

Girls versus Boys: Who is Harder to Raise?

I'm happy to announce that I had a happy, healthy, beautiful baby on May 25. While I get acclimated to my new family situation, I'm proud to introduce one of my former English 101 students as my guest blogger. The fabulous mother of five, nursing student Naidia Carter will share the differences between raising girls and boys. Next week, you'll find out whether I brought home my first batch of sugar and spice or a second dose of snips, snails and puppy dog tails.

- Robyn

It's Friday morning and I have been awakened by the interchanging sounds of both my cell phone and the house phone. As my husband jumps up in an attempt to answer one of them, I barely lift my head up off of the pillow and focus in on the time displayed on my alarm clock. It's 7 a.m. and I have to get the kids up, dressed, faces washed, teeth brushed, fed and in the car by 8:30 so that they won't be late for school. That might sound easy to some but believe me it's not.

First it's off to the girls' room. I only have one girl to wake up this year because my 4-year-old Rayne is still in p.m. pre- k, thank God. I only have one fashion diva to deal with this year, Rylie. Rylie is my 7-year-old, who may I mention has picked out her own clothes since the age of 5. Not because I wanted her too, but because if I didn't she would throw a temper tantrum so major that the whole house would be upset for the rest of the day. "Wake up, Rylie," I gently call out to her, being careful not to wake my 4-year-old up who is fast asleep in the bottom bunk just below her. "It's time for school get up so that you can pick out your clothes," I say.

Then I'm off to the boys' room. "Ryan, wake up. It's time for school." Ryan is my 6-year-old who could care less about what he wears. His only motivation for waking up in the morning is waffles. I pull out jeans, a cool shirt, and socks lay them over his bed; but not before mentioning if he hurries up and gets dressed then he will have

time to eat breakfast. Before I'm out of his door Ryan is down off of the top bunk and passing me on his way to the bathroom.

Rylie, on the other hand, is still in the bed. I yell, "Get up or I will pick out your clothes for you!" Then her morning begins.

As I am getting dressed all I hear is, "I don't have anything to wear ... My socks don't fit right ... Can I wear sandals?"

"Um no!" I respond. "It's raining."

"I don't care."

"Well I do! Pick something else out!"

A few minutes later Rylie storms into my room, half-dressed and whining. She is looking for the perfect-fitting pair of socks and can't seem to find them in her drawer full of socks, that might I add are an array of every color, design, and size that you can imagine. I calmly walk out of my room. By now I'm irritated and know that she has just come into my room to further irritate me. I walk right past her not responding to her foolishness, down the steps to make breakfast. By this time, Ryan is fully dressed and follows behind me. I hear Rylie hit the floor.

"It's not fair! He only has one pair of shoes to pick from. I have too many."

"You need to get rid of some of them." Ok, I thought this was a fall out over socks not shoes? Call it what you like but this happens every morning without fail, it's always something with that "girl" of mine. Ryan, for the most part is always calm and cool.

So I ask the question is there a real difference in raising a boy versus raising a girl? Is raising one sex harder than raising another? From a mother's perspective there clearly is a difference between boys and girls but as a mother of five, three boys and two girls, I have come to realize that it's not just a matter of harder versus easier it's just different! While both girls and boys have very different social behaviors, personality traits and physical differences, they both require the same amount of love and affection from their parents. Every child whether it is a girl or boy is an

individual. I believe that it is his or her innate personality that should guide us in the way that we as parents deal with our children; and help us to make decisions in rearing them not their sex. As you will see below I have very briefly described based on my own personal experiences, some of the major differences and similarities of both girls and boys. I'm no expert so I'm inviting you to be your own personal judge on who you believe is harder or easier to raise.

I quietly watch my children as they are either playing out front of our house with their friends. It amazes me that even though they have been raised all of their life by the same parents and are very close in age, the way that my girls behave socially either with their family and friends is very different from the way my boy's socially behave. For instance my girls love to play school, dress up, do crafts, play with sidewalk chalk, and just talk. They cling to Daddy, even though I am their primary care giver. They are very chatty; love to talk about their day at school, their friends and what if anything they are upset about. On the other hand, my boys will play with sidewalk chalk or dress up for a while, but not before eventually stomping on the chalk and turning a dress up skirt into a superman cape. My boys would much rather physically interact with each other. They love to play fight, wrestle, play tag and play some type of contact sport. They cling to Mommy a lot more than the girls do, and when they are upset they usually hide their feelings. Getting my boys to talk about their day is like pulling teeth. Whenever I ask the question, "What did you do in school today?" I always get a response of "nothing."

Despite the fact that girls and boys seem to socially interact very differently from one another, they still do enjoy a lot of the same activities. For instance I have seen girls enjoy physical activities such as basketball or tag and I have seen boys enjoy doing crafts and playing school. Although my boys are "Mommy's" boys and my girls are "Daddy's" girls we both still serve our very different but necessary roles in their lives. As far as their verbal communication is concerned the girls definitely communicate better than the boys.

If you really look at it girls and boys both like some of the same things for the most part even though the way that they socially communicate is very different. It's just the way we as parents have to handle them that makes the difference.

When it comes to personality, girls are bursting out of the seams with it. Little girls seem to have a natural motherly instinct. It amazes me how they just naturally feed, protect, and care for their favorite baby doll or stuffed animal. Little girls also have the natural ability to accessorize and properly match clothes. If you don't believe me just come to my house and watch my 5 and 7-year-old girls work. They can pick out an entire outfit from head to toe, and accessories too, perfectly. I ask their advice when I'm getting dressed to go out somewhere. Who would have known? As far as all the getting hurt stuff is concerned they usually learn the first time around. If they get hurt doing something once nine times out of 10 they won't do it again.

As you can see girls and boys are different when it comes to personality. Both have their own very unique personalities. Whether it is their natural ability to accessorize or a fun and sparky attitude, I personally believe personality has nothing to do with sex and all to do with each girl or boy as an individual. The truth is they both cry when they are hurt, both come to Mommy to kiss and make their boo-boo's feel better, and in amazement to some, both are equally just as sensitive when they get hurt.

Besides the obvious, girls and boys are also much different physically. Some may argue that physically girls can do everything that a boy can do and sometimes better. While that may be true in some instances, girls seem to be a lot calmer than boys and are able to focus on a quiet project much longer. Girls do not naturally have as much body mass or muscle as boys, at least not my girls. Although my 5-year-old girl weighed more at birth than her 6-year-old, as they both grew, he now far outweighs her in size and muscle; she is actually quite dainty while he is naturally very muscular. The average little girl, with a typical activity level is physically weaker than the average little boy her age, regardless of his exercise habits. Boys are naturally more active than girls; it is harder for them to sit and focus on one particular project as long as girls. Boys usually have to be physically engaged in a project in order for you to have their undivided attention. For the most part the average boy weighs more than the average girl in his same age group. I learned this from taking my kids to the pediatrician. Growth charts demonstrate consistently larger sizes for boys than girls.

Despite the clearly defined social, personality, and physical differences that separate girls from boys these facts still remain. Both need attention, both get scared and need someone to comfort them; both require the same amount of love and affection. I guess the bottom line is no matter what girl or boy, we as parents should be thankful and appreciate the little miracles that God has placed in our lives.