The See Jane Top 50:
GENDER BIAS
in Family Films of 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media published the first GD-IQ (Geena Davis Inclusion Quotient) report in September of 2016. For our second report, we examine bias representations of gender and race in the top grossing U.S. family films (animated and non-animated) of 2016. Bias is defined as unequal treatment based on identity characteristics.

The goal of this report is to reveal what messages children receive from family entertainment media. Media messages profoundly shape the minds of young people. Entertainment media teaches children about their place in the world, what they should value, who they should respect, what careers they may pursue, who gets to be the hero and more.

It is important to analyze and measure media content in order to eliminate unconscious biases in media messages that reinforce negative behavior, prejudice, body hatred and shame, low self-esteem, and other harmful issues. The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media pioneered this field of research and has been providing data for over a decade. Our research has measurably improved gender representation in TV, film and advertising.

The See Jane Top 50 is distinct from other reports that analyze media content in three meaningful ways. First, our research focuses on family programming (G, PG, PG-13) in order to assess the content that young children, tweens, and teens are exposed to the most. Secondly, we employ the Geena Davis Inclusion Quotient (GD-IQ), a ground breaking software tool developed by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media at Mount Saint Mary's University to analyze audio and video media content. Funded by Google.org, the GD-IQ incorporates Google's machine learning technology as well as the University of Southern California's audio-visual processing technologies and is the only software tool in existence with the ability to measure screen and speaking time through the use of automation. This revolutionary tool was co-developed by the Institute and led by Dr. Shrikanth (Shri) Narayanan and his team of researchers at the University of Southern California's Signal Analysis and Interpretation Laboratory (SAIL). The third way the Top 50 report is distinct is in terms of topic breadth. Beyond standard measures of character identity (gender, race, sexual orientation, disability), Research Director Dr. Caroline Heldman and her team of Ph.D. researchers analyze measures of sexual objectification, violence, and character depth.

Geena Davis
FOUNDER and CHAIR
Geena Davis Institute
on Gender in Media

Madeline Di Nonno
CEO
Geena Davis Institute
on Gender in Media

Caroline Heldman, Ph.D.
RESEARCH DIRECTOR
Geena Davis Institute
on Gender in Media

Shrikanth (Shri) Narayanan, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR OF ENGINEERING
Andrew J. Viterbi,
University of Southern California

MAJOR FINDINGS

We find significant gaps in the Top 50 family films which underrepresent and missrepresent women and girls, people of color, LGBT individuals, and people who are otherly-abled. We also contribute to a growing number of studies that find gender and race diversity in entertainment media pays off at the box office.

BOX OFFICE REVENUES

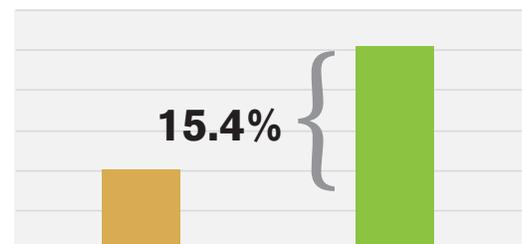### GENDER:

FEMALES LEADS GENERATE MORE AT THE BOX OFFICE

- Family films with female leads generated $10 million (7.3%) more on average at the box office than films with male leads, a trend that continues from our 2015 data.

7.3%
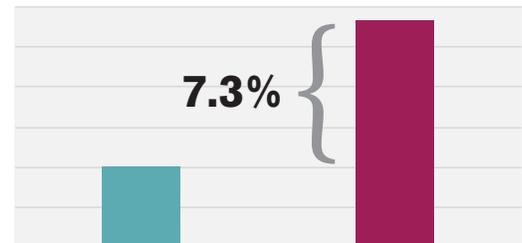
RACE:

PROTAGONISTS OF COLOR GENERATE MORE THAN WHITE LEADS AT THE BOX OFFICE

- Family films with protagonists of color grossed $21 million (15.4%) more than films with white leading characters.

