hearing aid; person with leg braces etc.
-Books that explore- Autism, downs syndrome etc. -Posters and picture cards.
books figurines
puzzles figurines books
Not as many as we might like. Some images of people with disability The book "same" about someone with cerebral palsy A figurine of someone in a wheelchair A couple of puzzles representing children in a wheelchair
Certain books, pictures and dolls
puzzles, books, dolls, people figurines, puppets, felt board pieces and stories.
We offer small wooden cutout people, finger puppets, hand puppets and felt people, these resource reflects disability/impairment. We also offer a diverse range of books reflecting disability/impairment. These resources are on offer on a daily basis.
same as above
as above
WOODEN PEOPLE, PROPS, WHEELCHAIR , HEARING AIDS FOR DOLLS, CALLIPERS , ETC DOLLS

3c.i) How are these toys utilised?

During free play
through group times and puppet shows. the children also have access to these toys to utilize as their interests arise. Books and dolls are made available to the children at all times.
These toys are readily available throughout the day.
in everyday practices
Within free play Structured group times and in depth discussions
Children have access to the toys in their play
Available during freeplay and planned experiences also mixed with other toys (not tokenistic)
Planned and free experiences
Through dramatic play
Free play, teacher directed.
Through various parts of the day and year during free play
As the children see fit to explore or teacher initiated as indicated by children's ability to access.
With educator scaffolding
Part of the freely available toys in the room. We also talk about them if the topic comes up.
As part of our regular program.
in everyday play
set out with our activities on a daily basis
As there are not many of these toys available they are only sometimes set out and utilised in play
Made available to the children to read/look at/engage in dramatic play with
free play and intentional teaching
These resources are utilised in group activities as well as during individual experiences.
dramatic play experience, free play
They are put out to promote discussions with educators.
during discussions about differences in people
IN ALL AREAS EG BLOCKS HOME CORNER

3c. v) How popular are these toys?

Popular with the children
dolls and books are the most popular resource we have, with the majority of children utilizing these on a daily basis.
These toys are utilised alongside the other toys -the children do not differentiate
yes
Fairly popular.
Will depend on interest and discussions with children and their understandings of the toy or disability
At times We use reflective practice and child led interest to plan
Just as popular as any others
Very popular
Average
Definitely not as popular as other toys.
Always popular with ALL children
Very popular
About the same as other puzzles, games, etc.
They are reasonably popular and are used by the children.
just as popular as all the other toys
not so popular
Not that popular
About as popular as the rest of the toys
they are popular amongst the children
The felt boards are exceptionally popular, especially during group time. The wooden people and hand/finger puppets are also very popular with the children. The reading resources are not as popular.
not much as it is like we only get when it is needed. not being offered all the time....
average
moderately
SEMI POPULAR no differentiation is made between types of eqt by chn

3c. vi) Which of the toys that you have listed are the most popular?

books and dolls
books
The dolls with impairments and used just as frequently as the dolls with no impairments.
Dolls
Dolls Puzzles Games
Figurines
Wheel chair dolls
dolls house props
Puzzles I guess.
Light, sound, interactive ie iPad.
Resistance material and weighted blankets
Matching card games
Figurines.
figurines
figurines
The book "same"
The dolls with disabilities, children love to use the dolls in wheelchairs although they don't appear to understand the purpose of the wheelchair, they seem to like the motion of it
books, people figurines.
The felt boards and felt people are the most popular.
small dolls
puzzles
jigsaw puzzles
all

3c. vii) Which of the toys that you have listed are the least popular?

the puppets
dolls
N/A
None
Books
Posters
Hearing aids
Nil
Plastic doll house dolls
Puzzles, books
Figurines
Books
N/A
NA
puzzles
Images representing disability
Books
not sure
The reading resources are the least popular.
wheel chairs or dolls with dark skins
as above
none

3e) Please provide reasons for your answer to the previous question (Are these toys helpful in educating the children about disability/ difference?).

