

Must-Have Tips + Tools For Moms of Boys



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10 Tips For Raising Confident Boys

We live in an increasingly negative world and our boys are being bombarded with negative influences every where they look. But even through the negativity, there are things we can do to raise confident boys.

1. What children see, children do.

If you want to raise confident boys, you need to be a confident and positive role model. Boys imitate the types of behaviors they see in their parents and in the environment around them. They pay more attention to what we do than what we say. Boys will develop their outlook on life while they are small and that will affect everything about their future life. Their attitude will determine the kinds of people they choose to spend time with, the type of education and career they work towards and the types of values and morals they will find important. As parents we need to demonstrate the type of attitude that we want our boys to develop. Even when we think they aren't paying attention, they are patterning their lives after some of the things they see us do. That is pretty scary to me!



2. Help your sons find the right type of heroes.

Boys naturally love super heroes. Who wouldn't want to fly or have super-human strength? And while there are no real-life "super" heroes, there are many different types of examples out there of people that boys can consider heroes. We have sports "heroes" and "heroes" in the music and film industry. But, some of those heroes are not very positive role-models.

Our boys need to look for people who are kind and compassionate, who are service oriented and who focus their lives on values such as honesty and integrity. If our sons are not given heroes, they will find them on their own and if they are not inspired by the right types of people, they will be inspired by the wrong types of people. The people around us can build us up or tear us down.

3. Teach the value of hard work.

It's sad to me that our boys are being raised in an entitlement society. Too many boys grow up into men who feel entitled to the same successes that took others years to attain. It's the "I want it now" mentality. People sometimes feel like they deserve what others have but have no desire to put forth the effort to attain it. When boys learn that success doesn't happen overnight and that it can be a long process, they will realize the value of working hard towards their goals and will find greater satisfaction and confidence when reaching them.

4. Develop your son's imagination.

A good imagination helps to build self confidence as our sons imagine themselves becoming an astronaut landing on the moon, a fire fighter saving lives of people in need or even the President of the United States. They learn to dream about the future and look forward to becoming something "awesome!" (as my boys would say). As long as we don't step on their dreams, they can start to see that anything is possible and they become optimistic about their potential as adults. Why not make plans to go to the moon or become President? Others have done it so why not them? Imagine how much more effective a child who is encouraged to use his imagination will be down the road when he becomes an adult. It's those people who dare to dream who are changing the world.

5. Teach them to find humor in life.

Humor teaches our boys to not take life quite so seriously and can improve overall health. Laughter has been shown to decrease anxiety and fear, relieve stress and also add joy to life. Using humor attracts people to you and can help improve relationships and communication skills. Humor is almost always one of the personality traits of the most successful people. Having a sense of humor about life can help our children learn to look at things in a different way and can keep the challenges in life from becoming too scary or overwhelming.

6. Create a loving home environment.

To a child love is spelled TIME. Make sure you are spending quality AND quantity time with your boys. No one ever looks back on their life and wishes that they had spent more time at the office or more time on the internet or watching television. But I'm sure there are many people who look back at their lives and wish they had spent more time loving their children and providing fun and engaging activities that they could do together.

Our children can sense where our priorities are and if we don't make them a priority in our life they may feel that they are not important. If they don't feel important at home, where will they feel important? Find the things that interest your sons and spend time doing them together as a family.

7. Help your boys build a healthy self image.

Our world, in many ways, has become such a depressing place. People are often insensitive and rude and often don't care about the consequences of their actions or words. We need to remember to lift our boys up with kind words because we know that the world will be trying to bring them down. We often forget that boys are just as sensitive as girls when it comes to their self-image. A few kind words each day can have a huge impact on their sense of self-worth. We can't assume that they know how we feel and they need to hear it coming directly from us. Even as our boys get older and might act as though they want nothing to do with us, they secretly need to know of our approval and love for them. Letting our boys know that they can accomplish great things praising them for their accomplishments makes them feel more confident in their abilities and can help them develop positive self-esteem.

8. Teach your sons to communicate.

Teaching your boys good communication skills and really listening to what they have to say is essential to raising positive boys. Boys don't always like to open up about their feelings, but parents need to remember to positively communicate with each other and their boys each day. This might seem like a really simple concept but in today's world of rushing, texting and tweeting it can be hard to make good old-fashioned conversations a priority. Our boys need to see that we take time as parents to set aside all other distractions and give them our undivided attention. We need to ask them about their day and about what is going on in their lives and really take the time to listen to what they have to say. When they realize that their voice matters they feel like a more important part of the family.

9. Give security through discipline.

The subject of discipline often brings up very negative feelings and most parents have their own views of how to discipline their children. I am absolutely not an expert on this topic but I do feel that children need to have set limits and know what is and isn't acceptable. People generally think of discipline as a form of punishment but a synonym for discipline is education. The whole purpose of discipline should be to help develop our children into whole, well adjusted and well behaved adults. Children feel more secure when they are given reasonable limits in their lives and when they know and understand those limits. We should want our children to grow into adults who are disciplined enough to know what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and then have the discipline to learn and get things done. Anyone who has ever accomplished anything great had to have great discipline

10. Show real love.

What is "real" love? Real love means we work through our problems together and don't use words that would demean or insult our children just because we are in the heat of a moment. Real love means we don't expect perfection but that we expect them to do their best. Real love means accepting our children as unique individuals and teaching them how to build on their strengths and learn from their weaknesses. Real love means doing difficult things because we know what is best for our child even if everyone else is doing things differently.

Real love means looking at our children with our eyes focused on the type of person that they can ultimately become and not focusing on their shortcomings but believing that they can grow up to change the world. Raising confident and positive kids is not an easy task but real love can do what no other thing can. When I take the time to really focus on showing my children individual love I can see a huge difference in their attitude towards me and to their brothers. Showing genuine love is the most important factor in raising positive, confident boys in an increasingly negative world. As I look back over this list of tips for raising confident boys, it can seem somewhat overwhelming but with persistence and love on our part as parents we can begin to make small bits of progress in helping our boys live confidently as they grow into men.

Some of these 10 points are adapted from the book, "*Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World*" by Zig Ziglar, which I really enjoyed.

Potty TRAINING Boys: Advice from Moms of Boys!

Of all the responsibilities that parents have, potty training has to be one of the most dreaded. And if you are raising a boy, not only can it be frustrating, but also quite messy!

Watch for Potty Readiness

Starting the potty training process before your child is ready will only end in tears for your child and possibly for yourself. So before breaking out the potty chair and sticker charts, here are some of the signs that your child is ready to potty train.

Signs of Being Ready to Potty Train:

Your child may exhibit some or all of these.

- ❑ Can stay dry for longer periods of time
- ❑ Wakes up from nap dry
- ❑ Starts to “hide” when going to the bathroom and wants to be changed right away
- ❑ Tells you when they have a wet or dirty diaper
- ❑ Shows interest in others’ bathroom habits and may want to watch others or wear underwear like their siblings or parents
- ❑ Bowel movements become predictable and happen around the same time every day
- ❑ They are able to dress and undress themselves and pull pants up and down easily

Once they show signs of readiness, they also have to have the desire to potty train. This is where I struggled the most with my boys. Quite frankly, they just didn’t care if they had to sit in a wet or dirty diaper. So potty training for us, involved a lot of encouraging but also being patient. All of my boys were three when they potty trained but we did it without any messes or frustration. It just clicked one day for them.

For my boys, I would introduce the potty to them when they started showing some of the signs listed above. I would also take them shopping to purchase some new and “awesome” big boy underwear. (We made a HUGE deal of this!) And we also picked out a toy that sat up on the shelf in the bathroom until they were diaper free. And we used a potty chart that they could put a sticker on and earn a trip to get ice cream. I never forced them to go.



