

# Why are some young people less likely to achieve high educational qualifications?...

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Why are some young people less likely to achieve high educational qualifications? There are many reasons why some young people are less likely to achieve high educational qualification, from parental care through gender divide, and whether the birth mother smoked during pregnancy to one of the most striking reasons, social class. (Department for Education and Skills 2006), (Connolly 2006). Children from a lower class background will almost always underperform when compared to children from a middle class background, and this difference is even more striking when including gender with working class boys significantly underperforming compared to working class girls, middle class boys and middle class girls. In a school with more than 35% of pupils receiving free school meals, 67% of boys attain an acceptable standard in English, whereas 78% of girls at the same school achieve acceptable standard in English, and in a school with between 0% and 5% of pupils receiving free school meals 90% of boys attain an acceptable standard in English and 95% of girls attain an acceptable standard in English (Connolly 2006). It would appear from this that there are significant disincentives for boys of working class background to achieve high educational qualifications. Speaking in 2008 about how social class determines educational achievement Graham Holley, the chief executive of the Training and Development Agency, said: " If you turn the clock back on pupils in school today 15 years and predict their outcomes from where they were born, you can do it. "(Garner 2008). In a 2004 study Connolly looked at two physically close schools (half a mile separated them) one mostly pupiled by affluent middle class children, the other mostly pupiled by poor working class children, it was observed that the boys at play in the working class

school would concentrate on activities that showed off the physical prowess, often play fighting and practicing fight moves seen from TV, whereas the boys from the affluent school could be observed competing over who had the greatest knowledge about popular fantasy films and in comparing various game levels (Connolly 2006). Whilst the attainment gap is obvious, explaining its source is more complicated, there is clearly some pressure on boys to concentrate on areas other than education, but that this pressure is greatly influenced by social class as in schools with pupils almost exclusively from the more affluent in society the gender gap reduced and in the case of Maths and Science almost disappears entirely (Connolly 2006). Looking at social gap alone, the educational achievement of the parents has a big impact, with less than 60% of 16 year olds whose parents do " Lower Supervisory/Routine" work still participating in education versus well over 80% of 16 year olds whose parents do " Higher Professional" work, it's also evident that parents from lower social classes can be priced out of locations and homes that would enable them to send their children to the best schools as a house being in a good secondary schools catchment area can add more than £140, 000 to the value of a house. (Department for Education and Skills 2006) This double effect of gender attainment gap and social attainment gap impact particularly strongly on boys from working class homes. Bibliography Connolly P, (2006) Young Boys, masculinities and schooling: Sociology Review: Vol 15, No 3, Feb 2006 Department For Education and Skills, (2006) " Social Mobility: Narrowing Educational Social Class Attainment Gaps, 26 April 2006" <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000657/SocialMobility26Apr06.pdf> accessed on

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