

Child Development/Understanding of Concepts

Development of communicative functions, such as reacting and understanding communication from others, participation in interaction and conversation etc don't start to mature until age 7, although abstract vocabulary can come in at age 5 and obviously gesture, vocalisation and early language come in way before that.

Man/lady/boy/girl categories are understood from about age 2-3, coming in after big/small in the development of understanding of opposites. He/she pronouns are understood from about 3 years. Abstract language doesn't begin until age 5-6. Before this age, children think being male or female is what people look like (hair, clothes etc). In terms of 'gender' children have only a concrete understanding, linked to what people look like and do. They have no idea of sex or how babies are made - children of this age do not link ideas of boy/girl/male/female to penis/vagina but to appearance/roles assigned.

Children are not able to understand that people think in a different way to them until about age 7.

(References: The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF); Piaget; Dewart and Summers Pragmatics Profile for Children; Sally-Ann Theory of Mind for Autism test; Bates 1974)

Children cannot understand the difference between 'gender' as a social concept of masculine/feminine (ie an abstract idea) and 'sex' as a concrete classification of male/female based on primary sex characteristics and reproductive function (even many adults do not understand this distinction).

For a 4 -5 year old child, 'girls' literally means the people who wear hair slides and dresses.

A boy who likes to wear hair slides/princess costumes or likes playing with dolls therefore may think this means he is a girl. His belief is reinforced through parental messages - "that's for girls" - together with the messages from the extreme gendered toy/clothes/books marketing of the past decade, especially through images of only girls playing with certain toys which he sees on toy packaging/tv ads. (Images are processed 17,000 times faster than words, at a primitive level in the brain, ie: seeing is believing: for children, images 'imprint' at the deepest level).

To put it another way, children's concept of boy/girl is based on stereotypes. Children are busy classifying everything into categories, the first stage of which is to form an idea of a fixed stereotype. Throughout early childhood children themselves will be rigidly policing and enforcing the gender/sex-role stereotype on both themselves and their peers. As they mature into later stage childhood children begin to accept variations and subtle shades of grey in place of the strict black and white interpretations they initially form. Parents and teachers can help children mature in this way by challenging stereotypes and preventing bullying of any child who is different.

Transgender lobby groups such as Gendered Intelligence use the terms 'gender' and 'sex' interchangeably to mean 'gender' - biological sex is not explained or acknowledged as material fact. Their message to children, through PSHE classes in schools, is that you can 'choose' your sex, a message they obscure through the use of the word 'gender.' This consolidates a 4-5 year-old child's stereotype level of thinking and reinforces the gender and sex-role stereotyping messages of the toy industry. Children are encouraged to think they may be a boy or a girl based on their toy and clothes preferences; that 'sex' is fluid and 'gender identity' is the fixed (and innate) reality. A boy who likes to wear hair slides really may be a girl.

It is estimated that as many as 1% of children think they are the opposite sex, with a further 3% of boys and 5% of girls choosing activities/interests more commonly associated with the opposite sex. Around 80% of children who think they are the opposite sex will come to terms with their natal sex by the end of adolescence and achieve emotional and psychological stability. A significant proportion of these children will be gay or lesbian. Figures for transgender/transsexual adults vary between 0.01 - 0.03% of the population (before transgender groups began to add in intersex people and all categories of 'gender-variant').

If children are actively taught to ignore biological sex as irrelevant and instead form their identity on a subjective 'feeling' based on gendered choices and behaviours, we will create 'trans' children through constant reinforcement and affirmation of their 'preferred gender' by parents, teachers and peer groups.

To base your own identity and sense of self on a disembodied idea of your 'real' sex in opposition to your body's sex creates a disconnect between mind and body, which is a precursor for mental ill-health. This disconnect is the definition of 'gender dysphoria,' so in effect groups like G.I. are actively encouraging children to be gender dysphoric and to see this condition as normal. Children are taught to view their own bodies as 'wrong' and in need of fixing, rather than being helped to achieve mind-body integration through sensitive and non-judgmental support, watching and waiting. Children are set on a lifetime course of being in conflict with their own bodies (which self-appointed 'gender specialists' and the Pharmaceutical industry promise to 'fix' but never really can: no matter how much surgery you endure, a male cannot be changed into a female and vice versa).

No part of a child's identity is fixed at birth, a child develops identity (or Self) through interaction with the environment. Genetic inheritance from parents is acknowledged to be around 45% of who you are, with around 55% being environmental influence and learning. In other words, a baby is born with a genetic potential in terms of personality/interests/aptitudes, which is then developed further through social interaction. The brain is literally built through this interplay between genetics and environment.

As 'gender' is a social idea of masculine and feminine behaviours and aptitudes (which changes from culture to culture) no child can possibly have an 'innate' gender identity, as social rules, ideas and influences are not experienced in the womb.

Affirming that a boy is really a girl is an active choice to influence, condition, or indoctrinate him into the belief that he is really a 'she,' based on the idea that 'girl' is a feeling in your head and not a biological sex category. This is an ideology, based on no reliable scientific evidence, which redefines the meaning of the words 'girl' and 'boy' to subjective ideas based on personality, and not correct biological classifications.

'Girl' and 'boy' are now stereotypes. Teaching this to children in schools as fact contradicts all the work teachers do to challenge those stereotypes which especially hold back girls.