

# Brain-based Genetic Differences in Girls and Boys

Sources: Gurian, M. & Stevens, K. "With Boys and Girls in Mind," *Educational Leadership*, Nov. 2004. Sax, Leanoard (2005). *Why Gender Matters*. New York: Broadway Books

Girls Tend To	Boys Tend To
Have better hearing than boys and may find "loud" or repetitive noises distracting.	Have worse hearing than girls and may lose attention simply because they can't hear.
Are better at object discrimination, i.e. "What is it?"	Are better at object location, i.e. "Where is it?"
Will focus on faces and things. "Girls draw nouns using warm colors."	Will focus on movement. "Boys draw verbs using cold colors."
Use more of the advanced part of their brains, such as the cerebral cortex.	Use more of the primitive parts of their brains, e.g. the hippocampus and amygdala.
Can explain and describe their feelings.	Find it difficult to talk about feelings.
Are more verbal emotive.	Are more spatial mechanical.
Develop language and fine motor skills about 6 years earlier than boys.	Develop targeting and spatial memory about 4 years earlier than girls.
Multitask well and make easy transitions.	Focus on a task and transition more slowly.
Friendships are focused on other girls.	Friendships are focused on a shared activity.
Conversation is central to a friendship.	Conversation is often unnecessary.
Social hierarchies will destroy a friendship.	Social hierarchies build camaraderie and organize relationships.
Self-revelation and sharing are precious part of a friendship.	Self-revelation is to be avoided if possible.
Often ask a teacher for help and enjoy a close relationship with a teacher.	May not ask for help to avoid being perceived as "sucking up" to a teacher.
Like to be faced, looked in the eye and smiled at.	Avoid eye contact and prefer you sit beside them.
Retain sensory memory details well and make good distinctions between colors.	Don't retain sensory details or make color distinctions as well.
Deal with moderate stress, such as timed tests, less successfully.	Deal with moderate stress well and may actually do better because of it.
Want to be with friends when under stress.	Want to be alone when under stress.
Feel "yucky" when faced with threat and confrontation.	Feel excited when faced with threat and confrontation.
Rarely employ aggression playfully.	Often employ aggression playfully.
Connect sex to other outcomes.	Focus on the sexual activity itself.
Use landmarks to give directions.	Use compass points to give directions.
Prefer to read fiction—short stories and novels.	Prefer nonfiction—descriptions of real events, action, and how things work.
Have many friends if they bully and likely bully someone they know.	Have few friends if they bully and more likely don't know the person they attack.
Need encouragement to build them up.	Need reality checks to make them reassess and to be challenged.

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