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## **?Boy or girl?? As even younger kids challenge gender identity, schools try to adjust**

From the time they are born, we put our boys in blue beanies and our girls in pink ones. It's a societal norm, an expectation even, that you just are what you are born ? a boy or a girl.

From early on, we divide toys and activities by very distinct gender lines, with superheroes and trucks and muck on one side and princesses and dolls and all things frilly on the other.

Many children land, enthusiastically, on the expected side. Others dabble in both ?girl? and ?boy? things. But what if your kid, even from an early age, mostly showed interest in doing opposite-gender things? More importantly, what if they wanted to BE the opposite gender ? or a less-defined mix of both? And what if they wanted to test those limits in public places, like school?

Would you let them?

It's not, of course, that pat of a process. Parents don't just decide to let their kids switch genders. But, whether parents are dragged through the process, or if they decide to work it through more openly, more kids are challenging the boundaries of traditional gender, and going public at younger ages.

And they are doing so with the guidance of a growing faction of medical experts who no longer see this as something to be fixed. Last year, the American Psychiatric Association removed ?gender identity disorder? from its list of mental health ailments.

Some experts predict that views on gender will evolve in much the same way they have for sexual orientation, since homosexuality was removed as a mental illness nearly four decades ago. Today, the gender spectrum includes those who are transgender, who see themselves as the opposite gender, and those who are gender variant, or gender nonconforming, whose gender is more ?fluid.? For kids, it means they identify part of themselves as boy and part as girl.

?Now these kids . are beginning to have a voice . and I think that's what's been making things interesting and challenging ? and difficult, sometimes ? depending on the family, the kid, or the school,? says Dr. Robert Garofalo, director of the Center for Gender, Sexuality and HIV

Prevention at Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

While the numbers are relatively small, it means that, increasingly, schools are having to figure out how to accommodate them, some more successfully than others.

**Read the full article:**

May. 27, 2013

News Article

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/boy-or...> [1]

Associated Press

Martha Irvine

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**Links**

[1] [http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/boy-or-girl-as-even-younger-kids-challenge-gender-identity-schools-try-to-adjust/2013/05/27/ee1fbc2e-c6f7-11e2-9cd9-3b9a22a4000a\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/boy-or-girl-as-even-younger-kids-challenge-gender-identity-schools-try-to-adjust/2013/05/27/ee1fbc2e-c6f7-11e2-9cd9-3b9a22a4000a_story.html)