But, with each of my boys, it had to be their idea to be done with diapers. My oldest turned three and decided he was “too big” for diapers. He potty trained over night. The situation with my others was very similar. My youngest was pretty stubborn about going to the bathroom, even though he was able to. So I didn’t make a big deal out of it. I just let him know his toy was up on the shelf waiting for him to be done with his diapers and when he filled up his chart we could get ice cream. He didn’t seem to care much until I read him the book, *No More Diapers for Ducky!* He took his diaper off and was done with them. He pretty much potty trained over night as well.

What to Buy for Potty Training Boys

- ❑ Potty seat – You may want to purchase a potty seat when you first start. With my boys we used a potty seat that goes on the actual toilet . It worked great for them and then the mess can just be flushed. Score!
- ❑ Some type of reward – Help them get excited to earn a fun new reward when they are done potty training.
- ❑ Training Pants – Either cloth training pants or disposable training pants can help keep down the mess as your child learns. I only used them at night until they got the hang of staying dry.
- ❑ Potty Chart and Stickers – This may help to motivate them to go. My boys loved their sticker chart!
- ❑ Toilet target – I know a lot of moms that have put a toilet target inside the toilet bowl for their boys to aim at. Or I have heard of others who keep cheerios nearby the toilet and their boys throw one in before they go and use it as a target.

Advice for Potty Training Boys from Moms

Every child will have a different potty training experience so I asked my [Moms of Boys Community](#) and [The Joys of Boys Facebook Community](#) to share their best potty training tips. Here’s what other moms of boys had to say:

“Don’t Rush it. One day a light bulb will come on and they just get it. (And buy TONS of Lysol wipes.... Boys have BAD Aim!!!!)”

“I found trying to force potty training with my son was useless. We both stayed stressed out. So I finally decided to let him decide when he was ready. Sounds flaky I know but he trained himself with no stress a short time later.”

“Consistency is key, once you decide to potty train and they’re in underwear, keep them in underwear (with exception of nap and bed). Avoid pull ups and the potty seat. Find a seat that sits on the toilet. If they potty train on one of those plastic seats it’s another transition when they move to the toilet. Also, the summer is the best time because they’re wearing lighter clothing. And most importantly. .. be patient and make it as positive as possible!”

“We started my son after his second birthday, he is just now potty trained one year later. We rushed it! Won’t do that with my younger son! We will wait till he is three!”

“Don’t force it. When you notice yourself getting frustrated, step back and realize it’s not worth yelling and losing your temper. Learned the hard way.”

“Cloth diapers help tremendously. Our oldest potty trained at 22 months, our middle at 18 months and our youngest is 14 months and is starting to be highly upset as soon as he is wet/soiled in his cloth diapers. They really aren’t that bad, honestly.”

“Patience, patience, patience!!! Mine was so tough but ... it all of a sudden clicked!”

“My 2 boys started training at 2 years, they were fully trained (#1 & 2 in toilet) by the age of 3. Encouragement, constant reminding if they have to go potty. Making it a big deal when they go, (yay, you did it! Alright!)” helps as well.”

“I have 3 boys. Don’t make a huge deal out of it and they won’t either. For me charts and treats was overkill and it didn’t motivate them one way or the other. High fives and ‘good job’ were wonderful! Letting them pick out underwear was great too, no one wants to get ‘cool’ underwear dirty.”

“I waited til my son was ready, no fighting in this house. He sits when he goes for now. When he is ready to stand then we will start working on that.”

“They will do it on their own....no “training” needed.”

And if you are just at your wits end and just want to be done with diapers, I recommend *Potty Train in a Weekend* by Becky Mansfield. She shares her secrets on how she potty-trained her four kids in one weekend! Where was she when I was potty training!



For a list of books and recommended products for potty training your child, check out this post on TheJoysOfBoys.com!

How To Get Rid Of The "Boy Smell" In Your Bathroom

If you have boys, you know about the "Boy Smell" that can be found in your bathroom, even when freshly cleaned. Here are some solutions that have worked for me.

Grandma's All-Purpose Cleaner:

For everyday cleaning, I thought I'd share my Grandma's All-Purpose Cleaner with you. This is my go-to for everyday light cleaning and wipe down and it works just as well as store-bought expensive cleaners.

This cleaner is really easy to make and I use it a few times per week on the walls and tile in my bathroom. And it makes a gallon so I don't have to mix it up very often.

Ingredients:

- ❑ 1 Pint Rubbing Alcohol
- ❑ 1 tsp. Liquid Dish Soap
- ❑ 2 Tbsp Ammonia (You can even get Lemon-smelling Ammonia to give your bathroom a fresh smell.)

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients in a gallon jug. I do not use milk cartons because they will leak eventually. Find one that held water if you can.
2. Fill the jug with water and gently shake to mix everything together. (Don't shake too vigorously because the dish soap will bubble up a lot.)
3. Pour cleaner into a spray bottle and store the rest in the gallon jug. It will store for a long time.

A Natural Bathroom Cleaner to Get Rid of Boy Smell:

1. Make a mixture of Baking Soda and lemon juice (Freshly squeezed if possible). Start with around 3 Tbls of baking soda and add a little bit of lemon juice at a time until you have the consistency of pancake batter.
2. Spread the paste along the bottom of the toilet on the floor, behind the toilet seat, or anywhere else urine might splash. Let it set for 10-15 minutes.
3. When the time is up, spray the areas with white vinegar and watch it fizzle. When the fizzing is done, wipe it down with a damp cloth.

Easy and so effective! I like to use this in my grout around the toilet as well. Using these cleaning tips will help you get rid of the boy smell in your bathroom hopefully for good! Now if we can just get them to aim!!



How to Teach Your Son to Be A Gentleman

Is it possible in today's society to teach your son to be a gentleman? Yes, definitely!

You've heard the saying "Boys will Be Boys". In my experience, it is true...to an extent. But I don't believe it means that our sons are just creatures of instinct who can't learn manners or respect for others. I know that "Boys will be Boys" really does apply at times, and sometimes I just stare at my boys wondering what is going through their heads, but I hope I am teaching each of my sons how to be a gentleman.

It seems as though crude and rude is becoming more acceptable, but just because something is accepted as a societal norm, doesn't mean it is the way I hope to raise my boys. I want to start creating habits of good behavior while my sons are young so that they can see the importance of respecting other people as they grow.

Use table manners.

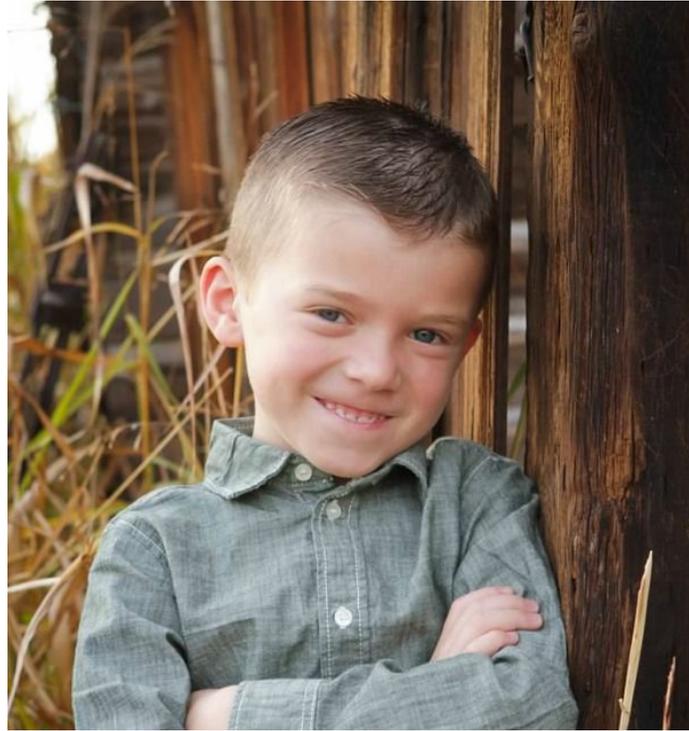
Let's start with the obvious! To be a gentleman, boys need to learn table manners. I'll be honest and say that this is something we struggle with at our home. But we are trying to teach our boys table manners such as chewing with their mouth closed (Seriously!), keeping bodily noises away from the dinner table, not reaching across the table for things but asking politely for food to be passed, using a napkin instead of a sleeve and not eating with their hands (You would think they would have learned by now). And, now that they are getting older, we also are teaching them to keep electronics turned off during family dinner and participate in family discussions. All of these things prepare boys for dating and being in professional situations. Teaching table manners takes time and daily reminders.

