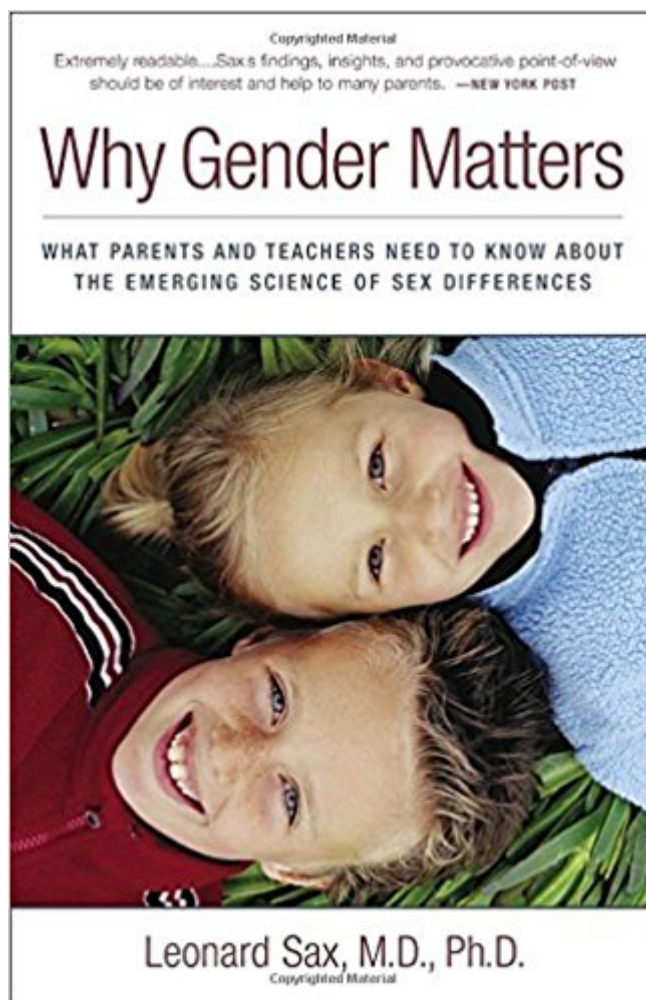


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# Why Gender Matters: What Parents And Teachers Need To Know About The Emerging Science Of Sex Differences



## Synopsis

Are boys and girls really that different? Twenty years ago, doctors and researchers didn't think so. Back then, most experts believed that differences in how girls and boys behave are mainly due to differences in how they were treated by their parents, teachers, and friends. It's hard to cling to that belief today. An avalanche of research over the past twenty years has shown that sex differences are more significant and profound than anybody guessed. Sex differences are real, biologically programmed, and important to how children are raised, disciplined, and educated. In *Why Gender Matters*, psychologist and family physician Dr. Leonard Sax leads parents through the mystifying world of gender differences by explaining the biologically different ways in which children think, feel, and act. He addresses a host of issues, including discipline, learning, risk taking, aggression, sex, and drugs, and shows how boys and girls react in predictable ways to different situations. For example, girls are born with more sensitive hearing than boys, and those differences increase as kids grow up. So when a grown man speaks to a girl in what he thinks is a normal voice, she may hear it as yelling. Conversely, boys who appear to be inattentive in class may just be sitting too far away to hear the teacher—especially if the teacher is female. Likewise, negative emotions are seated in an ancient structure of the brain called the amygdala. Girls develop an early connection between this area and the cerebral cortex, enabling them to talk about their feelings. In boys these links develop later. So if you ask a troubled adolescent boy to tell you what his feelings are, he often literally cannot say. Dr. Sax offers fresh approaches to disciplining children, as well as gender-specific ways to help girls and boys avoid drugs and early sexual activity. He wants parents to understand and work with hardwired differences in children, but he also encourages them to push beyond gender-based stereotypes. A leading proponent of single-sex education, Dr. Sax points out specific instances where keeping boys and girls separate in the classroom has yielded striking educational, social, and interpersonal benefits. Despite the view of many educators and experts on child-rearing that sex differences should be ignored or overcome, parents and teachers would do better to recognize, understand, and make use of the biological differences that make a girl a girl, and a boy a boy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the feminist conception of gender flexibility, no set rules apply: girls can play with trucks; boys can play with dolls. But pediatrician and psychologist Sax argues that our theories about gender's fluidity may be wrong and to apply them to children in their formative years is quite dangerous. Sax believes the brains of boys and girls are hardwired differently: boys are more aggressive; girls are more shy. And deliberately changing a child's gender—[in cases of intersex \(hermaphroditism\) or accident \(as in the case of David Reimer, who was raised as a girl after a hideous circumcision mishap\)](#)—can ruin a child's life. Sax also believes modern gender philosophy has resulted in more boys being given behavior-modifying drugs and more girls being given antidepressants. Much of his argument makes sense: we may have gone to the other extreme and tried too hard to feminize boys and masculinize girls. Sax makes a compelling argument for parents and teachers to tread lightly when it comes to gender and raises important questions regarding single-sex education, which he supports. His readable prose, which he juxtaposes with numerous interviews with school administrators, principals, scientists and others, makes this book accessible to a range of readers. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

