

Why boys get into trouble and why most discipline measures do not work

Abigail Norfleet James, Ph.D.
IBSC
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Why are boys the focus of discipline issues?

- Biology puts them at risk
 - They are loud
 - They get actively involved with their world
 - They need to interact physically with each other
 - They are impulsive – frontal lobe issue
- Society puts them at risk
 - Focus of classroom problems
 - Lack of positive male role models
 - Tend-&-befriend approach

Emotional Disconnect

- Fight or Flight
 - Body is prepared to react
 - Lack of control may mean overreact
 - No examples on how to modify behavior
- Tend and Befriend
 - Focus is on not frightening student
 - Reasoning rather than rules
- Disconnect
 - Boys do not think that adult is serious or has the strength to demand good behavior

What is discipline?

- Discipline –teach a child appropriate behavior
 - Induction
 - Power assertion
 - Removal of attention
- Punishment – stop behavior
 - Presentation of aversive stimuli
 - Removal of positive stimuli
- Abuse – power is used to control another
 - Physical
 - Sexual
 - Emotional
 - Neglect

Types of Discipline

- Induction
 - Does not work with boys – they think it is not fair
 - Works with girls especially with reference to adults
- Power Assertion
 - Physical
 - Hegemonic Masculinity
 - Concern that boys learn this as appropriate response
 - Reference to rules and consequences
 - Consistency is key
 - Only works if student values the consequence
- Removal of attention
 - Similar to negative punishment

Why doesn't punishment work?

- Punishment doesn't actually work unless it is immediately following the incident and the child sees it as catastrophic
 - Punishment must fit the crime
 - Must mean something to the child
- Much of what is used as punishment is actually reinforcing to boys
 - Suspension
- Public punishment becomes a badge of courage
 - Conduct disorder as coping mechanism

Self-Esteem

- Does punishment lower self-esteem?
- What matters most to little children is that they perceive they matter - even if attention is negative
- Failure will lower self-esteem
 - Especially if child feels out of control
- Success will not raise self-esteem
 - Unless the success is plainly the result of personal effort –
 - We need to struggle to survive
- Participation trophies lower self-esteem

Parental Involvement

- Child with low self-control has greater emotional and behavioral problems for both girls and boys
- Parents who were restrictive and psychologically controlling led to more behavioral problems
- Parents who were strict and alert to child's activities led to fewer behavioral problems
- As child reaches adolescence, collaboration with parent and teachers as guide

Strategies to teach self-control

- Do not praise or discipline with global terms – use specific references
 - Without specific references, failure results in boys getting angry and girls getting anxious
- Decision Education
 - Helpful frame, Clear values, Creative alternatives, Useful information, Sound reasoning, and Commitment to follow through
- Peer Mediation/mentors/prefects
- Conflict Resolution – manage problem & move ahead
 - Focus on behaviors & issues, not emotional responses
 - <http://www.execstrategies.com/Facilitator/ConflictResolutionStrategies.htm>

Everyone on the Same Page

- Rules apply to everyone including students and staff
 - If boys can't drink, neither can staff where boys can see
 - Honor applies to all
- Students are involved with the maintenance of discipline
- Staff trained not to put students on the spot
 - Boys are impulsive, teach them to think before they speak
- Having a sense of humor helps

5 Positive Rules

- Treat others with respect
- Be trustworthy
- Be a gracious winner and a resilient loser
- Be a responsible member of the community
- Rights and Responsibilities

Sources

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Conflict Resolution Strategies

Susan B. Wilson

1. Create physical space.
2. Establish emotional boundaries (standards of behavior).
3. Invite critical feedback.
4. Consider your response to rights vs. needs vs. wants.
5. Develop respectful responses to disrespectful behavior.
6. Do not shoulder the blame for criticisms that are not yours to own.
7. Listen with respect and respond with care.
8. Stick to issues and behaviors.
9. Choose and use a level of assertion; especially try empathetic.
10. Initiate contact with, "Specifically, how can I be helpful to you?"
11. Maintain your focus on, "We can work this out."
12. Expect respect. ("We can work this out when you stop yelling.")
13. Say what you mean in specific terms (we can't read minds).
14. Use fair humor (quips, toys, stickers, etc.).
15. Keep congruent – words, tone actions.
16. Avoid debate.
17. Use sure signals for confidence. (Head up, face forward, eye contact, shoulders back, steady stance, posture straight, no leaning)
18. Count to 10. Use silence to increase your calm. It's valuable to "leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."
19. Speak from the "same side of the table."
20. Tangible reminders to respond appropriately. (notes, touchstone, cues from a colleague, this notebook J) Document facts of behaviors and situation.
21. Build your credibility with your language and actions of deny Junk Talksm and raise WOW!sm.
22. Give people a way out. Establish choices.
23. Refuse the win-lose perspective.
24. Breathe. Fully breathe for calm and for conveying steadiness and confidence.

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