Have good work ethic.

I want to teach my boys how to work hard in life so that when situations come up to serve others, they are willing and able to do it. Too many youth (and adults!) don't want to be inconvenienced by hard work. I especially want them to be outside getting their hands dirty. When they are older, I hope they will work hard and be able to take on any responsibility given to them.

Be confident.

To be a gentleman, boys should learn to be confident. This is a struggle with a couple of my boys, but we are teaching them to look people in the eye and speak clearly. Also to shake hands when necessary and say nice to meet you. It is a big challenge for my older boys, but something that will help them out in life in the long run. To help them learn confidence in social situations, I give them a challenge when we are at church or when they are at school so interact with at least 2 adults and practice looking them in the eye and speaking up. It is a work in progress, but it is getting easier for them as they do it each week.



Show good sportsmanship.

My boys are involved in a lot of sports and we have seen some pretty poor behavior from many adults at games. Part of being a gentleman is learning how to win and lose graciously.

Watch for ways to assist others.

To be gentlemen, boys need to learn to offer assistance to others. I want them to learn to hold the door for someone, give up their seat on a bus, open the car door and hold the chair for their dates (when that time comes). I was completely shocked on a recent flight as I watched a young mother struggling to fold down her stroller before loading a plane while juggling a small baby, diaper bag, carry-on bag and other essentials. I was back in the line but watched as person after person walked by her and watched her struggle, never offering to help. A gentleman would have at least offered to help her fold her stroller up and carry her bags, even if they weren't comfortable helping with her child. By the time I reached her, the baby was crying and the mom was obviously frazzled. I offered to help with her bags and she was so grateful. Now I understand that kindness doesn't just have to come from a gentleman, but I couldn't believe that nobody offered to help her out. I want my boys to always be on the lookout for someone to help, even if it is inconvenient. Our society has become so selfish.

Learn by example.

I understand that not all boys have a father in the home, but I believe the best way to learn to be a gentleman is by following the example of someone who shows respect and generosity to others. That person might be a coach, teacher or leader from church. But having an example to follow, is a great way to teach your son to be a gentleman. And moms, if you are raising your sons alone, I applaud you for your hard work, love and devotion that you are giving as you strive to raise respectful and kind sons.

In a world where they say chivalry is dead, I hope to show that our sons can grow into strong, capable men who have learned respect, generosity, and confidence. It starts at home as we work to teach each son how to be a gentleman.

"Boys will Be Boys" And That is Okay!

Every night after I wrestle the last of my 4 boys into bed, my house is strangely quiet. It is always a stark contrast to just a few minutes before, when my house was filled with laughter, wrestling, and silliness.



My boys are really great kids. They are motivated and creative. They do well at school and make friends easily. They are also respectful to adults and treat people with kindness. But they are boys and it is in their nature to be a bit rough and loud. I have always had mixed feelings about the term, "Boys will be boys." Sometimes I feel that it implies that boys can't learn manners or respect for others and that they are creatures who only act out of impulse, which I know isn't the case just from watching my own sons and it should never be used to justify bad behavior. But, I also can't help but see that phrase in a positive light. "Boys will be boys" implies that boys are a little rough around the edges (aren't we all?) and that they are full of energy. (Is that bad?) I have found through personal experience that, regardless of what society thinks, "boys WILL be boys" and that is okay.

It makes me concerned to see that our society as a whole has shifted in the way that we think of boys. Instead of letting boys be the energetic, curious beings that they inherently are and providing ways for them to express their energy in a healthy way, we try to squash their enthusiasm to make them quiet and submissive. We take recess out of schools and then jump to medicate at the first hint of hyperactivity. We label boys as "wild" for having energy, but then we allow them to sit in front of electronic devices for hours at a time instead of providing creative outlets for their enthusiasm.

Our world today is very different from how it was in generations past. Gone are the days of staying out until dark riding bikes, or spending hours fishing with friends. Spontaneous baseball games don't happen like they used to and electronics have taken over the minds that once dug holes, just for the sake of digging holes or exploded things because it is fun to blow things up. [Kids are now even getting in trouble for playing too loudly OUTSIDE!](#) At least that story had an [exciting and surprising ending](#).

As a mother of boys, I never want to stifle my sons' curiosity or their unique personalities. I want them to spend time outside getting dirty, playing sports and catching bugs or lizards. I want them to build blanket forts and jump from couch to couch to avoid hot lava. I want them to spend hours riding bikes or playing night games with friends. I even want them to break out in spontaneous wrestling matches. In other words, I want them to be allowed to be energetic and curious without the world implying that those things make them bad. But, I will also teach them the appropriate times for those things.

Now, I understand that girls can be rowdy too and that not ALL boys are rambunctious and noisy. But my experience comes from raising my four boys. My boys are all very different. My oldest wasn't rowdy as a little kid. But, once we added a few brothers into the mix, things changed significantly. It always amazes me to watch what happens when you put a group of boys in the same room together. They think up things I would have never imagined and I often find myself wondering what is going on in their heads! In our home we have certain rules and boundaries that we have set that keep our house from turning into complete chaos (which could easily happen with 4 boys!) but I believe that allowing my boys to express their enthusiasm for life in fun and spontaneous ways will help them grow into mature, creative and confident men and that by helping them learn to direct their energy into something productive, there will be no stopping the amazing things that they do.

So bring on the pockets full of critters, bruised knees and grass-stained jeans. I'm so tired of feeling as though I have to apologize to the world for having boys or feeling as though I have to change them to fit some societal expectation. I'm no longer going to apologize for letting my boys be boys.

Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Video Games

Boys tend to love gaming, but is playing video games affecting their motivation and social skills? Here are some guidelines for appropriate use of video games.



We live in a world of technology. There is no escaping the fact that technology is everywhere and for our children, that means video games are everywhere. There has been a lot of debate lately on the effects of video games on our children and whether or not we should have technology limits and guidelines that our kids need to follow. It seems as though everyone has an opinion on what is best. Several recent studies have shown that videogames are helping to drive a growing epidemic of unmotivated boys and that there is a correlation between the amount of time spent playing video games and poor school performance.

According to research, boys play on average 13.4 hours of video games per week while girls average 5 hours. Researchers from Yale university have reported that playing violent video games leads directly “to aggressive behavior, aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, and cardiovascular arousal, and to decreases in helping behavior.” And researchers have found that playing violent video games is worse than watching violence on television because when a boy is playing a violent video game, he is the one inflicting death and destruction.

Dr Leonard Sax, author of *Boys Adrift: The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men* , talks about the negative effects that videogames are having on our sons and the guidelines we can set so that our boys use video games appropriately.

Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Video Games

1. **Look at the Content**

What is the video game rated based on the video game industry's rating system and what kind of content is your child viewing? According to Dr. Sax, video games rated "M" for mature, shouldn't be played by anyone under the age of 18 and just because something is T or E rated doesn't mean it is appropriate. Even cartoonish violence can have the same effect as the most graphic violent games.

2. **Limit Time**

Limit video game playing to 40 minutes on school nights and an hour on other days, after homework and other chores have been completed.

3. **Know Priorities**

Make sure your son has priorities outside of video games. Family should come first followed by schoolwork and friends. If your child is neglecting friendships outside of the gaming world or refusing to participate in family life because he is in the middle of a game, then his priorities are not in order.

4. **Other Constructive Outlets**

Give your son other outlets for his desire to compete. Some boys enjoy video games because of their desire to compete. Offer alternatives such as competitive sports or school team competitions. Most schools have different clubs that compete with other schools in the area.

5. **Help Them Understand Reality**

In a video game, you can walk away from the destruction you cause, but in real life you can't. Don't let the video game world become more real to them than the actual world.

6. **Watch for Obsession**

Obsession can be described as a loss of control. In some cases, a boy may know that he shouldn't be spending so much time playing video games, but he might not be able to stop. In situations like this, he needs help to overcome his obsession and to be able to bring his focus back to the things that are important in life.

Video games have become a part of life to many children, and by using these guidelines we can help our children to use video games appropriately and not have their gaming become an obsession or lead to antisocial or violent behavior.

How to Encourage Boys to Read

Do your boys struggle with reading? If so, you are not alone. It's a fact that boys don't read as much as girls. This reading gender gap is affecting boys' performance in high school and beyond. So how can we encourage boys to read?

Here are some quick facts about boys and that show why getting them to read is so important. According to a 2010 report by the [Center on Education Policy](#):

- ❑ Boys are falling behind girls in reading in every state and in every grade.
- ❑ Boys are more likely than girls to be placed in special education.
- ❑ Boys are more likely than girls to drop out of high school.
- ❑ Boys are less likely than girls to go to a university.

All of these things are tied to reading ability and as a mom of 4 boys, this is pretty scary! But there are some things we can do to encourage our boys to read.

1. READ TOGETHER

I started reading to my sons shortly after they were born. Even now we spend time reading together and I take that time to discuss what is happening in the stories we read. My boys are always excited to get one-on-one time with mom and reading with someone else helps them to pay attention to the book. When you start young, they grow up with a love of reading.

2. SLOW DOWN

One of my boys has one speed: FAST. It is hard to get him to sit down to read and then it is hard to keep him focused on what he is reading. It was while reading with my son that I realized he wasn't comprehending very much of what read. He was reading for speed and just wanted to get finished with chapters. I set time limits, instead of page requirements for him to read. That way, he isn't in a hurry just to finish a chapter so he can do something else. His reading skills have improved exponentially over the past year.

3. MAKE IT FUN – NO PRESSURE

I remember trying to force my oldest son to learn to read. I even checked out reading programs from the library and would make him sit while I tried to teach him. He hated it. I hated it. We were both unhappy. Once I took the pressure off, he learned to read easily. We loved reading the *I See Sam Phonics Books*. These were recommended by our first preschool teacher and I ordered the entire set. All of my boys have learned to read with these fun books and their silly characters. My boys never felt like they are being pressured. They actually loved seeing what shenanigans the characters would be a part of next.

4. GO TO THE LIBRARY

I started taking my boys to the library story time when they were toddlers. They had fun listening to stories and looking for new books. Now, they get excited to go to the library to choose out something new. My older boys even ask the librarians for suggestions of books they might like. Our library has a free summer reading program where kids earn prizes for reading, weekly story times geared towards different age groups and a book club for older kids.

5. GIVE BOOKS AS GIFTS

My grandma gave us a book for every birthday and every Christmas. It was those books that I enjoyed the most and anticipated. In order for boys to enjoy reading, books need to be readily available and they need to be exposed to a variety of different books.

6. CHOOSE READING MATERIAL THAT THEY ENJOY

I have always had the belief that as long as my boys are reading, then I don't care what they read (as long as the material is age appropriate). One of my boys went through a comic book phase. But he would sit and read comic books for hours. I was happy that he was reading. Find something that they are interested in and make it available to them.

7. BE INVOLVED IN SCHOOL EVENTS THAT ENCOURAGE READING

Our school has reading week once a year where students are encouraged to read as much as they can and take Accelerated Reading tests for comprehension. There are a lot of rewards and parties for their hard work and I know they can use parent involvement to help them out. I try to take my boys in early during the week so they can take A.R. tests before school.

8. BE IN CONTACT WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

If your child is struggling with reading or not wanting to read, his/her teacher is your best resource. Go to them with your concerns and they should be able to help you to work out a plan to help your child.

9. SET READING GOALS

If your child is hesitant to read, set some reading goals with them. I love that our school participates in the Accelerated Reading program. Children are encouraged to read and reach different A.R. goals where they are recognized by the school. Last year, my 3rd grader met his goal of getting 250 AR points and had his name put on a plaque in the school. That was a goal he has had for a couple of years and he was excited to meet it. But even at home, a simple reward for finishing a book or reading so many hours, can really encourage boys to read.

I love this quote and really believe it:



**"A good book
for a boy is
one he wants
to read."
James Moloney**

I asked my [Moms of Boys Community](#) for recommendations of the books their boys love to read and their suggestions are on my website.

[You can check out the list here!](#)

Feeding Boys: How to Keep Them Full!

I had heard rumors about it, but I didn't fully understand the amount of food that boys can eat, until I had four boys of my own. I feel as though I am constantly feeding my boys and it is hard to keep them full.

My boys seem like bottomless pits a lot of the time! Here are a few tips that have helped our family keep the boys feeling full and satisfied.

1. **Have quick, but filling foods on hand.** We are always on the go with sports, music lessons, scouts and all of the other events my boys are involved in. A lot of the time they are in the door for a few minutes before heading out. Have foods on hand that are filling for when you are on the go.
2. **Cut the Sugar.** When my boys come rushing through the door after school, it is very easy for them to run right to something sweet for an after-school treat. When kids consume too much sugar it causes a spike in blood sugar which will eventually result in a crash of energy as their blood sugar tries to level itself out. Opt for foods that are low in sugar and avoid sugary soda and juice. The sugar in drinks can really add up. Give them milk or water instead.
3. **Add Protein.** Protein helps to keep blood sugars stable and helps people to stay full longer.
4. **Look for foods that are high in Fiber.** Dried fruit, nuts, raw veggies, and high-fiber fruits are easy to add to any snack or meal and the fiber in them will help to stimulate a hormone in your brain that will make your kids feel full.
5. **Keep them Hydrated.** Our bodies confuse the feelings of hunger and thirst so often when we feel hungry we are actually getting dehydrated. Making sure our kids drink enough water is important to helping them feel full and have more energy.



You Might Be Raising A Boy If...

If you are raising boys, you know that they are full of surprises. I've asked moms of boys from all across the globe to answer the question, "You Might Be Raising a Boy if..." and gathered all of their hilarious responses.



YOU HAVE A LOT OF "POTTY PROBLEMS"...

You Might Be Raising a Boy if...

