

## SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR RAISING BOYS

Adapted from Dr. James Dobson's book entitled *Bringing Up Boys*, 2003.

**PRINCIPLE 1:** Don't fight a boy's naturally aggressive and excitable behavior.

Celebrate, shape, and civilize it. Allow your boy to play with toys differently than girls do. As long as he's not disobedient, selfish, hurtful, or destructive, there's no "right" or "wrong" way to play with toys. Don't punish your boy when he does something crazy. Instead, see the humor in the situation.

**PRINCIPLE 2:** To prevent the "wounded spirit" syndrome in a boy, deal decisively with bullies, reduce exposure to media violence, and watch for signs of depression, withdrawal, or lethargy. Boys need to know who's in charge, what the rules are, and that those rules will be fairly enforced. *Boys need someone to be in charge.* If this leadership is failing, they will become unruly and sometimes join a gang - gangs help fulfill the need for belonging, order, and safety.

**PRINCIPLE 3:** Stay close to your son both emotionally and as a vigilant guide. Convey rules in the context of a loving relationship. It is important that a boy see his parents as equals and his father treating his mother with respect and affection. It is also important to discuss sex and how to treat girls with your son. If you don't, he will learn it in the playground, and those values may be quite different from your own.

**PRINCIPLE 4:** To help a boy develop a healthy gender identity, make sure he receives appropriate affection, attention, and approval from his father or a trustworthy male role model. You want your son to feel positive about his sexual identity. Don't drive his sexuality underground by teasing him about girls or his sexuality.

**PRINCIPLE 5:** Spend both quantity and quality time with your son -- changing your lifestyle, if necessary, to make yourself available.

**PRINCIPLE 6:** Counteract the effects of cultural criticism of males by affirming a boy's masculinity and his value as a person.

**PRINCIPLE 7:** Make your son's relationship with God your primary parenting priority.