They are useful in that when coupled with a group time and a group discussion they can further the children's knowledge and understanding of those with disabilities and they can spark group discussion which leads to further understanding.
By the children having these toys available to them, and having children here with additional needs, the children do not see the differences, they accept them for what they are.
They treat all the equipment of the same level
They provide children with an opportunity to understand diversity and to appreciate that others have different strengths
Children see the differences through looking at the toys and commenting on the differences
Provides opportunities to explore, think and ask questions
Promotes discussion and awareness, allowing disability to be a normalised part of learning
We are inclusive centre with enrolled needs and educators are continually melding ability into program and adapting for all children as normal.
They do but are sometimes not realistic or meaningful
Interactive toys that are child initiated exploration will always be more popular than teacher led experiences.
I believe creating an inclusive environment where children and families of different abilities and backgrounds are all a part of the community is going to be the most effective tool to teach, scaffold and guide children's understandings
By making disabilities an part of everyday play, it becomes less of an issue and children are more accepting of it.
Definitely. Children who are exposed to a variety of abilities will be more sensitive and supportive to people with additional needs.
all the toys hold the same value
I think we can provide better resources to help educate children about this area
Yes, as they provide a talking point about diversity and disability. However, as there are not that many, disability is disproportionately under-represented in the classroom
I believe when an educator reads a book to a child in depth & talking about the disabilities (how some people are different) they begin to generally grasp an idea on this topic (not so much the toddler/baby age group)
they encourage discussions amongst the children and staff providing intentional teaching times.
It is hard to know how much understanding a child has of disabilities/ impairment at such a young age, however in providing the resources we are at least enabling positive guidance.
I think it can be tokenistic and we only provide children with these toys when talking about people with additional needs.
Without an educator with them they can just be tokenistic.
children accept the equipment cause its part of natural play and is common in our environment - no differentiation

3e.i) Do you believe that it is important for toys that represent disability to be made available to the children within your centre? Why/ why not?

Yes certainly
yes. I believe it is important to utilize these as they highlight there are different ways of being with in the community. they are also promote inclusive practices.
Yes. Some children may not have had the opportunity to be exposed to those with a disability, and by having these toys they become 'the norm' and the children then accept and include
yes
Absolutely!
Yea
Yes People with disabilities are people. Everyone is different but we are also the same - we are all people
Yes, we have and have had children with various disabilities and we want them to be just as included as every other able bodied child
yes
Yes but range and quality needs to be wider.
Yes. I think a range of people need to be represented especially because we are in a small community with almost exclusively Anglo families who have very little experience with disability/impairment and differences in general.
Yes, but the way they are used and the 'culture' of inclusion of the service is more important.
Yes, but relationships and experience should be paramount
Yes.See answer 3e
Yes. For the reason mentioned above.
yes, they depict the people of the world, that the children will come across in everyday life
definitely, teaches children about respect and how to treat others
Yes, again to discuss diversity and disability in an open, honest way and seeing it as something to be curious but not scared or judgmental about
Yes I do, So the children begin to understand that there are people in the world who need a little help to do the things we may take for granted, and to understand that we are all unique and equally important, even with our differences
yes as people with disabilities are part of our society as we are from a small community are sheltered from a lot of cultures an disabilities.
Yes, I believe that it is vital to offer a range of resources that represent disability at the service. It is important to learn to be accepting of diversity/difference and disability.
Yes. Because that reflect on our society as a diverse country. As an educator, we should strive for equity and fairness for all citizen of the county and this is our responsibility to teach children.
Yes, children should see all abilities as "normal."
Yes - to help them understand why some people can and can't do some things - especially in the lead up to the paralympics
yes it promotes tolerance, acceptance, natural for children so they dont question but include

3e.ii) Do you believe that toys that represent disability would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity? Why/ why not?