- ❑ You have to have "family meetings" about how pee got on the ceiling. | Dayna from [Lemon Lime Adventures](#)
- ❑ You've said "Don't pee on your brother" more than once! | Karen from [Raising Little Superheroes](#)
- ❑ You've ever fallen into your toilet in the middle of the night. | Kelly from [3 Boys and a Dog](#)
- ❑ You purposely keep an empty Gatorade bottle or two in your car! | Angela from [Rockin Boys Club](#)
- ❑ You're in the car and your son has to pee and you immediately think "where's an empty bottle or coffee cup". | Lisa D
- ❑ You have to check the toilet seat for wet spots before sitting down. | Melissa Jean S.
- ❑ If you have more plungers than toilets! | Melissa S.
- ❑ Bathroom smells of wee even though you clean it twice a day...you also know to avoid all puddles on the floor. Before taking a bath you have to empty it of Star Wars, Avengers and Spiderman bath toys | Mal M.

AND POTTY LANGUAGE!

- ❑ You find the word BUTT on your van side mirror in the morning. | Tabitha from [Meet Penny](#)
- ❑ The Valentine's day card you received from your children had the words "poop", "pee", and "butt" written in it multiple times | Adrienne S. Las Vegas
- ❑ Boogers and peepee are words used at your dinner table... | Mary R.



FARTS AND BODILY NOISES ARE A REGULAR PART OF YOUR DAY

You might be raising a boy if...

- ❑ You often hear the words “wait for it...wait for it...” at the dinner table then hear the eruption of laughter as he farts. | Erin from [Putting Socks on Chickens](#)
- ❑ He toots and laughs hysterically about it. | Vanessa from [Mama's Happy Hive](#)
- ❑ If you have to say “if you keep pushing that hard, you’re going to poop yourself” numerous times a day, during their never ending fart wars. | Deanna D.
- ❑ Burping contests after dinner are the nightly norm. | Nina S.

NUDITY IS NORMAL

You Might Be Raising a Boy if...

- ❑ You see naked butts way more now than you did in college... | Leah from [The Dog's a Boy Too](#)
- ❑ You’re constantly telling them to take their hands out of their pants. | Orlena from [Snotty Noses](#)
- ❑ You have a ground rule for dinner that reads: must wear clothing. | Marnie from [Carrots are Orange](#)
- ❑ You have to remind your kid that stickers are for paper. Not your penis. | Brett from [This Mama Loves](#)
- ❑ You’ve been told by a pediatrician, “Get used to it Mama, he’ll be playing with it for the rest of his life and no, he will not pull it off.” | Elizabeth B. -Palm Coast, FL
- ❑ You have to ask if he put on a clean pair of underwear after his shower. | Diane from [PhilZenia](#)

YOUR PANTRY AND FRIDGE ARE ALWAYS EMPTY

You Might be Raising a Boy if...

- ❑ You make it out of the grocery store with only one cart of food, and you consider that a good shopping trip. | Kara from [The Joys of Boys](#)
- ❑ What you used to spend on groceries seems like pocket change compared to the amount you’re dishing out these days...and they’re not even teenagers yet! | Ana from [Mommy's Bundle](#)
- ❑ Someone comes into your kitchen asking for a pre-dinner sandwich at 5pm. | Shannon
- ❑ There is no food in the cupboards even after you have been shopping. | Jen from [Mum in the Madhouse](#)

LEGO, SUPERHEROES AND HOT WHEEL, OH MY!

Boys have a lot of STUFF and you will find it in the most random places! You Might be Raising a Boy if..

- ❑ You cannot eat, sleep, bathe, or leave the house without some sort of “superhero accessory”. | Felicia M Sacramento
- ❑ You have to watch your step in the shower in the morning because of all the hot wheels cars under your feet. | Kate from [Kitchen Floor Crafts](#)
- ❑ Have more cars inside your house than there are in the entire parking garage at the mall. | Erika from [Pray Species](#)
- ❑ You learn that family movie night has to include superheros, crude humor or something that blows up — an “No kissing!” | Jacquie from [KCEdventures](#)
- ❑ Your vocal chords hurt by midday from doing “bad guy voices.” | Kate from [Nourishing Little Souls](#)
- ❑ You have enough LEGO to open a store. | Gina from [East Coast Mommy](#)
- ❑ When you pull back the covers on your bed and find this. | Cindy A.
- ❑ You wake up to a sword and Batman mask next to your bed! | Thaleia from [Something 2 Offer](#)
- ❑ You find legos, Pokemon cards and little green army men in your wash. | Rachael from [Adventures in Wonderland](#)
- ❑ If hot wheels and Legos are the main decor in your living room. | Jennifer V.
- ❑ You have to set up rules that all sports gear’s put in the trunk, before entering the car. | Beth from [iGameMom](#)
- ❑ You empty your pockets full of rocks, toy cars, sticks and dirt when you’re doing the laundry! | Niki from [Play and Learn Everyday](#)
- ❑ Your hallway is a minefield of Legos. | Carolina from [30 Minute Crafts](#)
- ❑ You empty your purse and find a bunch of cars and action figures. | Tanya A., Chula Vista

THEY LOVE THINGS THAT VROOM AND ROAR!

You Might Be Raising a Boy if...

- ❑ You know the name of more dinosaurs than you did when you studied them at university as well as the correct way to pronounce them. | Cerys from [Rainy Day Mum](#)
- ❑ You learn more about vehicles, dinosaurs, sharks than you ever thought you’d know by reading his favorite books over and over. | Christina from [There’s Just One Mommy](#)
- ❑ You get excited & yell out every time you pass a construction site...even if you’re alone. | Megan from [HEN Family](#)
- ❑ He has more transport mode words than anything else in his vocabulary by age 2. | Annabelle from [Piri-Piri Lexicon](#)



WRESTLING, ROUGH PLAY AND DARE-DEVILS

You might be raising a boy if...

- ❑ There's typically a blanket fort in the living room with a wrestling match going on inside! | Kara from [The Joys of Boys](#)
- ❑ Hearing the words "hey, watch this" send you running to the source!! | Kelli from [3 Boys and a Dog](#)
- ❑ You have to tell your kids they are not allowed to jump off the roof when they have friends over. | Chris from [Campfires and Cleats](#)
- ❑ You've had to explain that yoga is not a contact sport. | Erika from [Pray Species](#)
- ❑ You've implemented a "no wrestling before breakfast" rule at your house. | Melissa from [Fireflies and Mudpies](#)
- ❑ You have given up on the couch is not for jumping rule and have been to the ER more than once for either concussions or stitches. | Amy from [Umbrella Tree Cafe](#)
- ❑ Fist bumps are a natural celebration response. | Tanya S. Tennessee
- ❑ You're going nonstop all day. I work from son up to son down. | Brittany L.
- ❑ Wrestling is the first suggestion for "what game should we play" | Teresa R.
- ❑ You feel more like a jungle gym than a mom some days. | Megan T
- ❑ Their first game was "jump on daddy". | Niola McLean
- ❑ You have a speed pass at the ER. | CJ B.
- ❑ Your "mom of girls" friend tries to warn you that your son is jumping out of her daughter's crib like Spider-Man and you just shrug and say "he'll be fine" | Ashlee M. San Diego
- ❑ Busted knees and elbows are a regular weekly occurrence but he's actually crying because I said he couldn't go back out and play for a bit. | Yacenia W.
- ❑ There are holes in the knees of every single pair of their blue jeans. | Amanda from [Dirt and Boogers](#)
- ❑ Every pen in the house is dismantled and repurposed as a screwdriver. | Menucha from [Moms and Crafters](#)
- ❑ You have to buy new tennis shoes every 7 or 8 months because the old ones are worn out. | Mae from [Outdoors Mom](#)
- ❑ Your floors are covered in mud tracks 5 seconds after you cleaned them. | Krystal P.
- ❑ The only unbroken crayons left in your coloring box are pink. | Denise from [STL Motherhood](#)



what Moms Of Boys Know

I don't think anyone is truly prepared for what is in store when they become a parent for the first time but for a mom to boys it may seem like you have been zapped onto another planet. How can these little people be so busy or so messy ALL the time? There is no manual that can possibly prepare you to raise boys but here are a few things all moms of boys learn from on-the-job experience that can help others understand a bit more what our life is like.



