

Boys in School
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notes...

A. Introduction

A. Something about the boys we know

Traits and Characteristics
Instrumental and Expressive
Masculine or Feminine

+ / -

B. Goals of This Talk

- Explore the boy code
- Consider what language rules boys use
- Discover effective strategies for reaching boys in school

B. Boy Code

“... a social message, transmitted through parents and other caretakers, that one should stand on one's own two feet, cut Mama's apron strings, be a stoic little man and be emotionally independent, long before a child is developmentally ready to achieve that.” William Pollack. (1999). *Real Boys: Rescuing our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*, p. 17. Owl Books.

Boys Will Be Men: A Documentary About Growing Up Male in America
The Boy Code

A. Whence?

- Some brain research background
 - stem, limbic, amygdala, cortex
 - corpus callosum
- Social learning
 - Home & School
 - Mothers & Fathers
 - Siblings & Peers
 - Culture & School

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”
—Fredrick Douglass

B. Whither?

- How much choice do boys have in their behavior?
- How do children, and boys specifically, gain executive function?

The Pilot Light

C. Language in Use

A. Status and Connection

“The same effort that the boys are putting into proving that they can top each other, the girls are putting an equal amount of effort into proving that they’re the same. Even if they’re not.” Deborah Tannen. (1999). *He Said, She Said: Gender, Language, & Communication*, p. 4. Classroom Media.

B. Extra-textual

- Boys 55% facial to 28% for girls
- Boys 28% voice tone to 18% for girls
- Boys 7% to words alone compared to 54% for girls

C. Power and Relations in Teacher-talk

- Listening
- Gatekeepers

D. Strategies

Yes, school is a place where we learn how to learn, where we change and grow ... but who’s the grown-up in this situation?

A. When stressed: Fight or flight, or Tend and Befriend

B. Show, don’t tell

C. Help boys recognize, name, and label their feelings

D. Mindfulness Skills

- We define mindfulness as being aware of what you're feeling, thinking, & experiencing when it's happening, without judgment.
- Uses the neural circuitry that allows us to pay attention, calm ourselves, & attune to others’ feelings
- Relaxation skills

E. Visual routines

F. Learn and promote appropriate Big-Body Play

- Boys who play rough-and-tumble with each other are friendlier!
- Frances Carlson. (2009). *Rough and Tumble Play 101*. CCIE.

G. Use boy interests to teach Emotional Intelligence

- What they love, what they hate
- What scares them, what excites them

To respect that fury or those giddy high spirits or a body that seems perpetually mobile is to respect nature, much as one respects the strength of a hurricane, the rush of a waterfall.”

—Sara Ruddick, author & mother

H. Don't Forbid Heroes

- Boys want to protect, save others, be heroes, & provide
- Power Cards

I. Pause state

- Girls' brains are usually always 'on'
- Boys' brains often go into a 'pause state' after completing a task
- Pause breakers: *loud voice, clapping, spinning, running, jumping*

J. When you feel angry - - -

K. How Boys Learn Best

- Hands-on learning
- Touching, moving, climbing on, handling & building things
- Solving problems physically
- Give boys something to touch, chores, modeling clay, or encourage doodling
- Include movement in lessons – physical representations
- Take Breaks – stretch breaks – change locations in room
- Use fidget toys that involve squeezing and stretching, (e.g. soft foam ball, bendable wire toys, etc.)
- Provide an air cushion to sit on to reduce fidgeting & allow for some extra movement

L. Video modeling

M. Charts and Scales

N. Pictures and Graphs

The Pilot Light

- Boys: be aware of potential attack
 - Who is the enemy?
 - What weapons should I use?
 - Quick aggressive reactions to potential danger
- Girls: keep vigil to maintains social order & harmony
 - Is everyone cooperating?
 - Following rules
 - Does anyone need anything?
 - Sets up females to naturally have EI skills

E. So what's next?

Resources

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