Sure
yes, they spark group discussion and which in turn promotes learning. they also bring the children closer to members of the community they wouldn't normally have access to if they are yet to experience children and adults with disabilities.
Yes, all toys can be used as a learning opportunity to engage children in discussions about acceptance, inclusion and diversity
yes
Yes!! It allows children to develop and understanding of others who require different levels of assistance in different areas
Yes
Yes
Yes for reasons stated above
yes
Yes with quality.
Yes depends on the toy though
Yes - but through use by ALL children - interactive child led exploratory toys are more powerful than token visual representations - having disabled children and/or families meaningfully included in the service is even more powerful again to children understanding
Some but real, authentic understandings come through experience, empathy and relationships formed amongst peers in an environment where inclusion is actively encouraged and embraced.
Yes. See answer 3e
Yes. Children may not be in contact with many or any individuals with additional needs and such toys would be a good tool for educators.
I think it helps with inclusion. people are people no matter what they look like
yes
Yes, for the same reasons as above
Yes I do, so children can become familiar with people with disabilities and see them as equals, and not receive such a shock when they see people with disablilites in the real world but rather see them in a positive light
yes, they promote investigate, questions and exploring by the chn.
Yes, I feel that in offering the resources, children become accustomed to and begin to learn about the importance of acceptance and inclusion of disability and diversity.
yes and no. I think the ways of using it. you cannot just put dolls. We need to explain the reason why we have these dolls, intentional thought
Yes but only if used in the right setting and not just put out for show.
yes of course it is part of our curriculum

GROUP B: 3f) Please list and describe any toys that you can think of that represent disability/ impairment.

Glasses for dramatic play, wheelchairs for dolls houses, books with characters that have impairments, books with braile, stations that have wheelchair access.
Puzzles, disability/impairment figurines
books and puzzles
'A doll like me' - These are dolls handmade for children with impairments/disability. The dolls have the same impairment the child has.
Sign Language Photo boards Symbols Dolls
sandpaper raised alphabet letters, peg puzzles, soft toys, pictorials e.g.puzzles showing diverse people
I broke some dolls and the children just wanted to throw them away. Even after lots of discussions and stories of disability the children saw them as broken and not disabled
reflecting right now and realize that we no longer have any toys that represent disability impairment
Dolls/toy figures in wheelchairs, with walkers
dolls, puzzles and posters.
None of the toys can be singled out as representing a disability.
puzzles and dolls etc
The only specific item I can think of is a few books that touch on Asperger syndrome. We do have weighted balls that are mostly used by a boy with autism.
Dolls - either for dolls house or babies, books etc
Pictures and figures of disable people.

3g) How could toys that represent disability be utilised within your centre?

Organised throughout the centre to adequately represent these children.
Open conversations about this topic exposure to normalise what might be considered different.
it would be useful in developing a better understanding
They could become part of the dolls that the children use, and help disability/impairment become a normal part of the children's experience in dramatic play. They could also be used for teachable moments.
Dramatic Play Transitions Sequence of the day
easily mixed in with daily items
I would like crutches or wheelchairs for dolls. A downs doll.
dramatic play, dolls on wheelchairs
Everywhere! Used in any type of open-ended play!
provide children to play with toys that represent disability. This will help normalize disability and create inclusion. It could also be a source to create the opportunity for discussion.
on a regular basis
If there were toys such as wheel chairs, walkers to 'play' children might use them disrespectfully due to lack of understanding.
I don't believe we would use them
The children who have the greatest understand have a strong personal relationship with disabilities outside of work. The children at work do understand that the two boys with autism have a slightly different expectations. Personally haven't have any experience with using toys that represent disability.
Throughout the set ups, dolls in home corner or books representing children with disability.
These can be utilised with intentional teaching to explain to children.

3i) Please provide reasons for your answer to the previous question (Would having these toys within the centre be helpful in educating the children about disability/difference?)

