

When people think my baby is a girl

The first time someone thought my baby boy was a girl I took offense. Clearly he's a boy, I remember thinking. How else do you explain his masculine crawl? Later I would encounter a similar situation, only this time I was in the opposite position, meeting an old friend on a sidewalk outside Union Market grocery store. "That's a cute little boy," I blurted out without thinking. He was, of course, a she, a mistake clearly avoidable given the pink socks.

A big part of our problem is that we're those parents who think our baby's hair is too cute to cut. But there are other circumstances justifying the vainglory. Our Puerto Rican babysitter warned us not to cut Aaron's hair until he was at least 18-months old – something about bad luck and turning him into a thief. I'd heard the same nonsense regarding cutting fingernails with clippers (we're supposed to bite them), my mom full of old wives' tales of varying hilarity. The best came from my friend from Kentucky who said babies who don't fall off the bed during their first year of life will inevitably stop growing and die during their second. I fully embraced this Appalachian adage after Aaron blindly fell over the headboard and bumped the floor so hard we considered going to the emergency room. He has been growing in the upper sixtieth percentile ever since.

Gender issues start early in this world for children and reach well into adulthood where in rare instances people even choose to get rid of what the good Lord gave them. We're Democrats in the southern states and Republicans in New York City, and social progressiveness is a fundamental cause for us. Issues like gay marriage and the obvious need for greater equality for the repressed classes is something we advocate. But I also feel there's nothing wrong with reinforcing gender roles in children, at least to the point they are responsive and reflective. People think my baby is a girl but our boy acts like a boy to me, so I'm going to treat him like a boy. For this reason I have sympathy for those parents who get angry when strangers get their child's gender wrong. There's so much we're trying to encourage in our children without having to deal with others confusing the circumstances.

Nonetheless, the femininity of our first born boy is no problem for me. A pretty boy will likely grow into a good looking man. Leonardo DiCaprio has always been too pretty to play the handsome lead, but he's managed pretty well in life. But then there's a difference between a man who's pretty and a woman who's handsome. While I don't mind my boy being called a girl I wonder if I'd have the same perspective if I had a girl being called a boy? There seems to be a gender inequality for young girls who look like boys – would anyone want to think their baby girl butch?

[Website discussions abound](#) for moms dealing with baby girls who look like boys. Regardless of the bows in hair, dresses and all methods of feminizing their daughters, people trend toward thinking babies are male. It really causes some parents a lot of stress.

Stupid people mistaking my baby girl for a boy – My daughter is 11 months old and still bald. I put bows on her head but she is getting to the point where she will take them off. I also dress her as girly as I can, paint her nails, for crying out loud she wears a baby bracelet on her wrist. - [Lauren](#)

Add to that already sensitive issue those parents who are on their third or fourth child, ready to diversify their brood of gender homogeneity with a new sex only to have another of the same.

Now I am pregnant again with our last!! I am praying for a son. I don't think I can handle hearing the disappointment of " It's girls". I think I might die cause my husband really needs a son. Way to many females around here. Poor guy. I am just scared to death. I feel silly for being so depressed, but I really want a son. - [Guest Pollyanna](#)

The pitfalls for mistaking gender identity do not end with a baby. We're all very familiar with terms like "tom boy" and "effeminate" to describe children, not always affectionately. But as our society becomes more progressive with gender equality, it would seem these terms have fallen into disuse. The kids, themselves, seem the last ones to really care, after all. My 12-month old certainly doesn't care, but will he develop a complex about it at the age of five years old? I certainly hope not.

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But for now, I'm happy when people think my baby is a girl. I gently correct them and then offer them the following: "And isn't a shame God wasted all that beauty on a boy!" And with that they give me a half smile and apologize. "It's all good," I tell them.