15.4%

MAJOR FINDINGS

PROMINENCE

GENDER:

### MALES LEADS OUTNUMBER FEMALE LEADS

- Male characters out number female characters 2:1 in terms of leading roles, supporting roles, screen time, speaking time, and narration.

- Middle-aged female characters appear far less than middle-aged male characters (40-59).

RACE/ETHNICITY:

### WHITE CHARACTERS OUTNUMBER CHARACTERS OF COLOR

- White characters outnumber characters of color 3:1 in leading roles. Only one-third of supporting characters are people of color, a lower percentage than the U.S. population.
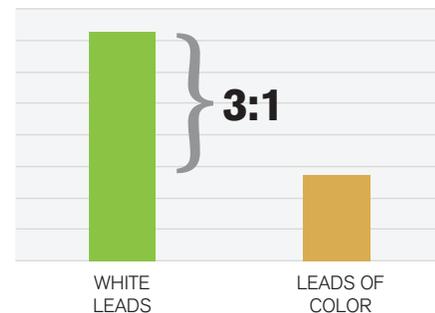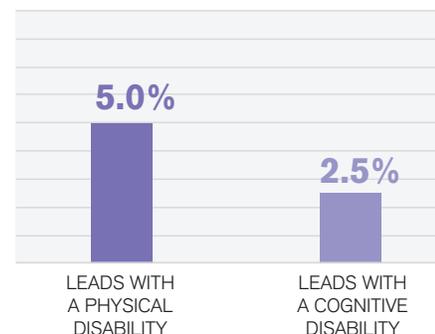
LGBT:

NO LEADING LGBT CHARACTERS

- LGBT individuals are virtually erased in family films. No LGBT protagonist was featured in the Top 50 family films, and LGBT characters made up only 1.4% of all supporting characters.
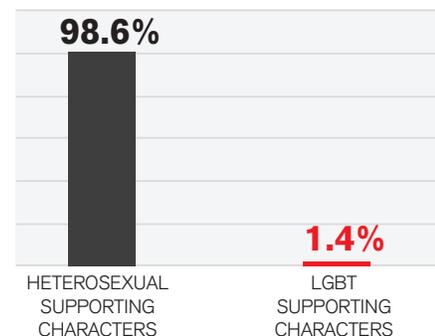
ABILITY:

OTHERLY-ABLED CHARACTERS MISSING IN FAMILY FILMS

- People who are otherly-abled are missing in family films. Only 5.0% of leading characters are portrayed as having a physical disability in the Top 50 family films, and only 2.5% of leading characters are shown as having some type of cognitive disability.

} 2:1

MALE LEADS | FEMALE LEADS

} 3:1

WHITE LEADS | LEADS OF COLOR

98.6%

1.4%

HETEROSEXUAL SUPPORTING CHARACTERS | LGBT SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

5.0%

2.5%

LEADS WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY | LEADS WITH A COGNITIVE DISABILITY

MAJOR FINDINGS

GENDER

SEXUALIZATION:

- Female characters are three times more likely to be shown in sexually revealing clothing as male characters.

- Female characters are three times more likely to be verbally objectified than male characters.

- Female characters are shown as partially nude at a higher rate than male characters (21.0% compared to 15.2%).

- A higher percentage of teen girls (61.1%) in family films are shown in revealing clothing than female characters in their 20s (44.1%) or 30s (41.2%).
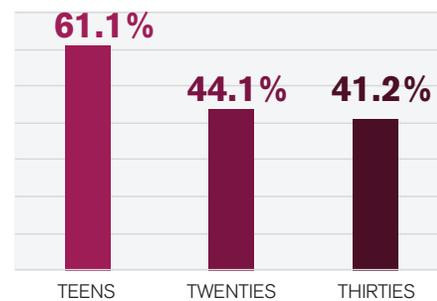
SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

- Female characters are twice as likely to experience sexual harassment and gender slurs in family films as male characters.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE:

- Male characters are more likely to enact sexual violence than female characters, and female characters are far more likely to be the target of sexual violence.

