

## **The Education of Boys**

As a parent of two boys aged 5 and 8 years I was very pleased to see your inquiry into the education of boys in Australian schools.

My 8 year old son has specific literacy needs which I am advised if were not addressed now would have led to him having literacy problems as an adult. I consider my experiences as a parent of a boy with such needs relevant for your Committee.

My son commenced his education at a state school at the age of 5 years. Even at that age he displayed signs of not being able to keep up with the rest of the class. At that time I was advised by teachers at his school that he was a boy, they are slower developing and not to worry. At no time was he or any of the other boys experiencing difficulties given any extra help or was any advice given to parents in relation to what can be done out of school hours to help. I was continually told was that he was a boy and some boys can take longer to learn things - don't worry.

This attitude - "Boys take longer to learn, don't worry" - without any form of support for my son or us I believed was totally unacceptable. By the end of Year 1 my son had very poor self-esteem because he was in a Prep/1 and doing alot of his work with the brighter Prep children rather than his peers. As a result my husband and I removed our son from that school and placed him at a private boys school which we believed would better suit his needs.

Fortunately this school took the time with our son and established that he had a specific learning disorder and was given the support at school, home and through outside agencies (Occupational Therapist) to help him.

Our son is now in Year 3 and although he still experiences difficulties in some areas I know he is given the support he needs and is reaching his full potential.

The point I am trying to make to your committee is that learning disorders can be ignored in some children because they are boys and some teachers believe that generally boys take longer to learn things. Some boys, like my son need extra help so that they don't get lost in the system and end up with limited literacy skills.

I will be very interested to see the recommendations your committee make and commend you on this initiative.

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