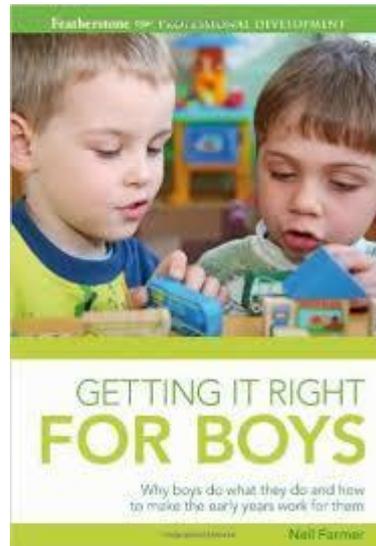


Network Meeting Presentation to Walsall Early Years
Leaders and Managers (February 2017)
from 'Getting it Right for Boys'
by Neil Farmer



The book challenges leaders/practitioners to:

- Analyse their beliefs about learning
- Utilise theory and scientific enquiry
- Consider brain development and the chemical/ hormonal make up of young learners
- Apply understanding of learning styles
- Think about age appropriate strategies

Key points of debate:

‘It is not the boys who are underachieving at all. Instead too many practitioners are underachieving in their policy, provision and practice to meet the diverse needs of children.’ (especially boys)

‘True inclusive practice entails an appreciation of difference as it is through this that similarities can be made.’

‘Children need to be cognitively, physically and emotionally involved in order to internalise concepts and create a disposition to continue learning’

Leaders responsibility to boys

- Clear understanding, values and vision for boys learning, shared with all staff and underpinning expectations, routine and processes.
- Ensure the adults that work with our children are knowledgeable, sensitive and interested in what works for boys.



Developing our vision for boys

Circle/ list six characteristics that you consider most important to encourage in boys.

Cross out those characteristics your setting discourages.

Add any other characteristics that you think are missing.

Understanding Difference

Common themes when working with boys is their difference in:

- Physicality
- Language
- Emotional needs
- Attention spans
- Environments they require
- Space needed for movement
- Time to be involved in learning



The Secret Life of 4 and 5 year olds

- Understanding emotion
- Risk taking
- Building big and dinosaurs



What works for boys? (and other learners)

- Regular stimulation and excitement
- Competition
- Visual learning
- Physical play – jumping, climbing, balancing, running
- Building high
- Rough and tumble
- Stories, open ended questions, sustained shared thinking, meaningful reflection
- Problem solving
- Fun and humour
- Risk taking
- Open ended learning

Seeing the bigger picture for Boys

A tale of boys learning and adult intervention

Here they come the adults with...

- What colour are they?
- How many is there?
- What shape are they?

Research from Croydon, 2010



What do we want our practitioners to understand?

- The essence of their role: to enable children to become problem solvers and active learners
- The need to reflect outward and inward and embrace new ways to deliver the framework
- Observe – where does learning happen? What learning is taking place? How can I build on this?
- Do I am, I need exercises

What do we want our practitioners to do?

- Understand and follow the interests of boys
- Develop themes and topics that offer adventure, humour and sport
- Audit what boys read and where and plan appropriately
- Adapt teaching to non sedentary learners
- Think about how to make writing more kinaesthetic and purposeful
- Ensure outdoor environment is central to learning
- Explore, be energetic and have fun with the children
- Purposefully interact, engage and extend learning
- Ensure competency meets challenge for deep learning

Excellent practitioners:

- are role models for playing and learning
- validate and extend learning (in both adult led and child initiated)
- Provide balance between unsupported play and highly structured direction

How stimulating are your staff? Do they have any CPD needs?

Ask practitioners to self reflect and audit their practice.
(see audit)

Leaders toolkit

1. Characteristics of children
2. Practitioner Self Reflection
3. I am, I need/ Checklist for environment
4. Leaven Scales for **wellbeing** and **involvement**

Outcomes for Boys

- Boys are not underachieving or failing. With the right practitioner knowledge and skill boys can achieve their full potential and see themselves as capable, confident and creative learner