

Assignment: How-To Blog Article

1. What is the website you are writing for? State the name and link to the website

Refinery29 Canada <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/parenthood>

2. Who are you trying to reach? To whom will your advice appeal?

Refinery29 is a catalyst for women to see, feel, and claim their power. “They are the leading next-gen media and entertainment platform focused on women and underrepresented voices pushing the status quo, in their lives and in the world”¹. Underrepresented voices include BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, etc. They aim to advance a modern and progressive feminist experience, and my How-To blog article is directly relevant to this subject matter (**5 Ways to Raise a Feminist Son**). Refinery29 is an online American publication owned by Vice Media Group. They have sister publications in Canada, France, Germany, UK, and Australia. I have chosen the Canadian publication for this assignment. They publish articles that fall under 9 distinct categories:

Money

Beauty

Fashion

Health & Wellness

Entertainment

Living

Parenthood

News

Unbothered (*this section is described as "A community celebrating Black voices, Black art, and Black women"*)

Age range: Both millennial and “millennial-minded” women, “It’s a lot of women who don’t fall strictly in that age group, but have a shared idea and way of thinking”². Millennials range in age from 25 to 40 (born 1981-1996). This would be in-line with the age of many new mothers looking for guidance on how to begin their parenting journeys in a way that is well-aligned with their personal values.

3. How-To Blog word count:

708

¹ <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca>

² <https://i-source.ca/refinery29-to-launch-in-canada-in-october/>



After my husband, Ryan, and I found out we were expecting a son, he nervously confessed he was afraid to raise one. We had built our own relationship and marriage on the basis of equality and creating a safe space where both of us could be entirely ourselves. Now we had to figure out how to pass on our values to Oliver in a world hellbent on fitting him into a mold, a blue one.

Blue things

Generations ago, society created gender norms and expectations that have largely dictated and shaped how boys and men continue to be raised and socialized, often to their detriment.

Limits are placed on which of their emotions are acceptable, the ways they can express them, how they think, and even what options they have in life – about everything, from the childhood toys they play with, to the adult variety they might be curious about later. Their choices either affirm their masculinity or put it into question.

Gender expectations can also affect how boys and men interact with other genders. They form the basis of rape culture and play a major role in the marginalization and violence experienced by women, gay and bisexual men, trans, and non-binary folks.

Redefining feminism

Feminism as both a concept and a quest has historically been attributed uniquely to women and girls. Recently, alarming transparency and attention surrounding the ongoing mental health crisis among men and boys have grown. The crisis has shed light on the undeniable connections to how society has traditionally viewed and disparaged femininity in direct contrast to upholding often faltering ideas of masculinity. It is shaping how many parents are deciding to raise and socialize their children going forward.

Many cis women like myself who are embracing a collective approach have ardently expanded our table, inviting all genders to pull up a chair and participate in a long-overdue discussion. About lived experience, trauma, and our shared belief in a more equal human experience, for everyone.

My husband and I began this dialogue 6 years ago. This is how you too can raise a feminist son and shape the next generation.

1. No means no

Consent is about teaching your young son to respect their own body and the bodies of others. They're also responsible for their own actions and are held accountable, in a constructive way – it is not about shaming, it is about learning. Practice with him what he can say and do when he feels uncomfortable. Teach him to respect “no” messages. Make your home a safe space to ask questions and speak up when something is not right.

2. Sex ed begins (and continues) at home

Comprehensive sex ed empowers children and adults to make informed choices and act responsibly during their lifespan. It begins by teaching toddlers the proper names for private body parts. It sets a



foundation for countering stigma, shame and taboo. Explain menstruation in age-appropriate detail from a young age, when preschool boys first start to notice mom's tampons in the bathroom. As boys grow up, clarify the nature of pornography and distinguish between entertainment versus reality.

3. Household chores are gender-neutral

Teach your son that household chores and responsibilities are determined by each parent and child's individual skills, interests and what works best for the family – not their gender.

4. Mind your messages

Be mindful of language and conventional sayings that stifle and limit how your son experiences life and his inner world, i.e. “boys don't cry”, “be tough”, “be a man”, “you're fine”, “pink is for girls”. Expose him to a wide variety of toys and forms of play. Paint your son's toenails rainbow colours for Pride Month (or any other day!). Encourage him to practice different skills that are part of the human experience, i.e. gift a doll to your preschool son.

5. Emotions are human

Mental health is a topic we openly discuss and model at home, with friends, and extended family. Create a safe space where every family member can share thoughts and express a full range of human emotions in a constructive, vulnerable, and authentic way. Check-in and hold space for each other. Listen, be present, and normalize asking for help. Thank them for sharing and trusting you with their feelings.

*“Hey maman, I picked a name for him...It's Melon, because I love watermelon, and I love Melon too.”
- Oliver, at 4 years-old*