Children at this age are susceptible to environmental influence. The more we normalise diversity the more aware and accepting children will be.
Children need to know that everyone is different and that impairments don't make anyone more different. Since children learn through play having toys for this is imperative. Also , children with impairments need to be seen.
Yes, during group time and discussion time. They could be utilised to educate the children.
We have children within the centre with disabilities and impairments and they could help children understand their peers challenges
children often don't understand what a disability is and using toys would be a better way to explain it to them
As per part 3g. By starting a conversation, by having the children become familiar with toys with difference it becomes part of everyday life.
provides a provocation for questioning / interest / discussion / learning
We word love to add these to provide new way of understanding and to build awareness
show a level of normality and empathy e.g a Barbie who has a leg missing can still be played with and cared for
How can we talk about differences without embedding it in our program
because children learn throuhg hands on experiences
these toys just like cultural items need to be included in any area that is suitable.
As per above, create a point of discussion and normalize disability. Also from personal experience, I was fearful of people who had a disability because as a child I was told not to look, not to approach, not to point or ask questions. To normalize disability in a child's world would prevent this.
it will help as children need to be aware that they could see this and understand.
Children lack suitable maturity to distinguish which items should be used for 'play' and laughter and which toys are meant to be used more seriously.
no, I think relationships, attitudes, conversations and challenging stereotypes with children and families are much more effective than tokenistic toys.
It would be helpful to myself to find appropriate ways to education the children. It is easy to talk about things but I feel they would benefit most from a practical point of view.
I feel that children learn well with visual aids (most of them) so having something to physical would help explain.
To show children. Best way would be to have people with disabilities come and spend time with children then toys.

3i. i) Do you believe that it is important for toys that represent disability to be made available to the children within your centre? Why/ why not?

Yes! Creating a new norm will decrease intolerance.
For all children.
Yes, but a cost factor would need to be included to purchase this equipment. Also a manufacturing that supplies these toys/equipment.
Yes they should be. Children need to learn about diversity and differences with each other
yes t increase awareness
Yes, people with impairments need to see themselves represented in the toys they play with. People without impairments need to see a greater representation of diversity.
Yes - particularly if a typical demographic is represented at the centre and the area the child come from. They may not have the opportunity to experience in their environment / community
Yes, would add another teaching aid or resource
Yes, no one is perfect and we need to empathise with our community
Yes. It desensitises children to the differences.
yes, for children to be exposed from a young age and be more accepting
The earlier the exposure the more naturally the children will accept disability as a part of their everyday lives
Yes - for reasons as above
yes definitely because it will help children to understand that there are people who have this condition and need to be respected.
I do not think young children should be given any items that represent a disability to be used as toys. eg. An able child being pushed around in a wheel chair can mistakenly feel wheel chairs are for free rides. Also parents with able children might not want their children to play in such games as a disability is a very sensitive issue,
no, I think relationships, attitudes, conversations and challenging stereotypes with children and families are much more effective than tokenistic toys.
Yes. We recognise the diversity of culture and family set ups - so why don;t we also widely explore the differences of people and disability.
Yes, we have some children with additional needs and this would help explain this to the other children. Diversity is not just cultural.
Yes and real people with a disability more so.

3i. ii) Do you believe that toys that represent disability would contribute in teaching children about disability, inclusion and diversity? Why/ why not?

Yes. Children will be given more opportunities to be directed and modelled appropriate interactions, acceptance and care towards those with disabilities.
Yes because it exposes negative ideas that they may have which opens discussions.
Yes, as long as the educators had enough experience to start the discussion/learning with the children and not make it a tokenistic approach.
Yes to allow the development of disability, inclusion and diversity
yes it would
Yes, but it would depend on how they were used. Inclusion needs to be the focus of the teaching, rather than just pointing out aspects of difference.
Yes as they promote discussion / inquiry and can be used in a number of ways as part of the routine / programming
Yes, children learn through exploration and toys would benefit their investigation
Yes. Talk about differences in a positive way
Yes. It is difficult without examples
yes hands on
Yes, as in 3i ii)
Yes - as per above
yes, it would be useful to teach this practice as children can respect the people and support them.
Children are very adaptable when they have to face misfortunes of life and will learn to deal with another's disability when they have to face it. Therefore it is not necessary to 'prepare' children to learn to face everything. It is impossible to know and understand some things that happen and why they happen and will only overwhelm them.
no, I think relationships, attitudes, conversations and challenging stereotypes with children and families are much more effective than tokenistic toys.
Yes. It would help them to build upon their understanding of people and differences. Children can accept cultural differences, and family set up differences, so why wouldn't they be able to understand and accept the difference between people based on disabilities?
Yes, children learn best through their play and interactions with others. These resources and toys could be used for this.
Maybe. It's a start in the right direction.