MOMS OF BOYS KNOW:

1. That no matter how hard you try, you will never understand what goes on inside their little heads that makes them want to destroy everything that comes in their path.
2. That fighting and playing sound a lot alike! And both are VERY loud!
3. That no topic of conversation is off-limits and that they will speak their minds to anyone at anytime, often leaving you red-faced and apologetic.
4. That one of the mysteries of the world is how a freshly bathed boy can walk outside for 2.5 seconds and come back in smelling like a wet dog.EVERY.TIME!
- 5.That everything and anything will be turned into a gun or a sword.

MOMS OF BOYS KNOW:

6. That you must ALWAYS check pockets before washing clothes. [Little boys are hoarders](#) and carry their best finds in their pockets.
7. That little boys have their own inside jokes and one little phrase or saying will be repeated over and over and they will giggle for hours.
8. That a cardboard box is better than any expensive toy you can buy them.
9. That in the eyes of little boys, couches are ships and carpet is either hot lava or crocodiles.
10. That to little boys there is only one food group: pizza!

MOMS OF BOYS KNOW:

11. That firemen, policemen, “Army Men” and astronauts are the COOLEST people in the world and all little boys want to be one at one point in their lives .
12. That the strongest forts in the world are made from blankets and pillows.
13. That little boys are born with a natural instinct to BURN things.
14. That little boys are too busy to inconvenience themselves with things such as properly “aiming” into the toilet and they’ll do their business just about anywhere.
15. That the end of every day it will seem like you have just survived a hurricane and after the boys are settled in bed you will slowly walk out to assess the damage.
16. But most of all, moms of boys know that there isn’t anything that compares to the love a little boy has for his mommy and that at the end of the day the hugs, kisses, cuddles and “I love you’s” make up for everything they put us through and though we might constantly feel exhausted we wouldn’t trade a single sticky kiss, smudged fridge, fingerprinted window, or hurricane-stricken living room for anything.

How to Get Rid of Stinky Feet and Shoes

I have boys. Boys smell. A LOT! But there are a few things we can do to help get rid of stinky feet and shoes.

The one thing that has been surprising to me as a mom of boys, is how smelly they can get. They can be freshly bathed one minute, go outside for 30 seconds and come in smelling like a wet dog. And their feet can get so smelly, especially when they get involved in sports and are sweating a lot. It gets worse as they get older. Here are some natural remedies that will help your kids (or anyone in the family) get rid of stinky feet and shoes.



Freeze Stinky Shoes

Put smelly shoes into a large freezer bag and place in the freezer overnight. The cold will kill the bacteria that are causing their shoes to stink.

Soak Inserts

If the shoes have removable inserts, soak the inserts in vinegar and water. Use 2 parts vinegar to 1 part hot water. Soak for a few hours and then let them dry. The vinegar is a natural disinfectant and will kill the bacteria in the shoes.

Baking Soda and Essential Oils

Mix a few tablespoons of baking soda with your favorite essential oil such as Lavender Essential Oils (essential oil is optional but makes shoes smell better). Sprinkle into the shoe and spread evenly over the bottom of the shoe. Leave overnight and then tap excess baking soda into the garbage can. You could also fill up a nylon or thin sock with baking soda and essential oils and tie it off. Leave inside a shoe overnight and then remove. The baking soda absorbs the smell, making your shoes fresh. You can use it a few times before making a new one.

Use Tea Bags

Place Spicy Tea Bags such as mint, orange spice or gingerbread into shoes anytime the shoe is off.

Use Lavender

Rub Lavender Essential Oils on your feet every morning before putting your shoes on. This will keep your feet from getting sweaty and stinky and will also help to deodorize your shoes.

Vinegar Foot Soak

If you or your kids have really stinky feet, soak the feet in a bath of apple cider vinegar or plain vinegar. Add 1/3 cup of vinegar to a bowl of warm water. Soak feet for 10-15 minutes a couple of times per week to keep smells down.

10 ways to Bond with Your Son

Building a strong relationship with our children is so important. Here are 10 ways to bond with your son that will help you stay close as he gets older.

It has been exactly 12 years since I became a mom of boys. When I only had one or maybe two boys, spending time bonding with them individually wasn't that difficult. But now that we have added two more to the family, I really have to make a conscious effort to nurture my relationship with each of my boys in a way that is individualized to them because they are each so different.

1. BE IN THE MOMENT

Thanks to modern technology, the world is literally at our fingertips. Computers and other electronics have become such a large part of our lives and the lives of our kids, that we can't imagine getting by without them. But, the constant stream of information into our minds often leaves us in a state of perpetual distraction. Make a plan as a family to unplug at a certain time each night. Spend that time discussing the day, playing games, going outside, etc. Live in the moment, without the commotion of the online world.



2. GET LOST IN A BOOK TOGETHER

Books take you on adventures to far-off places. Why not experience those adventures with your son. Find an exciting book that he enjoys and read it together out loud. Take the time to stop and ask questions as you read. You might be surprised to hear your sons' interpretation of the story.

3. GO FISHING

Spend time at the lake in nature fishing. It's amazing what your children will tell you and it is a great time to get to know them on a deeper level. Plus, it is cheap entertainment.

4. COOK UP SOME FUN IN THE KITCHEN

From the time my boys could stand up on a stool, they have been helping me in the kitchen. Some of my favorite bonding moments have happened over pancake flipping and cookie decorating. I learned a long time ago that the memories are well worth the mess and my boys are learning life-skills that they will need when they leave the house and are on their own.

5. LET HIM TALK

Boys are often introverted creatures when it comes to sharing the details of their day. I try to provide alone time with each of my boys where they can talk and I can genuinely listen without distraction. This might be before bed as we say goodnight, on a walk around the block or just driving to and from school, sports or music lessons. To really bond with your son, turn off the radio, shut down the 1,000 to-dos running through your head, and just listen to what he has to say.

6. SHARE POSITIVE WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

The words we say to our sons really do stick and sometimes we forget that our son's self-esteem might be fragile. We expect them to be tough, which often causes them to hold back their emotions. Build your relationship with your son by telling him positive things about himself on a daily basis. Make a big deal out of his accomplishments and let him know how proud you are of him. A favorite quote of mine says: "Parents need to fill a child's bucket of self-esteem so high that the rest of the world can't poke enough holes to drain it dry." – Alvin Price

7. BECOME THE STUDENT INSTEAD OF THE TEACHER

From the moment our children are born, we begin to teach them new things. Flip-flop roles for a bit and let your son teach you about his interests. Does your son love sports but you don't have an athletic bone in your body? Have him teach you the basics of his favorite sport. Is the language of Minecraft completely foreign to you? Spend some time building an online amusement park and learning all about Creepers and Enderman. Your son will love that you took the time to learn about his interests and it let him know that if something is important to him, it is important to you.

8. PLAY!

Our children first learn about the world through play. Just because you are an adult does not mean that you can't be silly, get messy and a little bit crazy. If you are a parent to boys then you know that they love to be loud and a bit rambunctious. They would be thrilled if you join in the fun with them. Get out the LEGO pieces, build a blanket fort, have a dance party in the kitchen, or fingerpaint a masterpiece. These are the moments your kids will remember and cherish the most.

