

Teaching Young Boys

Strategies for Improving Programs Through Preventing Behavior Challenges, Improving Outcomes and Creating Lifelong Success Stories



Agenda

- Introduction
- Gender differences in behavior and learning
- What young boys need
- Your Classroom Design and Instruction... is there a match?



Whole child development

- Each area or domain is directly influenced by development in all other domains
 - Touchpoints
 - Appropriate behavioral expectation

Learning is complicated...

- Are you contributing to the behavior issues?
 - Transitions (Go to the door, take off your mittens, put them away, go to your seat)



Attribute Blocks

Young boys, young girls

- Research shows young girls and boys develop and learn differently
- The natural ways boys learn can be interpreted as oppositional, lazy, or defiant
 - May be the reason boys are over-represented in special education, expulsion, and suspension

Why do boys develop and learn differently than girls?

Goodness-of-fit



- "Learning and behavioral differences of young girls and boys are based on an interaction between biology and the physical and social environment" (page 51)
- i.e., Kinesthetic learners thrive in an environment that supports that learning style, as opposed to one that punishes movement
- Goodness-of-fit is a measure of how well the physical and social environment matches how the child develops and learns

Culture

- Expectation that boys are "naturally" more aggressive, physical, and asocial
 - ECE teachers are expected to teach all students to be cooperative, socially proactive, compliant

Culture

- Gender-role socialization
 - Female teachers are typically raised with different gender-role socialization than young boys
 - Can cause a mis-match between the majority female teachers and the boys they teach
 - Boys need to be around men as healthy role models
 - One of the most impactful role models is a male ECE teacher!

95.5% of caregivers are women (in the US)
 97.2% of preschool and kindergarten teachers are women
 81% of elementary and middle school teachers are women
 Most support staff in ECE are women

Only 6 in 100 children in the US will have a male preschool teacher



Neuroscience of Gender

- Risk Taking
- Exploring
- Accidents
- Impulsive behavior
- Inattention and distractions
- Hyperactivity
- Many behavioral and learning disabilities
- More childhood illnesses
- Short attention spans
- The need to use more space

Today's Realities...

- More children live in families without men at home
- More young children are spending more time in early childhood programs that have few, if any, men
- All children need goodness-of-fit
- Boys and girls in early childhood programs need exposure to men more often; teachers and volunteers are strategies our programs can offer
- "institutional" behaviors are beginning to dominate our classrooms



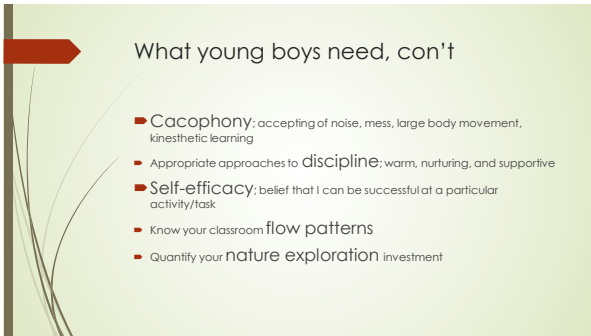
- In many ways, it is easier for men to provide young boys with goodness-of-fit for maximum development
 - Men know what it was like to be a boy and come equipped to help boys deal with their frustrations

"The issue is not that boys should only have male teachers; it's that a gender balance in early childhood and school classrooms is healthy for young children - both boys and girls"



What young boys need

- Lots of physical activities; many boys learn by using their whole body
- Rough-and-tumble play; in families without men/boys, EC programs may be the only place this happens
- Hands on learning; honor this learning style as a legitimate way to learn important social and academic skills and concepts
- Initiative and industry; classrooms must provide a place for **each** child to do something well and to demonstrate it in front of others
- The **Arts**; they can be an outlet, a competency for those who don't do well in traditional learning, and can be empowering



What young boys need, can't

- **Cacophony**; accepting of noise, mess, large body movement, kinesthetic learning
- Appropriate approaches to **discipline**; warm, nurturing, and supportive
- **Self-efficacy**; belief that I can be successful at a particular activity/task
- Know your classroom **flow patterns**
- Quantify your **nature exploration** investment



Teachers of boys must embrace the need to...

- Move freely through open space
- Use the outdoors for optimum play and learning
- Experiment and mess around with all sorts of materials
- Engage in activities and interactions that don't have to fit an adult's view of order and neatness
- Make lots of noise
- Explore the concept of cause and effect in multiple ways
- Take a variety of physical risks
- Physically engage with other children in many different ways

Teachers of boys must embrace the need to...

- Participate in all sorts of constructive and manipulative activities that help develop fine motor skills...match our expectations to gender differentiated developmental milestones
- Explore different ways to communicate their emotional needs
- Push physical and social limits safely; rules, people's patience, the capacity of the physical environment, the use of certain materials, and how things work and don't work... if the custodial staff hate you then you are probably on the right track!



Self-Assessment
How boy-centric is your classroom?

TAKE-AWAYS

Some "Visual Aids" to see what your program could look like... happy boys doing what they do best!













We would love to hear from you to continue the discussion...

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