



# BOYSTORY

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## What Boy Story's Kickstarter Success Says About the Changing Toy Market

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Toys that give kids choice in play and break down stereotypes keep making waves in the toy market. Another outdated stereotype began crumbling this month when Boy Story successfully launched a line of boy dolls.

Boy Story's success shows how the strong demand for choice and equality is starting to break through the historically gendered toy market. No longer do families want to box their kids into play based on gender stereotypes. They are demanding a change.

Boy dolls balance out the market by including both genders in playtime. "Kids need to understand diversity and embrace differences. I want the toys and stores I shop at to support those lessons," said Christian McMurray, Houston dad of two—a boy and a girl. "That's why our family supported Boy Story's Kickstarter. It's a false choice between girl dolls and boy action figures. Life, and especially the workplace, needs to be a gender equal environment. Bias is learned. What lesson are we teaching in a toy store with pink and blue aisles? Children believe they can do anything, equally. Dolls aren't just girls. Action figures aren't just boys. The kids should be the ones picking the toys to play with; mine picked Boy Story." McMurray hopes to see toy stores diversify so the only thing kids think about is playing.

So do many parents just like him. Boy Story's Kickstarter alone brought out more than 230 supporters. Crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter give smaller companies like Boy Story a voice and ability to launch.

The Kickstarter campaign is over but the boy Action Dolls—complete with 11 joints and a modern cool look—are right around the corner. Retailing at \$99, the Action Dolls are expected to be available in late 2016.

Preorders have begun on Boy Story's website, and toy retailers are joining in the excitement as they get ready to stock boy Action Dolls for the first time. Boy Story co-founders will be visiting the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association's Marketplace in Denver with updated prototypes next week.

The first two dolls—Mason and Billy—add gender and ethnic diversity to the world of girl dolls. The adventure stories that can be purchased along with the dolls showcase the brilliance of difference.

Boy Story’s founders are ecstatic at the market and community response. “The dolls are already flying off shelves, and they haven’t even landed yet,” said mom of two boys and co-founder Kristen Jarvis Johnson. “I left my law career and joined my sister full time last month because I think it’s time to take action. I know from personal experience how harmful gender bias can be. I believe this is a small step towards a big change in our society.”

The company has been testing the Action Doll prototypes with kids ages 3-9. After a recent visit to a local preschool, Katie Jarvis, Boy Story’s other founder, laughed as she recalled the requests for blue hair and red capes. But she did tear up a bit when every single boy said he had never seen a doll like Billy or Mason. When asked why, the kids said they had never seen a doll that was a boy.

“Kids are the best because they give completely honest opinions, so we try our best to listen to them,” Jarvis said. “These children are so beautiful because they don’t automatically see things as black and white, or male and female. They just want to play and have fun. They don’t want to be told what kind of toys they should be playing with. And that’s exactly what we are trying to do. Give them good, honest play without gender messages.”

Boy Story’s Action Doll line currently offers only boy dolls. The dolls, though, are for all kids and intended to fill a gap in the market. “You have to break down the barriers before you can share the sandbox,” said Johnson. That is Boy Story’s motto.

“The community support on Kickstarter shows that our toy market is rapidly changing, and our company is front and center contributing to that change. Won’t it be great when we can’t even remember the days that dolls were for girls and cars were for boys? That day is right around the corner.”

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