

Bridging the Gender Gap: Books for Boys

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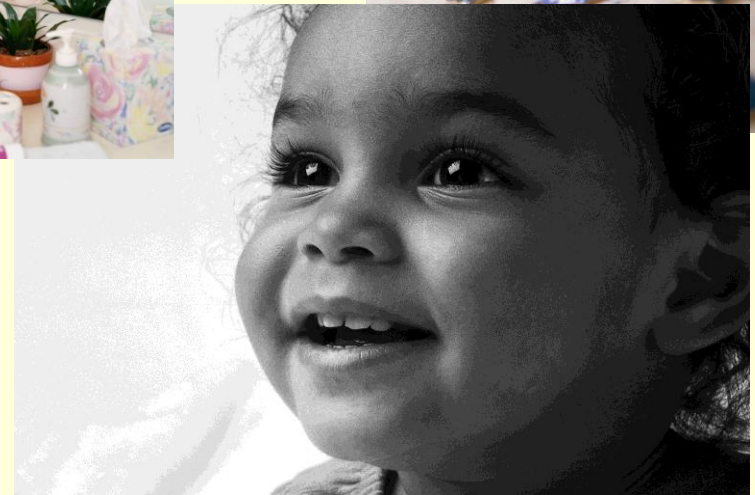
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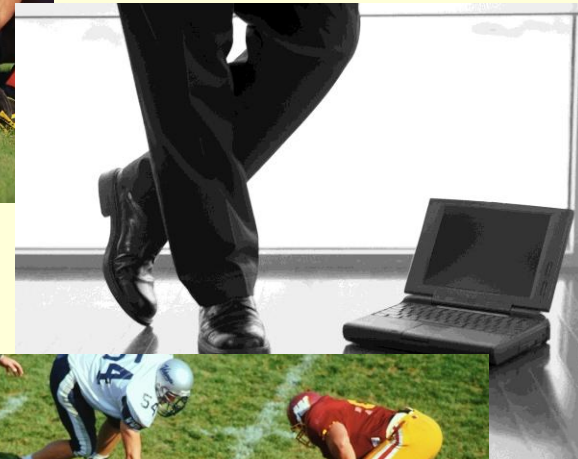
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What are little girls made of?



What are little boys made of?



The Trouble with Boys

- Four-year-olds were expelled at a rate about that of three-year-olds 50% greater.
- Boys were expelled 4½ times more often than girls.
- African-Americans were twice as likely to be excluded as Latinos, Caucasians, Asian-Americans.
- Of African-Americans expelled, 90% were boys



...and the situation worsens as boys enter elementary school

- Twice as likely to be diagnosed with a learning disability (of all diagnosis – boys account for 70%).
- Up to 4½ times more likely to be on medication for ADHD (80% of school students on Ritalin are boys) – USA Today



Trends to worry about

- Boys are – on average – a year to a year and a half behind girls in reading and writing skills.
- Boys get the majority of D's and F's in most schools – in some, as high as 70%.
- Boys make up 80% of discipline problems.

More troubling trends

- Boys account for 80% of children diagnosed with behavioral disorders.
- Boys account for 80% of high school dropouts.
- Boys comprise 44% of college populations (boys account for 22% of the NY City University System; girls 78%).

Graduation Gender Gap

- Male students are consistently less likely than females to graduate from high school with a diploma.
 - Of all the males eligible to graduate from high school during the 2002-2003 school year, only 65.2% of them actually did (female, 72.7%).
 - American Indian – 42.7% (female 47.5%)
 - Black – 44.3% (female 57.8%)
 - Hispanic – 50.1% (female 59.9%)
 - White – 72.4% (female 77.9%)
 - Asian – 73.1% (female 79.6%)

The Bottom Line

- Girls outperformed boys in overall educational markers.
- Male test results skewed the overall statistics most dramatically in basic reading / writing.

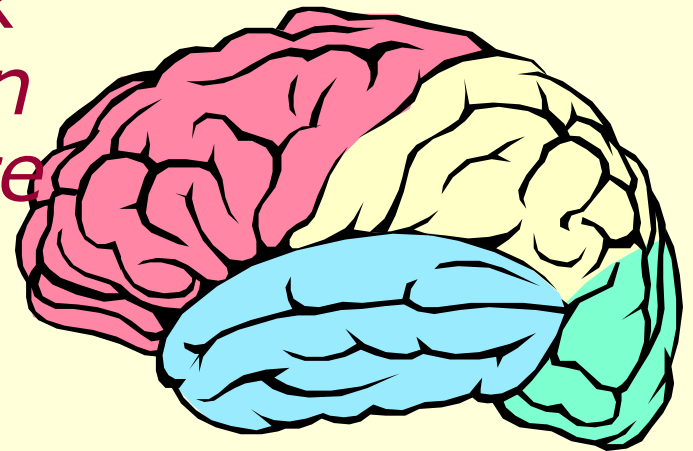


Boys' Brains

- Boys compartmentalize brain activity – they use less of the brain (15% less blood flow to brain than girls) – and they are structured to learn with less multi-tasking.
 - *Boys do best when focusing for long periods on one task.*
 - *They do not do as well when required to move from task to task rapidly.*

The Male Brain

- Boys, in general, have weaker neural connectors in their temporal lobes.
 - *Neural connectors facilitate detailed memory storage and better listening*
 - *Boys are slower to pick up what is being said in words and require more sensory-tactile experiences than girls.*



Language Development

- Boys frontal lobes are less active than girls. Therefore, they are given to impulsive executive decisions.
- Boys realize slower development in the main language centers of the brain.
- The female brain uses more neural pathways and brain centers for word production and expression of experience, emotion, and cognition through words.

Hormonal Differences

- Boys have higher levels of testosterone – the hormone associated with aggression – and vasopressin – relates to territoriality and hierarchy.
- Girls have more estrogen and oxytocin. Therefore, they communicate with words more readily than boys.
- Boys, who have less oxytocin, are not as verbal and don't learn as much through sitting and talking—nor are they predisposed to do so naturally.

Creating a Boy Friendly Environment

- Predictable
- Stimulating
- Interactive
- Supportive



Components of a “Boy-Friendly” Learning Environment

- Sufficient workspace
- Adequate lighting
- Books, blocks, and karate kicks
- Choice-making

Promoting Verbal Skills

- Read daily.
- Conduct meaningful conversations.
- Maintain eye-contact and encourage eye-contact.
- Ask about daily experiences.
- Create word games.

Fine Motor Skills

- Fine motor activities links to verbal activities.
- Fine motor development contributes to legible printing and writing.

Genre

- Adventure
- Animals
- Biography
- Crime
- Dinosaurs
- Family
- Fantasy
- Folklore, Fairy Tales and Myths
- Graphic Novels
- Gross
- History/Historical Fiction
- Horror
- Humor
- Hunting, Fishing, and the Great Outdoors
- Mechanical
- Mystery
- Poetry
- Realistic Fiction
- School Stories
- Science Fiction
- Sports
- War and Weapons
- Informational Books and Nonfiction