61.1%   **44.1%**   **41.2%**

TEENS   TWENTIES   THIRTIES

} **2:1**

FEMALE
CHARACTERS

MALE
CHARACTERS

FULL REPORT

The full report below is divided into six different themes:

1. Character Prominence: Only Some Get the Spotlight
2. Narrators: Voices of Authority
3. Gender: Women Silenced and Sexualized
4. Race/Ethnicity: Sidelined and Stereotyped
5. Box Office Revenues: Gender and Diversity Pays
6. Behind The Scenes: Still a Boy's Club

CHARACTER PROMINENCE: ONLY SOME GET THE SPOTLIGHT

In this section we examine the prominence of characters in family films by gender, age, race, sexual orientation, and whether they are otherly-abled. We examine prominence in leads/co-leads, supporting characters, and overall speaking characters. For gender, we include information on speaking time and screen time using the GD-IQ. We also examine character prominence through an intersectional lens of gender and race.

GENDER

MALES LEADS OUTNUMBER FEMALE LEADS 2:1

Women constitute 51.0% of the population in the United States,[2] and previous studies find that female characters are vastly underrepresented in film.[3]

Male characters continue to outnumber female characters in leading and supporting roles in family films. In G-rated films, female characters have more screen time than in PG and PG-13 movies, but a gender imbalance still exists. In G-rated movies, male characters appear 53.9% of the time compared to 46.1% for female characters.

In G-rated films, female characters have more speaking time than in PG and PG-13 rated films, but there is still a large gender gap. In G-rated films, male characters speak 61.1% of the time while female characters speak 38.9% of the time.

- When it comes to speaking characters in family films, 70.9% are male and 29.1% are female.

- In terms of leading characters, 62.5% are male and 36.0% are female. Only 1.5% of films feature both a male and female co-lead.

- With supporting characters, 67.3% are male compared to 32.7% that are female.

We use the GD-IQ tool to measure screen time and speaking time. Men outnumber women two-to-one for both measures in family films.

- Male characters appear on screen twice as often as female characters (63.5% compared to 36.5%).

- Male characters speak twice as often as female characters (64.9% compared to 35.1%).

- In G-rated films, female characters have more screen time than in PG and PG-13 movies. In G-rated movies, male characters appear 53.9% of the time compared to 46.1% for female characters.

- In G-rated films, female characters have more speaking time than in PG and PG-13 rated films. In G-rated films, male characters speak 61.1% of the time while female characters speak 38.9% of the time.

}2:1

MALE
CHARACTERS   FEMALE
                    CHARACTERS
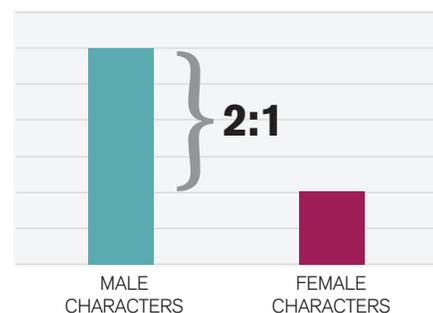
AGE

We examine the apparent age of film characters by gender and find a distinctly gendered pattern.

- For child and teen characters, the percentage of girl characters outnumbers the percentage of boy characters two-to-one.

- For adult characters in their 20s and 30s, male and female characters are represented in roughly equal numbers.

- Female characters appear far less than middle-aged male characters (40 – 59).

- Although their presence is much smaller than other adult age groups, elderly characters (over age 60) are equally likely to be male and female.

| APPARENT AGE	FEMALES	MALES
Children (0 - 12 years)	10.4% (n=56)	5.3% (n=66)
Teens (13 - 20)	8.2% (n=44)	3.9% (n=49)
Adults (21 - 39)	49.5% (n=266)	47.4% (n=592)
Middle Aged (40 - 59)	25.3% (n=136)	35.9% (n=448)
Elderly (60+)	6.6% (n=35)	7.5% (n=94)

RACE

WHITE CHARACTERS OUTNUMBER CHARACTERS OF COLOR 3:1

People of color constitute 38.0% of the U.S. population, and previous studies find that entertainment media lacks racial diversity.[4] We find that characters of color are underrepresented in leading and supporting roles in family films.[5]

- 76.2% of leading characters are white while 19.1% of films feature people of color as leads. This means that family films have three times the number of white leading characters as Latinx, Black, Asian-American, Native American, and other people of color combined.

