

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

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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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