

Wired to Move:

Successful Approaches to Teaching and Parenting Boys



Participant Handouts

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Boys and Girls Learn Differently

Functional Differences

Hearing

Females – hear equally in both ears and pick up finer nuances in sounds; tend to perceive equivalent volume levels as twice as loud as males

Males – tend hear better with their right ear

Seeing

Females – better peripheral vision; better eyesight at night; superior to interpreting facial clues and context.

Males – better distance vision and depth perception; see better in brighter light

Touch

Females – tend to have increased sensitivity to touch; react more quickly and acutely to pain; can handle long term pain better

Males – respond more to extreme changes in temperatures

Smell/Taste

Females – much more responsive to aroma, odor and changes in smell; prefer sweet flavors

Males – prefer salty tastes



Boys and Girls Differences:

Details

Girls' brains often receive more details than boys
Boys' often see the whole but not always the details

Brain Development

Girls' brains mature earlier
Boys can be 12 to 18 months behind developmentally

Brain Chemicals

Oxytocin—promotes bonding/relationships ~ more functionally present in females

Cortisol—a steroid chemical that increases in the brain when under stress.

When cortisol is high, learning is negatively affected.

KEY information; Drinking water reduces cortisol levels in children in just 5 minutes..

Serotonin—neurotransmitter regulating mood and inducing relaxation.

Dopamine—powerful neurotransmitter producing feelings of pleasure—teens get increased levels of dopamine in response to risk-taking behavior

Melatonin—hormone that plays a role in sleep. Healthy sleep patterns impact learning.

Estrogen—translates into better fluency and fine motor skills.

Testosterone—male sex and aggression hormone; (present in both males and females) promotes development of spatial areas of the brain, increases self-assertion, competition, self-reliance. During adolescence the spikes are increased 1000%.

Boys can have 2-10 spikes a day depending on age—more common in morning

Girls usually have 2 spikes a day—more common in late afternoon or evening

Early Years

Girls

- More developed fine-motor skills
- Prefer soft, cuddly toys
- Better peripheral vision
- More sensitive to tactile stimulation
- By age 3, 99% of speech is comprehensible
- Hears equally in both ears
- Equal visual skill with either eye
- Better auditory memory



Boys

- More developed gross-motor skills
- More physically active, prefer mechanical and structural toys
- Better depth perception
- Less sensitive to tactile stimulation, takes in less sensory data
- Less bothered by loud noises
- Less interested in singing, soft cooing sounds
- Less able to recognize emotional nuance
- Speaks first words later than females
- By age 4, 99% of speech is comprehensible
- Hears better in right ear
- Left eye is dominant
- Better visual memory

During Pre-K and Kindergarten

Girls

- Interested in people and relationships
- Will build low and expansive
- Newcomers warmly greeted and included
- Longer time needed to separate from mom
- Chooses same-gender playmates more often
- Fewer speech problems
- Stories involve human dynamics, concerns for victims
- Tend to focus more on feelings and less on tasks

Boys

- Interested in objects and things
- Will build things high and knock them down
- Occupies more space
- Needs lots of movement
- Newcomers will be ignored until “proven”
- More speech problems
- Playground play will be more individual and parallel
- Less attention span and empathy
- Chooses same-gender playmates most often
- Stories involve excitement and action, less concern for victims
- Get bored more easily – need more diverse stimulation
- Tend to focus more on task and less on feelings



During Adolescence:

Girls

- Greater ability to multitask
- Likely to achieve higher grades
- Expresses more empathy nurturance
- Better at reading emotions
- More intuitive
- Better at reading subtle social cues
- Better at fine motor and coordination for fine tasks
- Greater writing and reading skills
- Greater risk taking only in eating disorders and pregnancy
- Greater anxiety on test taking
- Focused on relationships
- Twice as likely to suffer from depression
- Exhibit higher levels of vigorous activity in single-sex classes that include dance, aerobics, and other activities tailored to their interests

Boys

- Success in higher levels of math
- Higher scores on multiple choice tests
- Better at three-dimensional reasoning
- Better at manipulating objects
- Take in less information concurrently
- Form bonds more slowly. More suspicious, less intuitive
- Engage in rougher play
- Like competition
- Won't freely choose small group learning settings
- Will do almost anything to keep from experiencing shame
- More prone at risk-taking behavior
- Task-focused
- Position in pecking order affects stress level and learning
- Twice as likely to suffer from a conduct disorder
- Eight times more likely to have achievement problems
- More likely to commit suicide