

Case 3: Sammy and Ballet

Satrina started taking ballet lessons when she was just two years old. She loved to watch people dance and she enjoyed listening to the music. But most importantly at two years of age she loved the pink leotards and tutus. Twenty-six years have now passed and Satrina is a lead dancer in a professional ballet troupe in a large metropolitan city.

Not only has her career gone well but she also has a happy, intimate marriage to her high-school sweetheart, Killian. Killian is a lawyer in a family law firm and has known since he was young that he would take over the family business. They have a five-year-old child named Sammy who has had a childhood filled with lots of love and affection. Sammy is small in stature but is physically graceful and coordinated and is a very bright child. Sammy has spent many hours at both parent's jobs. At the Ballet Company, Sammy loves to play dress-up in the beautiful troupe costumes worn in their shows. At the end of practice, Satrina lets Sammy spin, twirl, and leap across the stage imitating the dancers.

Dressed in "business" clothes, Sammy goes to the "office" with Killian and likes to imitate Father's behaviors. A small mahogany wood desk in the corner of Killian's office is where Sammy "works and orders people around" just like dad. But recently Sammy has been asking to go to the ballet company more with Satrina. And last week at supper, Sammy announced, "I want to be a ballet dancer when I grow up. Can I PLEASE start taking ballet classes?" Satrina was open and excited about her child's wishes to be a ballet dancer. Killian was definitely not excited about the

choice, and told Sammy that he did not think that was such a good idea. Sammy sulked away from the table, confused and sad.

QUESTIONS:

1. *Think about the psychosocial crisis of initiative versus guilt. Which of Sammy's behaviors indicate a strong sense of initiative or guilt? How might Sammy's parent's reactions to the suggestions about ballet lessons foster a sense of initiative or guilt?*
2. *Based on what you know about gender roles stereotypes, what family factors will influence Sammy's gender role identity?*