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## The Social and Emotional Needs of Male Twice-Exceptional Students

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**Presenters:** Terry Neu, *Assistant Professor of Education at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT*

Rich Weinfeld, *coordinator of the programs for twice-exceptional students in Montgomery County Public Schools, MD*

**Summary:** Some facts about boys, taken from *A Fine Young Man: What Parents, Mentors, and Educators Can Do to Shape Adolescent Boys in Exceptional Men*, by Michael Gurian, (J. P. Tarcher, 1999):

- Make up the majority of GT/LD kids (90 percent in the experience of presenter Rich Weinfeld)

**Some books the presenters recommend for additional information:**

- *Reading Writing, and Gender*, by Goldberg and Roswell, 2002
- *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*, by Pollock, 1999
- *Connect: 12 Vital Ties That Open Your Heart, Lengthen Your Life, and Deepen Your Soul*, by Hallowell, 2001
- *Great Books for Boys*, by Odean, 1998

- Score lower than girls on national reading and writing tests
- Account for more than 2/3 of special education students
- Are less likely than girls to go to college and four time more likely to drop out of high school
- Five times more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD
- *A to Zoo* (a subject index to picture books, fiction, and nonfiction for pre- school through grade two), by Lima and Lima, 2001, 6<sup>th</sup> edition

Also, visit the website [Guys Read](#), which lists books that are "boy friendly."

Is it biology or environment? According to the presenters, it's probably both.

### **BIOLOGY**

- The female brain has more language development areas, and instruction today is more language based.
- Boys have a greater need for movement, which is not a part of most school time.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

- We socialize boys and girls differently, teaching males the "boy code" from an early age.
- Men account for only 16 percent of teachers.
- School is not receptive to boys' need for movement and hands-on experiential learning.

### **WHAT CAN WE DO?**

- Educate teachers about the differences and the need to approach students in different ways.
- Make sure boys have connections at school and home: adults, advisory groups, a role model or mentor, or a chance to be a role model.
- Create a shame-free environment.
- Find ways to communicate with boys, even when they don't openly

respond. Action talk is one way – doing something that involves movement and then starting a discussion. Give them space and time to open up.

- Allow boys to work in their areas of strength and incorporate movement, hands-on activities, alternate ways to demonstrate knowledge, and assistive technology.
- Start with boys' interests and build on them. Make room for "obsession," their passion for a certain topic.
- Broaden the circle of topics that are acceptable for reading and writing in school to include action, violence, and sports.
- Remember that boys like to start with generalization and then prove or disprove rather than build [an argument] step by step. Also, boys tend to like to criticize a book rather than say what they like.

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