- 4.7% of films feature both a white character and a character of color as co-leads.

- Characters of color are 30.4% of all supporting characters in family films.

- In terms of speaking characters overall, 72.7% are white and 27.3% are characters of color.


3:1

WHITE CHARACTERS   CHARACTERS OF COLOR
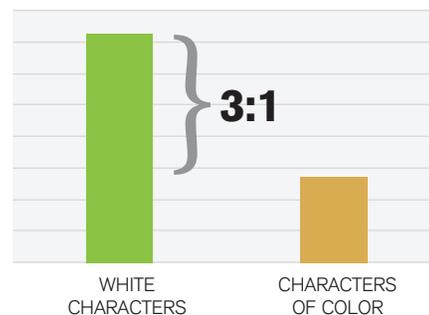
LGBT

NO LEADING LGBT CHARACTERS

We also analyzed the sexual orientation of leading characters. Today, 96.6% of Americans identify as heterosexual and 3.4% identify as LGBT.[6] Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) Americans are rarely shown in leading roles in family films.

- 100% of leads in family films are portrayed as heterosexual.

- LGBT characters made up 1.4% of supporting characters in family films.

98.6%

1.4%

HETEROSEXUAL SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

LGBT SUPPORTING CHARACTERS
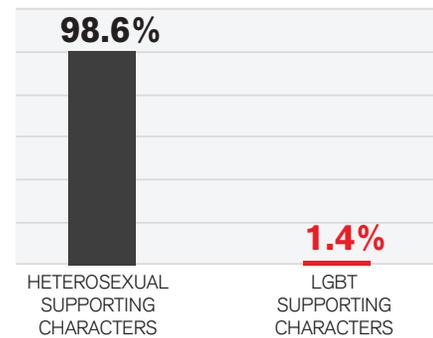
- In terms of speaking characters, 99.2% are shown as heterosexual and 0.8% are shown as LGBT.

OTHERLY-ABLED

OTHERLY-ABLED CHARACTERS MISSING IN FAMILY FILMS

Physical disability is defined as impairments in body functioning that render the execution of tasks or actions difficult. Cognitive disability is defined as differences in brain functioning that alter a character's ability to engage in social interactions or complete mental tasks.

We find that people who are otherly-abled are nearly erased in leading roles in the Top 50 family films.

- Only 5.0% of leading characters are portrayed as physically otherly-abled.

- Only 2.5% of leading characters are shown as cognitively otherly-abled.

- For supporting characters, 7.7% are shown as physically or cognitively otherly-abled.

- Overall, 98.1% of speaking characters are typically-abled while 1.9% are otherly-abled.

5.0%

2.5%

LEADS WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

LEADS WITH A COGNITIVE DISABILITY
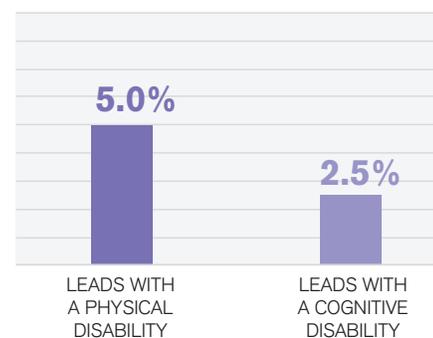
INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

We find that female characters are slightly more racially diverse than male characters.

- For female speaking characters, 70.3% are white, 16.7% are Black, 5.9% are Asian-American-American, 4.1% are Latinx, 1.4% are Middle Eastern, and 1.1% are Native American or Pacific Islander. Overall, 29.7% of female speaking characters are people of color.

- For male speaking characters, 73.8% are white, 13.8% are Black, 4.7% are Asian-American, 3.8% are Latinx, 2.4% are Middle Eastern, and 1.2% are Native American or Pacific Islander. Overall, 26.2% of male speaking characters are people of color.