When I was a college freshman, a male teaching assistant I sought help from told me matter-of-factly that women were not good at inorganic chemistry. Had I been armed with *Why Gender Matters*, about how biological differences between the sexes can influence learning and behavior, I could have managed an informed rejoinder to go along with my shocked expression. Sax—a pediatrician and psychologist in the Washington, D.C., area and founder of the National Association for Single-Sex Public Education—hopes to make today's teachers and parents aware of the science behind differences between girls and boys. He was inspired to write the book as more and more parents brought their young sons to his office in the mid-1990s, seeking

an evaluation for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Recalling studies that show boys do not hear as well as girls, Sax felt that for some of the boys he assessed, simply not hearing the teacher led to their inattention, a problem that could be solved by a front-row seat. Although Sax repeatedly makes clear these differences do not limit what either sex can achieve, he does contend they play a valuable role in determining the most effective methods for teaching, disciplining and understanding children and young adults. Using studies as well as anecdotes from his practice and visits to classrooms, he offers advice on such topics as preventing drug abuse and motivating students. In his chapter on aggression, Sax cites research that shows young male primates are much more likely to engage in rough-and-tumble play than females to illustrate why some amount of aggression in boys is normal and why banning "healthy" outlets such as dodgeball<sup>97</sup>;done in his local school district<sup>97</sup>;is misguided. The book is thought-provoking, and Sax explains well the science behind his assertions. His anecdotes are generally instructive, although some are a little too thin to support his points. Sax ends by offering several compelling arguments in support of same-sex education, such as analyses that find girls are more likely to study physics and boys are more likely to study literature in single-sex schools. But whether or not you agree with Sax, his volume is a worthy read for those who care about how best to prepare children for the challenges they face on the path to adulthood. Aimee Cunningham --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

There is nothing like this book: evidence in abundance - but you're not overwhelmed by citations, for he puts the references in as needed and in a way that's easy on the eyes. His conclusions are based on or with the support of the studies which he adduces. His writing style is sober but very entertaining.

Wonderful insights that have made me a much more patient teacher and added the challenge of a new approach to teaching girls and boys differently based on their developmental stages. The success is obvious and even parents have noticed and complimented me!

I was fascinated by the information in this book. It gives those who deal with children another perspective of children and their behavior. I wish I had read this book when I was still teaching young children. I think it is a great resource for parents and teachers alike. I purchased additional copies for parents of young children in my family. I would recommend it as a great go to resource for teachers, parents or anyone dealing with children and teens.

A must read for all. The basis for a lot of the current thinking and research.

Excellent book for anyone that has children or grandchildren. Will help to navigate the school system to ensure that your male children will benefit the most from their school experience.

I have reread this book several times as my children have gotten older. This book is one you need to hang on to and refer to friends. Every educator should take the time to read this.

must read if you teach GenX to Millennials

Everyone who has a son or daughter, or works with children should read this book. It is a science, research based book - not just the authors opinion, though he does use examples from his person experience. I love this book for better understanding the unique, deeply rooted gender differences that are being observed in the scientific world.

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