

## Enhancing Teaching and Parenting for Girls

- Use puzzles to foster perceptual and symbolic learning.
- Promote leadership by creating working groups and teams.
- Verbally encourage girls who exhibit low self-esteem or who underestimate their abilities.
- Promote physical activities that foster gross motor skills.
- Use manipulatives, especially in Science and Math.
- Provide role models of girls succeeding at activities or school subjects normally associated with male success.
- Provide opportunities for girls to study together.
- Expect girls to ask for help and want to affiliate with a teacher.
- If a girl is the “odd one out” of her social group, don’t dismiss it. Ask about her problems and her possible enemies.
- Don’t shield girls from “skinning their knees”, which might foster a learned helplessness.
- Promote girls to actively explore their world even at the risk of failure or minor injury.
- Let girls create their own challenges in which they can take safe risks.
- Be aware that loud or repetitive noises may distract girls since their hearing is more acute than most boys.
- Provide role playing activities for girls.
- Provide an abundance of fiction at a variety of reading levels so that girls have materials they enjoy reading rather than just school content to study.
- Connect Science and Math to the real world so that girls can understand the relationships between and impact upon people.
- Be aware of how much stress a girl is feeling as it may degrade her performance.
- Use a supportive, non-confrontational approach to change a girl’s behavior rather than a confrontational in-your-face style. Smile and look a girl in the eye.
- Don’t assume an adolescent girl is not having sex. Remember that “oral sex” is considered “hooking up” and not seen as a “sexual activity” by many teens.
- Kids don’t date anymore. Girls will “hook up” without having a relationship in order to feel socially powerful in their peer group. The most common time and place for teen sex is after school in someone’s house.
- Allowing a girl to participate in girls-only activities, such as soccer, volleyball, etc. makes them less likely to be sexually active.
- Know *everything* about a party your daughter is attending.
- The number one risk factor for girls using drugs is low self-esteem. They also tend to use drugs to relieve stress or because their friends are doing it. Be aware of their feelings and learn as much as possible about their friends.
- Academic stress is a common pathway to drug abuse among girls.
- Provide alternative ways for girls to relax, such as hiking, sports, meditation, concerts, etc.
- Eat supper together so that you know where your daughter is everyday and can learn with whom she associates and what they may be doing.
- Don’t transfer your authority to a child. Establish the prohibitive rule. Stick to it. Then offer an alternative activity.

### Sources:

Gurian, M. & Stevens, K. (2005 ) *The Minds of Boys*. San Francisco: Josey Bass.  
Sax, Leanoard (2005). *Why Gender Matters*. New York: Broadway Books

## Enhancing Teaching and Parenting for Boys

- Use manipulatives that require boys to employ fine motor skills.
- Provide a larger learning space when possible.
- Make lessons kinesthetic and experiential. Structure activities for movement.
- Use technology as a learning and teaching tool. Balance study and screen time.
- Use graphic organizers that compartmentalize concepts into small sections.
- Keep verbal instructions short. Don't layer instructions. Write layered instructions as numbered steps on the board or worksheet.
- Surround boys with reading material they will enjoy, such as real life nonfiction, adventure, sports, or how-to books. Provide a variety of reading levels.
- Expose boys to a variety of male mentors from many walks of life that illustrate different ways to be successful.
- Many boys may not hear as well as girls and need to be moved closer to the front of a room.
- Provide differentiated writing assignments in which girls can write about description, sensory details, feelings and boys can describe events or action.
- Be aware that boys will continually test their manhood by doing risky actions and that they overestimate their abilities.
- Boys in groups do stupid things. Begin any new physical activity with lessons from a trained teacher.
- Supervise boys to lessen personal injuries.
- Boys learn the "rules of the game" through aggressive play. Aggression and competition builds camaraderie and organizes their peer relationships. Don't ban PE and other physical activities from the school day or boys' aggressive drive will show up elsewhere inappropriately.
- Be aware of the video games boys play. Don't buy any video game that promotes a "moral inversion" where bad is good and good is bad.
- Ask boys about their studies since they most likely study alone and don't ask for help from teachers.
- Ask boys about their lives when they want to be alone. Stress tends to cause boys to choose isolation.
- Avoid small group activities for boys unless each one has a different but equal goal to achieve yet all members together are held responsible for a team score.
- Provide a moderate level of stress through timing or some sort of challenge to engage a boy's interest.
- For many boys and some men, the sexual act is closely tied to aggression. Kids don't date anymore. Boys will "hook up" simply for the sexual activity and the prestige it may bring among peers. The most common time and place for teen sex is after school in someone's house.
- Eat supper together so that you know where your son is everyday and can learn with whom he associates and what they may be doing.
- Boys who abuse drugs are thrill-seeking or want to be cool. Provide healthy, alternative physical and intellectual "thrills" for young males.
- Give clear and consistent discipline to boys.
- Don't transfer your authority to a boy. Establish the prohibitive rule. Stick to it. Look him in the eye and tell him so. Then offer an alternative activity.

### Sources:

Gurian, M. & Stevens, K. (2005 ) *The Minds of Boys*. San Francisco: Josey Bass.  
Sax, Leanoard (2005). *Why Gender Matters*. New York: Broadway Books