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Parenting Beyond Pink & Blue: How To Raise Your Kids Free Of Gender Stereotypes



Synopsis

A guide that helps parents focus on their children's unique strengths and inclinations rather than on gendered stereotypes to more effectively bring out the best in their individual children, for parents of infants to middle schoolers. *Reliance on Gendered Stereotypes Negatively Impacts Kids* Studies on gender and child development show that, on average, parents talk less to baby boys and are less likely to use numbers when speaking to little girls. Without meaning to, we constantly color-code children, segregating them by gender based on their presumed interests. Our social dependence on these norms has far-reaching effects, such as leading girls to dislike math or increasing aggression in boys. In this practical guide, developmental psychologist (and mother of two) Christia Spears Brown uses science-based research to show how over-dependence on gender can limit kids, making it harder for them to develop into unique individuals. With a humorous, fresh, and accessible perspective, *Parenting Beyond Pink & Blue* addresses all the issues that contemporary parents should consider—from gender-segregated birthday parties and schools to sports, sexualization, and emotional intelligence. This guide empowers parents to help kids break out of pink and blue boxes to become their authentic selves.

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Customer Reviews

It's good to be skeptical of the biologizing of gender differences. It's also useful to critique poorly designed studies. The author is obviously intelligent and this is what makes it so terrible to see her debunking myths about gender difference and neuroscience in one breath and uncritically accepting other misconceptions about brain development on the other. For instance, she uses the example of babies with cataracts to illustrate how neurons that aren't used go away. But this is entirely the wrong-headed. There are two kinds of experiences necessary for normal brain development: experience dependent and experience expectant. Babies, or more classically kittens whose eyes are not exposed to light at a certain point in their early development become brain-blind. They may have the cataract removed so that the optic nerve is exposed to light but because it didn't happen soon enough, they will never see because those neural connections simply aren't there. There are very, very few examples of experience dependent brain development which makes it strange that she would even mention this, except to leave people with the mistaken impression that if parents don't intervene quickly their child will have some permanent change to their brain that will skew them to one gender or another? It really makes no sense. Another "use it or lose it" example she uses has to do with hearing the sounds in different languages. This is also misleading. Yes, babies adapt to the sounds in their own language early on and can't quite hear the sounds in other languages after a certain point. BUT researchers have discovered that they CAN hear and make these sounds if they are slowed down. In this way, Asian people who grow up without an 'r' sound can learn to make it.

If you're new to the idea of raising kids without gender bias or unaware of some of the potentially damaging effects of raising kids with gender bias, this book is a good place to start. I'm not exactly new to the topic, so the book had a bit less to offer me, but that does not mean it has no value. It is highly readable and takes a lot of research information and presents it in a digestible fashion for the layperson. I also like the fact that Dr. Spears is a realist about such things rather than an extremist. She's not advocating radical parenting, but trying to encourage parents to pick their battles and what it means if you bother not to fight at all. However, there were several aspects about it that I was not quite so pleased with. The primary one was that it engaged in what is a common and unfortunate tendency to loop around to making the same points again and again and then presenting further data to back it up. While I'm happy to know and hear about the data, I think the point that stereotypes are common, potentially damaging to your child's potential, etc. doesn't need to be

reiterated quite so much. It smacks of a lack of creative material presentation, or perhaps a lack of sufficient diverse material to fill 200 pages. The other aspect of this which I was not a fan of was the clear bias. There is a fair bit of data that supports brain differences between males and females, but such data, when presented, is offered as being either impossible to accurately interpret or dismissed as insufficiently compelling.

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