

# CHILDREN & Gender

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# Boy or Girl?





# Sex vs. Gender

Sex:

“Refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences”

Gender:

“Can refer to the role of a male or female in society, known as a gender role, or an individual’s concept of themselves, or gender identity”



# Girls vs. Boys

## Descriptions

“Quiet”

“Shy”

“Docile”

“Cooking”

“Teacher”

“Actress”

“Arts and crafts”

Boys:

“Trouble”

“Always wants his way”

“Rambunctious”

“Fishing”

“Baseball”

“Hiking”

“Manufacturing industry”



# Impact of Gender Roles on Children and Development

## ❖ Career choices

- “Women do not pursue job paths within STEM and men do not hire them because neither group perceives those jobs to be appropriate for women” (Puchner, Markowitz, & Hedley, 2015, p. 24)

## ❖ Health concerns

- “Dysfunctional behavior . . . lower self-esteem . . . depression and eating disorders, diminished cognitive efficiency” (Ward & Aubrey, 2017)
- “Their anxiety is correlated with depression, binge drinking, and drug use” (Ward & Aubrey, 2017)



# What influences these Gender Roles?

- Parents
  - Have the strongest influence on children
  - Pass on their own beliefs about gender
  - Approval/Disapproval of children's gender expression
- Peers
  - Other children's reactions and comments at school
  - Gender divided play
- Television and Other Entertainment
  - Commercials targeted to specific genders
    - Ex: Barbie commercial only has girls playing
  - Presents many male and female stereotypes
  - Male's often outnumber females

# Kohlberg's Cognitive Developmental Theory of

## Gender

### Three Stages

1. Gender Identity (2-3 years old)
  - a. Child recognizes that they are male or female and other people are as well, but fails to recognize that gender is “constant”
2. Gender Stability (3-7 years old)
  - a. Child knows that gender is “fixed”
  - b. “When I grow up I will be a mommy/daddy”
3. Gender Constancy (7-12 years old)
  - a. Child understands that gender does not change despite appearance or activities

# Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about “gender neutral parenting?”
1. Do you think that toy sections and marketing should continue to be divided by gender or combined?

# References

- ❖ Ward, L. M., & Aubrey, J. S. (2017). *Watching gender: How stereotypes in movies and on TV impact kids' development*. San Francisco, CA: Common Sense.

[https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/2017\\_commonsense\\_watchinggender\\_fullreport\\_0620.pdf](https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/2017_commonsense_watchinggender_fullreport_0620.pdf)