

*National
Organization of
Mothers
Of
Twins
Clubs, Inc.*

SUBJECT: **GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES IN THE
LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN**

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Gender identity refers to the concept that children learn an idea of what is masculine and what is feminine and to which group they belong. This awareness usually emerges by age four.

The theory that fathers and mothers treat boys and girls differently, mainly in speech and secondarily in behavior, was tested using a pair of two-and-one-half-year-old boy/girl twins.

RESULTS:

In analysis of tapes, the following was noted:

1. Mother spoke twice as often as father.
2. In the combined utterances of both parents:
70% were to the son
30% were to the daughter
3. Boy's perceptions, actions and speech got somewhat more responses and support from both parents than the girl's.
4. Parent's speech seemed to follow the patterns of gender differences in that the father's style was more direct.
5. Twins showed a style of speech more like the mother's style than the father's.

Similarity of the children's speech could be due to the "twin factor," in which any gender differences in the children are not evident because of the closeness of the children both physically and emotionally.

CONCLUSION:

At two-and-one-half-years-old, the children seemed to have already developed a sense of gender identity between themselves that was reinforced in their play.
