

# Boy Smarts...

## Effective Strategies for Parenting Boys

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The challenges of raising boys have become increasingly hard to ignore.

Are boys and girls hardwired differently? How do home and school environments interface with genetics?

More importantly, how can parents and teachers help boys to be successful?

Let's face it, boys and girls enter the classroom with different needs, different abilities, and different goals. The fact that each child is unique and complex should not blind us to the reality that gender is one of the great organizing principles in child development.

Parents everywhere express their concern as boys arrive home from school with negative attitudes toward learning in general. They recognize their boys' capacity to create, but grieve to see the spark of enthusiasm smolder, and die in school. Parents also struggle with how to motivate boys. Now what to do about it?

On Tuesday April 24 from 7 - 9 pm at the Ecole Robb Road at 1900 Robb Road in Comox is hosting the BC celebrated author and professional speaker, Barry MacDonald (see [MentoringBoys.com](http://MentoringBoys.com)), to help parents meet the challenges of parenting boys for success at school - and life.

Boy Smarts - Mentoring Boys for Success at School urges parents to embrace what makes a boy a boy, especially during the early years. Over the past two decades, research has shown that differences between the genders are more significant than previously acknowledged. Drawing on studies from the cultural as well as biological-based approaches, Barry MacDonald (educator and registered clinical counsellor) has developed a valuable resource and presentation to help teachers and parents understand the gender-specific tendencies in which boys think, feel, learn, and offers some highly practical guidelines for helping boys be successful in their learning.

We need to understand the different-ness of boys from girls as assets rather than liabilities. As MacDonald careens into homes and classrooms of the future he sees a place that boys can truly call home; where their rambunctious, recalcitrance, and rebellious energy is accepted and channeled; and where they are participants in relevant, realistic, and responsive learning. He also envisions parents and teachers working together.

MacDonald's ideas are making waves. Last year he was identified as 1 of 25 Influential British Columbians to pay attention to. In 2006 his presentation sold out to 850 parents on the North Shore. In the spring of 2008 he will also present a Boy Smarts keynote address at the Canadian National Principal's Conference.

MacDonald boldly suggests that there is only one force powerful enough to make our communities pay more attention to boys' needs - Parents of boys!" With plenty of humour and story-telling MacDonald's topnotch presentation offers inspiration and practical tools for caregivers to guide boys to become courageous, caring and ethical men. Indeed, half our future depends on it.