9. PASS NOTES

Start a fun tradition of leaving little notes on your son's pillow. You might even want to have a journal that you share and write little notes back and forth to each other. Your children might not tell you everything that is on their mind, but you will be surprised at how much they will write down. Plus, not all boys enjoy writing. This gives them a reason to write and express themselves.

10. ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH MOM AND DAD

If you have more than one child, chances are it is hard to spend quality time with each child alone. Set aside some time each week to spend with your children individually. Take them out on a [Mother and Son date night](#). See what interests them and go out and do it together. I am always amazed at the things my boys tell me when they are alone without their other brothers.

I asked moms from our [Moms of Boys community](#) and [The Joys of Boys Facebook page](#) to answer how they bond with their boys. I love their responses below:

“My oldest son is 11 and is not into sports at all. I play some video or board games with him, go to the movies, arcade, etc. My son loves to read so we go to the bookstore on our date nights or sometimes even just the library.”
– Mindy G.

“My 2 year old and I stop and watch equipment at construction sites. We have even put the hatch up, grabbed some snacks, and “tailgated.”
–Susan S.

“We play videogames together! Everyone has a blast.”
–Amy R.

“We let our son play tackle football this year...which I know nothing about. He is a quiet boy that doesn’t ever say what he is thinking or feeling so it has been fun watching the game footage together and asking him questions. It is the most I have gotten out of him in years and I love having something that he knows more about that he can explain to me.”
–Chandee N.

“We like our weekend hikes as a family, take turns letting them cook dinner with us, and love supporting them in athletics.”
–Jeanie K.

“This may sound strange, but my oldest who is 13 loves staying at hotels, so he and I do little staycations in town and swim, and stay up late and watch movies and get room service and play games. It has really helped us bond.”
–Melodi S.

“I am a single mom & so my eldest is the man of the house (he’s 16). He helps with the ‘manly chores’, helps with his brothers homework, just helps me a ton! I think we bond over keeping this house running smoothly. Good or bad, right or wrong: I depend on him so much. And that is something we can discuss at the end of the day. What’s going good, what needs improvement....like a well oiled machine.”
–Kathrene W.

“I love playing catch with my 10 year old. I’m not good but he puts up with me! There’s always lots of laughs. I love that he’ll ask me to play catch with him.”
–Loni T.

“I think the biggest thing, is to let them know you care. Ask them how things are going. Let them know they can confide in you. Spend time with them having fun and being silly. Support them in their interests. Give them responsibility and reward them, it lets them know they are important.”
–Natalie L.

10 Assumptions We Should Stop Making About Boys

One of the things I have learned from raising 4 boys is that each child comes into this world as a completely unique person with their own personality and interests. But, I have found that there are several generalizations and assumptions that people make of boys.



My boys are as different as they could possibly be. I have boys who are reserved, and a boy who lives for attention and makes friends with everyone. I have boys who are athletic and a boy who would rather read. I have seen that even within the same family, kids are born with unique identities and we need to stop assuming that all boys are the same.

Here are some assumptions that we should stop making about boys.

1- ALL BOYS ARE ATHLETIC

One huge misconception that people have about boys is that all boys live for sports. Newsflash! Not all boys like sports. My oldest son loves sports and would play every sport under the sun if I would let him and if time and money allowed, but my other boys are really selective of which sports they want to play or if they want to play any at all. Now, I will say that I think sports are great for both boys and girls. I lived for softball when I was young and I've even written about [The Benefits of Playing Sports](#), but not every child likes sports and that is okay. If a boy doesn't like sports, there is nothing wrong with him! We should help our children to develop the interests and talents that they have, not the ones we think they should have.

2- BOYS NEED TO BE TOUGH ALL THE TIME

Research shows that boys are just as vulnerable and sensitive or even more so than girls and we need to stop diminishing their emotions by telling them things like, "Man up", or "Take it like a Man." They are not men, they are boys, and when we minimize the emotions that they are feeling they might learn to hold them in and may have problems expressing themselves later on in life. It's okay for boys to show emotion and it is okay for them to be sensitive. We should be encouraging our boys to work through their emotions and express them in a healthy way.

3-ALL BOYS ARE ROUGH AND TUMBLE

Not all boys love to play rough. My oldest son was never aggressive and would much rather build something cool than wrestle/play with other kids. My third son has always been an energetic kid and loves to play rough. It is fun for him to get down and wrestle. He always has scratches, bruises, etc but, I have had to explain to him that not all kids like to play rough. Having four boys has made me realize just how different each boy can be.

4- “BOYS WILL BE BOYS”

One of the main types of comments I get on my blog is that people appreciate that I can show the “good” side of raising boys and that boys are not just little hellions who can’t control themselves and who destroy everything on contact. Even the most energetic of boys can learn what is acceptable behavior and learn to be respectful of house rules and other people’s property. Boys can be taught manners and common courtesy and definitely can learn to control their “wild tendencies” if they have them.

5-BECAUSE MY SON DOESN’T SAY MUCH, HE MUST BE SHY

I consider myself an outgoing introvert. I love people and I love socializing, but I can only take so many people at a time before I need my space. A couple of my boys are the same way. They aren’t shy, but they just might not be comfortable with people that they don’t know being in their space. Now, because I know the feelings they experience in those types of moments, I have coached them on how to be polite, even if they are uncomfortable, and they are improving as they get older. When they were younger, even extended family dinners were a nightmare for us because they would get very overwhelmed with people. But, that doesn’t mean they are shy and people constantly telling them that they are can make them feel as though something is wrong with them.

6-IF A BOY PLAYS WITH A DOLL, IT WILL AFFECT HIS GENDER IDENTITY

I will never understand the assumption that letting a boy play with a doll could somehow affect his gender identity. My husband is very hands-on with my boys and I want my boys to be like him when they have their own children. Each of my boys played with a doll at one time or another and they loved to dress, feed, and push them in a stroller or swing. Normally this came right before or after I had a baby and they saw me and my husband doing those things with their brothers. Playing with dolls will not change their gender identity and teaching boys to be nurturing is a good thing.

7-ALL BOYS LIKE TO BE DIRTY

This is definitely not true! I have two who love being dirty and I have two who would flip out if their hands had a little bit of dirt on them when they were younger. I still remember a visit to the beach when one of my boys was about 3 year old. He had a miserable time because he hated getting the sand on him. Some boys like things clean and some don’t mind getting right in and rolling in the dirt. My youngest loves to make “angels” in the dirt since we don’t have snow. He would live in a dirt pile if I let him, but that doesn’t mean all boys like being dirty.

8-IF YOU ARE RAISING ALL BOYS, YOUR FAMILY CAN’T BE COMPLETE OR MOMS WITHOUT GIRLS MUST BE SO SAD

I’ve already written about this topic in my post, [Yes, I’m Raising Boys and No, I’m Not Sorry!](#) I do not understand where the idea comes from that a mom of all boys is spending all of her days disappointed and longing to have a girl. Now, I understand that some moms of all boys may feel disappointment about not having a girl, but I am yet to meet a mom who would give one of her kids back in exchange for a child of the opposite sex. Never assume that moms of all boys are somehow feeling that their family is incomplete. I love my boys and wouldn’t trade them for anything and I would never want them to think that they are somehow not enough because they are boys.

9-BOYS AREN'T AS SMART, COOL, FUN, ETC AS GIRLS.

You don't have to look any further than pop-culture to see that boys are portrayed as less than girls in terms of smarts, wittiness, popularity, etc. Now, I am thrilled that there are wonderful movements out there that are working to empower girls, but can't we empower girls without putting down boys? If you look at many of the popular shows among tweens and teens, you will see that the girls are often portrayed as popular, funny, smart, etc while the boys are the class clown, the nerd or the joke of the show. We should be just as concerned about a boy's self-esteem as we are that of girls.