BOTH GROUPS: 3k) If you believe that your centre needs more toys that represent disability/ impairment, what do you see as the barriers to making such toys available to the children in your centre?

budget - money to spend as often these resources can cost quite a lot as with the multicultural resources.
the budget is a big restriction as well as finding and sourcing toys that would be relevant
Expense - these toys may tend to be more expensive than other toys
Finding them from suppliers.
Tight budgets that provide the bare minimum. These resources are often much more expensive than stock standard. These resources should be available in standard chain but often are not.
Cost and Availability
Actually purchasing the toys and incorporating them into the program correctly
interesting toys and where to find them, at a reasonable cost
Lack of funding as well as lack of understanding about why this is important - by room leader, director.
cost
We find them difficult to buy and often very expensive when working with limited budget
The toys available in catalogues and family perceptions
Funds
No barriers, our preschool actively promotes diversity, just need to budget for this each year
Not seeing any one with impairment
Reasonable costs and availability/choices.
availability, cost, quality, access
Apart from pictures and books I have been unable to find suitable resources
Money isn't a barrier for us. We have the funding to spend The biggest barrier would be availability of a variety of resources
None - it is up to the 'culture' of the service whether they include these things
We have some and it may be enough to educate children about disabilities. If we have more children with disabilities/impairments we would get more toys.
lack of resources we used to have some and now i realize that they are no longer at the centre
Limited selection available. Often toys/resources are difficult to obtain and expensive to purchase.
cost of the toys available and trying not to make it seen as a token
purchase more toys in areas such as dramatic play
Finances, lack of education in inclusion with management who are not EC trained
Where do we get these toys. I have never seen them available to buy.
Budget, access/ knowing where to get these resources
Not enough availability of toys in general that represent these, it can be quite challenging to find ways we can represent this through children's play
financial restraints to purchase the resources.
Cost. I feel that these resources are often quite costly to purchase.
more dolls, puzzles, felt puppets, books and songs.

I would consult families before I would introduce such toys to the service, as toys to play to me should represent an element of 'fun'. Toys representing a disability would not be a 'happy' toy to me. The barrier would be the way I approach and think about impairments and disabilities.
budget
Person knowledge of the resources out there. I hadn't even given it a thought to be honest until completing this survey. I know of books but not specific toys.
Budget.
Availability of useful products and costs. Usually you can only buy these sorts of toys from the more expensive educational stores.
availability in the market - where to go to buy them?
range and diversity- it is all the same
Lack of these resources. Not all children would learn from it compared to real people

4. What do you understand 'disability' to mean?

The focus seems to be on what the person can not do due to their physical impairment.
an impairment that makes the child/adult different from the majority. they may need additional assistance to complete tasks that others find easy
A disability is anything that may impair learning or life experiences.
Someone who has an additional need beyond that of the typically developing child.
A person that may need assistance in certain areas to help them to achieve
When someone with an impairment is subjected to social and physical barriers
Disability means lacking a function of the body which impairs the person, whether it is physical, mental, speech disability, etc.
Physical and mental challenges faced by some children affecting their learning and every day life
person with certain limitation, physical or mental
The socially imposed barriers to being and doing which are usually experienced by people who have an impairment (physical or mental or emotional).
Child with additional needs
Disability means an impairment that affects a persons daily ability to engage in tasks or experiences in their life
Not having the ability to do something that most other people can do / society expects you can do
Functioning differently to an able bodied person in 1 or more areas of their body
A physical or mental barrier to being a capable and well person.
Having a need that changes the sense of ability for being able to participate as norm or average to peers.
Obvious and not so obvious impairment to participating in activities.
I recognise the legal definition of disability and understand what that means from a political point of view. I think disability goes beyond that though. People are disabled by environments that exclude them.
An ability that is atypical
Someone with a different ability to mine who may at times require additional supports or aids to develop to their fullest potential
diminished physical or mental capacity
physical limitations
A difficulty or challenge that someone may face that most other people do not.
some one who may need extra help with everyday life
A physical condition that prevents a persons activities e.g. through movement
Any physical difference to the norm
disability means that a person has difficulty in areas that others don't , such as, can't see, hear or walk. There are disabilities also such as, autism where communications may be difficult or need adjustment. Disability means that there is something a person cannot do that most of us can do or deem as normal
Something that deviates from what is perceived to be 'normal' development
A physical or mental impairment which requires some form of assistance or guidance to carry out some tasks or challenges in day to day life
an impairment that restrict an individuals ability to participate in certain areas of society.

