

# What about the boys?

June 8 2009

---

Both boys and girls have issues, but boys seem to be the ones getting the raw deal. According to Judith Kleinfeld, professor of psychology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the US, issues affecting boys are more serious than those affecting girls, but they have been neglected by policy makers. Her review (1) of issues characterizing American boyhood, how they compare to those affecting girls, and the lack of initiatives in place to address them has just been published in the June issue of Springer's journal *Gender Issues*.

Professor Kleinfeld's paper reviews the different viewpoints surrounding the debated existence of a so-called 'boy crisis'. She then looks at gender differences in measures of educational achievement including literacy levels, college entrance tests, school grades, engagement in schools, dropout rates, as well as psychological issues affecting young people including mental health, suicide, depression and conduct disorders. Lastly, she shows how boys and girls compare in terms of premature death and injuries and rates of delinquency and arrests.

According to Judith Kleinfeld, boys get the raw deal. Compared with girls, American boys have lower rates of literacy, lower grades and engagement in school, higher drop-out from school, and dramatically higher rates of suicide, premature death, injuries, and arrests. Boys are also placed more often in special education. Girls on the other hand are more likely to have different problems including depression, suicidal thoughts and eating disorders.

The researcher argues that although there have been numerous federal,

state, school district, and foundation programs aimed at addressing issues faced by girls, led in part by the strong feminist movement, the same cannot be said for the problems encountered by boys. In her view, they have been largely neglected.

Professor Kleinfeld concludes: "In terms of policy discussion and educational investments, the nation is addressing gender differences which barely exist but ignoring gender gaps which are substantial. Policy attention has focused on the supposed underachievement of females in mathematics and science but these gender gaps are small. In contrast, substantial gender gaps are occurring in reading and writing which place males at a serious disadvantage in the employment market and in college.... Both [boys](#) and [girls](#) face gendered problems which need policy attention."

Source: Springer

Citation: What about the boys? (2009, June 8) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-06-boys.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--