

## DANIELLE'S EXAMPLE OF STRINGING SCENES TOGETHER

### The "Sissy" Syndrome

That they will be teased if they do certain "sissy" things is one of the easiest lessons boys learn at school. They learn it in the halls, in the classrooms, and especially, in the place where they learn the most in school, in the yard.

Picture the yard during first grade recess. The sun is shining. The tar is sticky and smells like burnt marshmallows. The jungle gym gleams red and green. Small children play. In the corner of the yard, a small boy plays with two girls. One of the girls has a doll that talks. The boy reaches for the doll, curious about how it works. He holds it in his hands and then ... he hears a harsh voice, the voice of a much older boy. "Look at the baby playing with dolls. What a sissy!" The small boy starts to cry, quietly. He looks for his teacher but she is nowhere. He hears the harsh voice again. "Don't you know, boys don't cry." Several older boys laugh at him.

The next day. The sun is shining, the tar is sticky, the jungle gym gleams. A small girl asks a boy to play. The yard is quiet as the boy says, "Don't you know, boys don't play with girls." The girl cries. Recess is over.

That's just one inside story told to this reporter. This reporter then watched children in the yard and in the halls. In kindergarten boys and girls hold hands. Girls hold boys' hands. Boys hold boys' hands. In first grade they hold hands. And in second. But in third grade, boys no longer hold hands. The way they show if they are together is to stand next to each other, poking each other. Sometimes wrestling. If they get hurt, they don't cry. If a girl talks to them, they may ignore her.

There is more to be learned here. Burning questions remain. What other things are considered sissy? How is this school a place that teaches boys this? Do we want to be this kind of place?

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