10- BOYS WILL ALL GROW UP, LEAVE AND NEVER COME BACK

I know that I am not at the point of life where my boys will be moving out any time soon (thank goodness) but one thing I hear over and over is how I won't have anyone to take care of me when I am old because all boys move out and never look back. Luckily I have good examples in my life to show me that this doesn't have to be true. I watched my own father serve and take care of his parents everyday until they died and I watched as my mom treated them as she would her own parents and how they embraced and loved her as their own. So, even though I don't have experience in this subject yet, I have hope that we will stay a close family as they get older, even if we are separated by distance.

I think it is safe to say that boys, just like girls, are all different and we need to stop making assumptions about how they "should" be. I hope that I am teaching my boys to be confident in the things that make them unique and that society can't determine their interests or the way that they should live their lives.

Things to Teach Your Son Before He Leaves the House



As a mom, the task of raising sons can be a bit overwhelming. It seems as though there are so many things to teach boys before they are grown. My boys are very different than I was as a child and they each have their own set of unique challenges. They act differently and respond differently to problems.

The #1 thing that moms mentioned that they want to teach their sons was respect for others and themselves. Being able to have respect for other people and to not see themselves as the center of the universe is really important to moms.

“If I had to pick one thing I’d say to be a gentleman, to show respect to everyone and everything. In society today I think it’s becoming a lost art, but it’s so important.” -Shawnda W.

“I want my boys to know how to treat and respect women, how to be good husbands and fathers. I want them to know that their sons will learn these same things from them.” -Kimberly P.

*“With the way I see people treat people these days, I hope to teach him to have respect not only for others but for himself!”
- Kathleen*

“I want to teach him how to treat a woman, in every sense. Being kind and loving and faithful, the provider, helping with the housework and the children... I want to teach him to be a good man” - Andrea R.

“How to respect a woman, how to be good husbands and fathers. How to help with housework (this is not just a woman’s job!!)” – Ashley S.

“How to treat a woman, be a good husband and father..and that NO JOB is “not a man’s job”. You can pick up a mop and bucket, it won’t hurt you..I promise.” – Kristin M.

“To respect themselves and have their own opinions and beliefs, even if they aren’t the same as my own. I also want them to learn to be amazing husband’s and fathers, just as theirs was to them.” – Tiandra S.

“Respect. Everything in life boils down to it. If you have respect for yourself and others than most everything else will fall into place. I’m struggling right now to teach my 13 year old that his actions affect other people. Everything he does affects someone. So to me it’s all about respect!” – Nikki M.

” I want my boys to leave the house knowing they should always treat a woman how they treat me, with love, respect, and kindness.” -Lauren M.

“I’ve taught all of my boys several things. Never hit women. Never call her names, get in her face, don’t put her down. Make her laugh when she’s sad and when she’s happy, realize what it takes to keep that smile.” Tabatha L.

TEACH KINDNESS TO YOUR SONS

Teaching kindness came in a close second to respect and I think they go hand in hand. If you have respect for other people, you will automatically want to be kind to them.

Here’s what the moms had to say about kindness:

“I want to teach them that it’s cool to be kind to others. Say please and thank you. My oldest is really good at letting someone know when they have hurt him but forgives with a hug.” -Taylor A.

“I hope they will lend their big, loud, strong voices to those who are silenced or whose voices are weaker and ignored. To stand up when they see injustice being done- because as white, middle class, educated men they have the unearned privilege that their voice will carry the furthest and hold the most weight: so use it to lift others up.” – Allana R.

“I hope to teach them to be kind and always help others.” -Kristen H.

“To be kind and thoughtful, you can never have too many friends. Everyone has something to offer, give them a chance.” -Laura S.

“I want my boys to be kind. Above all, no matter what they do in this life. Kind to women, kind to animals, kind to their own kids, kind to everyone they come in contact with. Obviously there’s so many more things I want for them, but without kindness, what’s it all worth?” – Aimee H.

“Treat others how you want to see your family be treated.” – Kim J.

“Love is reflected in Love.” – CJ B.

“How to be a good man, husband, and father. Why? Because there are too many mean people in this world. I want him to be as kind, non-judgmental, and open minded as his parents are so he can be a good person. He needs to be a good husband so he can have a happy marriage and know how to treat his wife with respect... He needs to know how to raise his own children and treat them with love in order for them to grow into beautiful people.”

“Think before you speak. The tongue is the strongest muscle you have and can do the most damage.” – Haley L.

TEACH IMPORTANT LIFE SKILLS AND HARD WORK

Beyond kindness and respect, we want our boys to be able to DO things when they leave the house. They need to be able to manage their money, as well as cook and clean. And learning to work hard to help provide a good life for their families is equally important.

Here’s what our moms said:

“I want them to be able to cook for themselves and do the laundry.” -Eireann G.

“I want to equip them for the financial road ahead... I feel like finances aren’t spoken enough about and we aren’t educating our young on how to start out successful instead of trying to recover in the future and begin again.

**I sure wish I understood 10 years ago, what I am just learning now!” – Vanessa M.*

*“How to run a household. I want him to be able to help his wife with the cooking, cleaning, and babies. His wife deserves an amazing husband like I have. I think that translates into how to treat a woman and be a thoughtful person in general.”
-Holly J.*

“Personal accountability. I would also like to teach them to work hard and to put forth effort in all they do.” – Casey O.

“If you like to eat, you better learn to cook. If you like clean clothes, you better learn how to wash them. If you like money, you better work hard to earn it and learn to take care of it. If you like your friends, be a good one to them (and if you don’t like them find new ones whose values align with yours). And no matter how old you are, mommy kisses never wash away and will be with you always.” – Mara K.

TEACH SONS TO LOVE THE LORD

Having a strong relationship with the Lord was the most important thing that many of our moms want to teach their sons. When asked the #1 thing they want to teach their sons, the answered:

“To love, honor and respect the Lord and hide His truth in their hearts!!” Pauline J.

“I want to teach them to put their Heavenly Father first in everything! – Rosemary F.

“I want them to learn to love and obey God above all else. Everything else in life comes from a loving relationship with God; kindness, humility, respect, a servant heart, etc!” -Tamara K.

“To be a man of God. I pray we are raising our boys to know and love God so they will have eternal life.” -Jessica L.

“To know Jesus Christ would be my number 1.” -Vanessa M.

“To know and Love, and have a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing is more important to me than raising a Godly Man.” – Heather J.

“How to be a man of God and provider for the family.” – Meredith M.

OTHER THINGS TO TEACH YOUR SON BEFORE HE LEAVES THE HOUSE:

“How to be a fully functioning, capable and contributing member of society who thinks with their head, loves with their heart and works with their hands.” Lindsey E.

“To be respectful, capable, caring, independent, and kind. (Just not SO independent that he doesn’t still need me, at least sometimes.” – Ashley A.

“To be a man of good character. From character stems everything important: integrity, responsibility, respect for others, independence, honesty, reliability, faithfulness, kindness, patience, a good work ethic, the ability to take criticism, a willingness to learn and to be introspective.” -Rosemary W.

“Follow your passion and find away to make yourself happy.. people with passion are happy and don’t need others to maintain satisfaction with their lives.” – Irena K.

“Love, respect, taking responsibility for their own actions, and you can do ANYTHING you put your mind to!!! I know it’s more than 1, I’m hoping 1 will sink in!!” – Stephanie W.

For Recipes, Activities, and inspiration for
Life with boys, visit me at
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