

Katy brothers Cade, Bryce, Ty, and Chance Needham share a love of the great outdoors

Photo by Holly Marie Photography



Kheli and Allen Paul and their sons Kyle, Evan, Travis, and Austin



Photo by Allen Paul and Shelly Hoffman

Parenting Boys

Is there really

We asked Katy families for their parenting

Katy sisters Iris Selena, Zoe Nicole, and Rosalynn Sanchez



Photo by Jason Lehecka

Parenting Girls a Difference?



Photo Courtesy of Damien Polansky

Damien and Jill Polansky and their daughters Morgan, Riley, and Lauren

perspective on raising all girls or all boys

*Written by Natalie Cook Clark
and Mary Hogan*



Katy parents could debate for days about the difference between raising all boys and all girls. Who's got the tougher job? Are those little boys just as cuddly as the girls? And how about those tomboys in pigtails? Doctors, psychologists, and professors have a lot to say about the way our children act and grow, but who really has all the answers? We decided to consult the experts – local parents – to find out exactly what's behind those little boys' and girls' smiles.

Great Expectations

Katy mom Melissa Nash has three daughters ranging from 2 to 6 years old and is happy to have all girls. "I like it, because I know what to expect," she shares. Jill Polansky is a mom of three daughters - soon to be five, with the birth of identical twin girls this fall. "I love having all girls and cannot imagine life without them," she says. "Most families are mixed gender and therefore may not be able to appreciate how special and rare an all-girl family can be."

Nicole Needham of Katy loves being a mom of all boys. "I like it a lot, because it makes things easier," she says. Katy mom Kheli Paul also has all boys. "It's not what I expected," she shares. "I'm a twin and have two younger sisters. Having my boys keeps me on my toes." Paul admits she wanted a girl, but has loved every minute she shares with her sons. "God gives us what we can handle, and I love my boys," she says.

Bundles of Energy

Even though these Katy moms all have unique families, they

have one parenting tip in common: Make sure to take time for each child. "I think boys would require tougher love," shares Nash, adding, "But the most important thing is to make one-on-one time with each child."

Katy mom Melissa Sanchez has three daughters, which has influenced her parenting style. "I planned to be a very reasonable, lenient mom," she shares. "But I think having all girls has changed that a little. I find myself being a little extra paranoid about them and even a little stricter."

When parenting her sons, Needham shares that she has to take a more laid-back approach to parenting. "We have to keep structure, and they help me make the schedule," she says. "But what really makes me happy is embracing their strengths and helping them make their own choices."

And some things just come with time, according to Paul. "I never expected it to be so busy," she says. "We discipline, love, and redirect. We focus on their strengths and tell them every day that we love them!"

Encouraging Their Individuality

So, what about the way our kids play? Are the little boys all about bulldozers and blowing up toys? And are the girls sticking strictly to the princess dresses? Even though Nash has all girls, they all have unique personalities. "They are still all different," she says, adding, "We focus on each child's individuality and strengths."



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No matter what a child is interested in, it's important to encourage their individuality. "We push our girls to be whatever they want to be and not to view anything as a boy thing or girl thing," shares Polansky. "We do a lot of traditional girl things like tea parties and makeovers, but they are also active in sports and like to go camping and fishing."

Needham's sons are on the go most of the time. "I love how active they are," she says, adding, "We focus on the outdoor stuff, camping, and museums. There is no Disney on Ice for me! I do anything to keep them active."

In the Sanchez family, there are definitely a lot of tea parties and pretend hair salons. But Sanchez says her daughters will really play with anything. "For them, it's what is most fun that they can use their imagination on," she explains.

Breaking up the Mix

Of course a big plus of having multiple children is everyone has an instant playmate. "I never hear them say they're bored!" says Needham. But do same-gender siblings ever wish for a brother or sister to break up the mix?

For her part, Needham has never heard her boys ask for a sister. "I think they love being competitive amongst each other," she says. "My sister-in-law is pregnant, and they are all hoping she has a boy."

Paul's oldest son, Kyle, does occasionally ask for a sister. "I think he understands the brother/sister thing better, since he's older," she explains. "He does wish for a sister now and

then, but four boys is enough! Four is perfect. My husband and I both came from large families, so it was always our desire to have several children."

In Nash's family, there are some days when her girls ask for a brother. "In the end, they love and are happy with the way things turned out," she says.

Mom's Personal Style

So does the gender of their children affect the style of these Katy moms? It is, after all, rare to find a football mom at her son's game without a jersey, no matter how trendy she may be. "Yes, I wear jerseys and love the outdoors," says Paul. "You do what is best for your children. I spend a lot of time out in the street throwing a football. Coming from a family strong in girls, this is new, but I love it."

With a family of all girls, it's natural for a mom to start wearing a little more pink and purple. "You become what works best for your kids," says Nash. "I love wearing pink now and playing tea party!"

Needham says she wouldn't change a thing about being a boy mom, including the pickup football games after dinner and weekend camping trips. "I love my boys and feel that I'm a better boy mom," she shares. **KM**

NATALIE COOK CLARK enjoys sharing stories of her hometown friends. She lives with her wonderful husband, beautiful daughter, loveable dog, and sweet bunnies.

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