



NATURE VS. NURTURE: WHAT DETERMINES GENDER IDENTITY AND WHO WE LOVE?



Have you ever heard that boys are made of "snips and snails and puppy dogs' tails" and girls are "sugar and spice and everything nice"? Children are often told who they are and can be based on their body parts, but biology and culture interact in complex ways to determine how people identify and who they love.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt

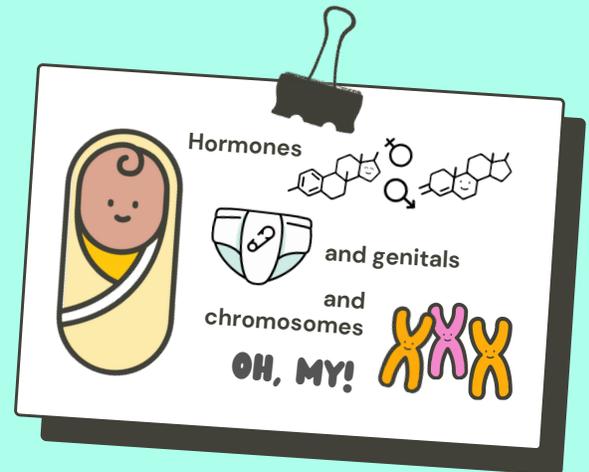
NORMS VARY ACROSS TIME & CULTURE

What it means to be a "boy" or a "girl" is shaped by culture and has changed over time; it is not prescribed by anatomy. For example, in the 1800s, young **American boys wore lacy dresses and long hair**. In many indigenous cultures, there is a **third gender**; sometimes called "two-spirit" people, individuals of this gender are often revered spiritual leaders in their communities.



HUMANS ARE BIOLOGICALLY COMPLEX

Hormones, chromosomes and anatomy interact in complex ways to shape gender identity and sexual orientation; **gender is not as simple as XX or XY**. For example, 2% of humans are born "intersex" (their bodies don't fit into the male/female binary), which is the same percentage born left-handed or with red hair.



SOCIETY SENDS POWERFUL MESSAGES

Children are **inundated with messages** about how they should look, act, and play (as well as who they should love) based on their gender: in the toy store, on TV, in books, and even on the packaging of household items. By noticing these stereotypes, reflecting on them together, and sharing other ways of being, we give children the **freedom to explore** who they are, and the world around them, with confidence

What might a child see when shopping for a dollhouse family?



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