Genders Essay, Research Paper

The early childhood socialization plays a major role in a person’s life. Socialization is best described as “a process by which a society’s values and norms, including those pertaining to gender is taught and learned”. This is perhaps the first thing that a child goes thought. As soon as a child is old enough to play with toys, they’re thought that the boys play with the big and strong action figures, while the girls are playing with the Barbie’s. Studies have shown that children as early as eighteen months show preference for gender-stereotyped toys. That leads us to the category of learning gender. It is also said that children by the age of two are already aware of their own and others’ gender. Also between the ages of two and three, they begin to identify specific traits and behaviors between genders. This leads us to the identification theory, which was presented by an Austrian physician by the name of Sigmund Freud. Freud says that children pass through a series of stages in their development. During the first two stages the oral and the anal stage, a similarity is shown between both boys and girls. Boys and girls know the difference of their own genitals and the genital difference between the two sexes. This is referred to as the phallic stage the third stage of development. It is during this stage that identification takes place. The

children start to model their parent of the same sex’s behavior. Considerably, identification occurs differently for boys and girls.

The boys go through a castration anxiety where the love they have for their mother becomes more of a sexual feeling and he views his dad as a rival. The child is cured from this stage as soon as he gets his first glimpse of the female genitalia. The little boy is scared off by thinking that if he stays in competition with his dad he might castrated the same way the female was.

For girls in the other hand, they go through something different in a way but similar in others. Girls go through what is called penis envy. Penis envy is developed at a girl’s first sight of the male genitals. The girl builds a jealousy of the boys extra body parts. Where than she looks at her dad as a superior to her mom. And just like the male she feels she’s in competition with her mother.

Although boys and girls are very much different, it is pretty safe to say that their learning theories of gender are very alike.