

Book review of “Calmer, Easier, Happier Boys” by Annie Saunders, teacher and SENCo

Calmer, Easier, Happier Boys is the third book by Noel Janis-Norton in a highly regarded series that began with *Calmer, Easier, Happier Parenting* and continued with *Calmer, Easier, Happier Homework*. More titles in this series are in the pipeline.

This book about boys is of particular interest to parents of children with Attention Deficit Disorder. It starts by describing the characteristics of typical boys, qualities shared by that significant third of girls who, research suggests, are similar to boys. Many of these characteristics fit well with the profile of children with ADHD, such as being impulsive, fidgety, easily distracted, thrill-seeking, rowdy, socially awkward, along with having a short attention span and underdeveloped fine-motor skills. For many of these children, these qualities adversely effect their behaviour, their academic achievement, their friendships and ultimately their sense of self-worth.

Boys (and those girls) who are born this way, Noel explains, require help to mature. They also need affirmation and channelling of their strengths. Society needs their high energy, enthusiasm, loyalty, risk-taking, sense of adventure and competitiveness. Mums, she says, cannot help boys develop fully without input from a father-figure. Boys need exposure to mature male role models. Where a dad is part of the family, he needs the space to do things his own way with his sons. If the dad is not around, mums need to find other sensible male adults, in or outside the family, so our boys can aspire to be responsible men.

Over the years Noel has helped thousands of families. She has achieved this by teaching parents a set of skills that guide children to become more cooperative, more confident, more motivated, more considerate and more self-reliant.

Those who are already familiar with Noel’s work will see here again such parenting strategies as descriptive praise, preparing for success, reflective listening, time alone with each parent, fostering self-reliance and following through with rewards and consequences. In this book Noel shows parents how to use these strategies to make life with boys calmer, easier and happier.

This is a readable book, very clear and full of practical ideas. It has the power to transform our boys’ lives and our relationship with them.