

# Family Viewing Guide

## Attendance and Achievement: **The Trouble with Boys**

### The Facts

- 85% of all school discipline referrals are for boys. (Gurian, M. (2006). Learning and gender. *American School Board Journal*, 193 (10), 19-22.)
- Boys are three times more likely than girls to be prescribed medication for ADHD. (Centers for Disease Control, 2016)
- Between 2000 and 2015, the male status dropout rate declined from 12.0 to 6.3 percent, but it is still higher than the female dropout rate of 5.4 percent. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017)
- 44% of college students are boys. (NCES,2015)

### Start a Conversation with Your Kids

- Do boys and girls behave differently in school? What have you observed? Why do you think this is so? Do teachers treat boys and girls differently? What do you think about this?
- Talk with your child about the importance of discovering his/her strengths. What are some interests that he/she would like to pursue and develop further? What are some ways your child can do that? How can you as a parent support him/her? Do we try to improve our strengths or do enough to celebrate the strengths and skills of our family members?
- Ask your child about his/her connection to school. Do you feel supported and connected in school? Is there anything that would help you feel more successful? Are there adults that support you and help you?

### Advice from the Experts

Michael Thompson, author of *RAISING CAIN* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1999) offers these suggestions to parents of boys (but also notes that girls benefit from these suggestions as well):

- **Give them opportunities to be physical.** Activity invigorates their brains as well as keeps them healthy and fit.
- **Find things they love to do.** Provide them with opportunities to learn and practice activities that interest them.
- **Make sure there are good male role models and mentors in your boy's life.** Find someone you know and respect in your community such as a teacher, a coach, a neighbor, a church leader, a “big brother” or a co-worker. Show your son how you have made connections with people you respect and use as role models.
- **Read aloud with your boys and have them read to you.** Allow them to select reading material that interests them and discuss what you have read.
- **Help your boy learn to recognize and talk about feelings.** A lot of good discussion can come out of having a game of catch — keep up the physical to get to the verbal.
- **Ask your boys to solve problems.** It builds skills and self-esteem, and it shows you respect their ideas and their opinions.
- **Praise them, be interested in their daily lives and what interests them, and give them unconditional love.**