A condition that might restrict a persons functions to complete a task.
a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities.
Disability mean a defect some one would have from birth.
restrictions and barriers society put on people that limit their ability to participate in everyday life experiences.
it means a person needs an extra support from others in terms of physical, emotional and linguistic needs.
A physical or mental condition that can affect ones movements, senses or daily activities.
Something that can adhere or affect one's ability or learning.
A person who's ability may be limited in some capacity.
any physical, social, emotional or intellectual difficulty that varies greatly from the 'norm'
a physical or mental condition that limits a person's ability to function with normal parameters movements, senses, or activities.
A person that has a more of a challenge to achieve things, so they have to work harder then others

5. What do you understand 'inclusion' to mean?

Inclusion is involving and including the child into the centre and making resources and programs accessible for them.
Inclusion is ensuring that these individuals needs are met in that they are able to complete the tasks they find difficult without drawing attention to the fact they need the additional assistance. It is ensuring that they feel confident to function in our environment and that they are not singled out in any way. It means including them in all aspects of the daily routine.
Inclusion means that all children regardless of their ability have access to early childhood education and have the opportunity to experience all learning environments as well as experiences.
The acceptance of all, celebrating their differences.
Yes
Inclusion is intersectional and means that all people are given access to their rights and are able to participate.
Inclusion means that everybody is welcome and included in everything without bias due race, religion, socio-economic status, sex, etc. Everyone is equal.
For every child to be included in all aspects of the centre and curriculum
to provide the opportunity for people with a disability to be a part of the wider community
Including all children in education and society to achieve their potential.
Provides children with additional need opportunities to interact with others in a secure and understanding setting
Inclusion means how we support everyone to be included in all aspects of an environment
Providing opportunities and experiences for everyone and being open to new info about needs to do this. This could be something as easy as allowing more time for someone to speak
Focussing on involving everyone regardless of ability or leaning difference
No barrier applies that will exclude you e.g. race, gender, ability, health issue. Can choose to participate or not.
Overcoming barriers to being able to participate by changing learning disposition or experience or strategy to be able to be included in the norm or average peer range.
Creating an environment and providing equipment that is suitable and relevant for all participants
Removing barriers to inclusion. Supporting individuals to participate. Ensuring all people are respected and involved in all aspects of the day, not just the parts that are convenient.
Inclusion in all aspects and functions of the day
Inclusion is a place where everyone can feel a sense of belonging
acceptance and understanding. playing together and working around the disability
everyone is part of the community no matter their culture or physical impairment
To accept and support all individuals regardless of abilities or disabilities and other factors of diversity.
making everyone in the world feel like they belong
being included as part of a group and not left out
Inclusive to all regardless of race, religion, sexual preference etc

Inclusion to me means that everyone is included and that the activity or accessibility to areas or adjustments made to make these things inclusive.
Accepting and recognising differences (regardless of what features define the difference)
To me this means to make sure every person, culture or way of life is represented in a positive & equal light in all aspects of day to day life
making sure someone or something is included as part of a larger group or society.
Encompassing everything concerned. Not excluding based on difference.
including all the services or items normally expected or required.
Inclusion is to include everyone irrespective of colour, caste, race, culture, language, physical appearance.
removing the barriers and restrictions for individuals to they can participate in everyday life experiences
it means we accept people's any differences and acknowledge them in a society as a citizen. Anyone can participate and access to education/employment that they deserve.
Being involved in a group or their activities.
Involving all children, educators and families at all times.
Everyone being able to participate and feel included in any group setting regardless of looks, personality, culture, etc.
enabling everyone equal access to facilities and resources
tolerance of the above and lots more
Putting more effort and ways to allow the person with a disability to be part of activities and experience and learn from it like other children.