



GENDER-SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES IN PARENTING: EXPLORING ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER- RESPONSIVE PARENTING

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the topic of gender-specific differences in parenting and examines the importance of adopting a gender-responsive parenting approach. Parenting practices have traditionally been influenced by gender roles and stereotypes, with mothers and fathers often adopting distinct styles in raising their children. However, with changing societal norms and a deeper understanding of gender dynamics, the concept of gender-responsive parenting has emerged.

The article reviews existing research on communication patterns, discipline styles, and gender stereotypes prevalent in parenting. It highlights that mothers tend to emphasize emotional expression and communication, while fathers may lean towards more authoritative and disciplinary methods. Moreover, parents inadvertently perpetuate gender stereotypes by assigning gender-specific activities and expectations to their children.

The article underscores the significance of challenging traditional gender norms and promoting gender-inclusive parenting practices. By encouraging open communication and emotional expression in both boys and girls, parents can foster empathy and emotional intelligence. An equitable division of household and caregiving responsibilities is also crucial in nurturing healthier parent-child relationships.

The study emphasizes the need for parents to adopt a gender-responsive approach, breaking away from rigid gender stereotypes, and allowing children the freedom to express themselves authentically. By understanding and embracing gender-responsive parenting, we can create a more inclusive and accepting society where all children can flourish, irrespective of their gender. The article concludes with practical recommendations to help parents adopt gender-responsive parenting strategies effectively.

Keywords: Gender-Responsive Parenting

INTRODUCTION:

Parenting plays a crucial role in shaping a child's development, and societal norms and expectations often influence how parents interact with and raise their children. Traditionally, parenting roles have been defined by gender, with mothers taking on nurturing roles and fathers being associated with authority and discipline. However, in recent years, a growing body of research has challenged these traditional norms, highlighting the importance of gender-responsive parenting that considers the unique needs and experiences of both boys and girls.

Understanding Gender-Specific Parenting Practices;

Gender-specific differences in parenting are influenced by a combination of cultural, social, and biological factors. Stereotypes about gender roles and expectations play a significant role in shaping how parents perceive their children's behaviour and the methods they use to discipline and interact with them.

1. Communication and Emotional Expression:

Studies have found that mothers tend to emphasize emotional expression and communication in their interactions with children, particularly daughters. Mothers often encourage their daughters to discuss their feelings and emotions openly, fostering a sense of emotional intelligence. On the other hand, fathers may be



more inclined to engage in physical play with their sons, emphasizing physical expression rather than verbal communication.

2. Discipline Styles:

Fathers are often associated with a more disciplinary role, enforcing rules and boundaries. Their discipline may be firmer and less emotional compared to mothers. Conversely, mothers may use a more nurturing and empathetic approach, focusing on understanding the reasons behind their children's behaviour and discussing consequences.

3. Gender Stereotypes:

Parents can inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes by assigning specific toys, activities, or expectations based on the child's gender. For instance, parents might encourage girls to engage in activities perceived as feminine, such as playing with dolls or engaging in ballet, while encouraging boys to participate in activities traditionally seen as masculine, such as playing with trucks or engaging in sports.

Promoting Gender-Responsive Parenting

Recognizing the importance of gender-responsive parenting, researchers and experts have outlined strategies to encourage parents to adopt more gender-inclusive approaches:

1. Challenging Gender Stereotypes:

Parents should be mindful of the language they use and the activities they promote to their children. Encouraging boys to express their emotions and nurturing their emotional intelligence can help break the stigma around "boys don't cry." Similarly, encouraging girls to pursue activities traditionally seen as male-dominated can help expand their horizons and challenge gender norms.

2. Equitable Division of Labor:

Parents should strive for an equitable division of household and caregiving responsibilities. Sharing caregiving tasks can help fathers develop stronger emotional bonds with their children, while mothers can have more time for personal pursuits or career advancement.

3. Open Communication:

Fostering open communication and emotional expression in both boys and girls can help them develop healthy relationships and empathy towards others, irrespective of gender.

CONCLUSION

Gender-specific differences in parenting have been shaped by societal norms and expectations over time. However, as our understanding of gender evolves, it becomes essential to adopt a gender-responsive approach to parenting. By challenging stereotypes, promoting open communication, and encouraging equitable caregiving, parents can create an inclusive environment that supports their children's emotional and psychological well-being, regardless of their gender. Embracing gender-responsive parenting can contribute to fostering a more tolerant and empathetic society, where individuals are free to express themselves authentically.

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