

boys adrift

May 13, 2015

Leonard Sax MD PhD

www.leonardsax.com

*Please note: this hand-out is intended as a **supplement** to the presentation, not as a **substitute** for the presentation. This handout is NOT intended to be read separately from the presentation; it cannot “stand alone.” If you would like to get a sense of the presentation but did not have the opportunity to attend, please read my second book **Boys Adrift**, especially chapters 1, 2, and 8. You can reach me at mrcrad@verizon.net but please also send a copy to my personal email leonardsax@gmail.com.*

Let’s talk about the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The United States Department of Education regards the NAEP as “our nation’s report card” because the NAEP is the ONLY objective assessment of student achievement which is administered in all 50 states; and because it is the ONLY assessment which allows measurement on a constant yardstick over 40+ years. The NAEP has been administered since 1969. Results are not traceable to individual school districts, but only to states. No administrator in Largo is going to get in trouble because the State of Florida did not fare well on the writing examination. So the NAEP is NOT a high-stakes test; and that’s precisely what makes it so valuable. You can download these data at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata>, click on “Main NDE” and review the Data Usage Agreement, then proceed.

White female, not eligible = 168; White female, eligible = 153

White female, not eligible, = 168; White male, not eligible, = 153

Black female, not eligible = 147; Black female, eligible = 131

Black female, not eligible = 147; Black male, not eligible = 133

We all understand why affluent kids have an advantage over kids from low-income homes: affluent kids have more resources. But when we compare a girl and boy *from the same home*, the gap separating the girl from her brother (on this parameter) is comparable to the gap based on household income. And that’s true regardless of whether the family is Black or White.

It’s not about ability. It’s about motivation. The big differences between girls and boys are not in what they *can* do, but in what they *want* to do.

Writing: FCAT 2.0

Statewide ≥ 3.0 in writing at grade 10:

Free or reduced lunch: 81%

Not free or reduced lunch: 90%

Male: 81%

Female: 90%

Source: <https://app1.fldoe.org/FCATDemographics/>

Scholarships : Pinellas Education Foundation manages 160 scholarships.

Girls who applied: 1014 (58.6%)

Boys who applied: 716 (41.4%)

Girls who won: 105 (65.6%)

Boys who won: 55 (34.4%)

So why are American boys (Black, White, and Latin) less motivated today, on average, compared with their sisters?

The five factors which (I believe) are driving this phenomenon:

- 1) **Changes in education over the past 30 years**
- 2) Video games
- 3) Stimulant medications for ADHD
- 4) Endocrine disruptors (DEHP, BPA, PET)
- 5) "The revenge of the forsaken gods"

That first factor, **Changes in Education**, has four components:

- A) Schools becoming "unfriendly to boys"
- B) Abolition of competitive formats with well-defined winners and losers
- C) Shift away from experiential to didactic learning; from outdoors to indoors
- D) Acceleration of the early elementary curriculum

But where do you draw the line? What's "out of bounds" with regard to writing, or drawing? What child should be disciplined, or even referred?

- Some boys like to draw violent pictures, or tell violent stories
- The lesson from St. Andrew's, in Aurora, Ontario
- Throwing of snowballs is permitted on the football field, but not elsewhere

- **In-bounds vs. out-of bounds**
- Generic and classic is OK; personal and threatening is **NOT** OK
- Violence in a story of Roman gladiators is *generic*: it is intrinsic to that genre. Likewise for a story about the Battle of Stalingrad, 1942.
- But if a boy tells a story about bringing in a knife to hurt another boy at school, whom he names – that’s not generic, that is personal and threatening. That’s out of bounds.
- Snowball tournament; dart-throwing tournament; light-saber tournament

It’s not about ability; it’s about motivation. The big differences between girls and boys are not in what they *can* do but in what they *want* to do.

My fourth book will be published next year by Basic Books. The title is *The Collapse of Parenting: the three things you must do to help your child or teen become a fulfilled adult*. Please visit my website www.leonardsax.com for updates.

Here are some comments about my first three books:

Why Gender Matters, Boys Adrift, and Girls on the Edge:

Why Gender Matters “. . . is a lucid guide to male and female brain differences.”

New York Times

Boys Adrift “. . . is powerfully and persuasively presented. . . Excellent and informative references and information are provided.”

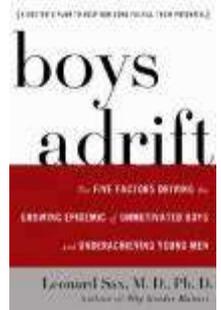
Journal of the American Medical Association

Boys Adrift: “A must-read for any parent of boys. This is real science, and Dr. Sax thoroughly uncovers the important health issues that parents of boys need to be tuned into.”

Dr. Mehmet Oz, host of “The Dr. Oz Show”

Girls on the Edge: “Packed with advice and concrete suggestions for parents, *Girls on the Edge* is a treasure trove of rarely-seen research on girls, offering families guidance on some of the most pressing issues facing girls today. Dr Sax’s commitment to girls’ success comes through on every page.”

*Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out**

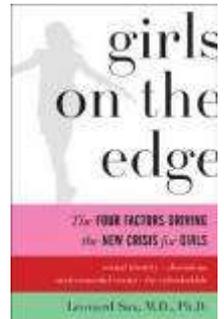


Girls on the Edge: *“This is essential reading for parents and teachers, and one of the most thought-provoking books on teen development available.”*

Library Journal

Girls on the Edge: *“The best book about the current state of girls and young women in America . . . offers astonishing and troubling new insight . . .”*

The Atlantic



Contact information:

Leonard Sax MD PhD
MCRCAD (Montgomery Center for Research in Child & Adolescent Development)
64 East Uwchlan Avenue, #259
Exton, Pennsylvania 19341
Telephone: 610 296 2821
Fax: 610 993 3139
e-mail: mrcad@verizon.net and leonardsax@prodigy.net and leonardsax@gmail.com
www.leonardsax.com

Book #4 comes out in December from Basic Books: *The Collapse of Parenting*

