

## Abstract

Title: Childhood in the Middle Ages

keywords:

marriage

family

childhood

differences between female and male children

education

This thesis aims to describe the life of children in the Middle Ages. Due to the woman's inferior social status, female children had a more difficult position than males.

This is then reflected in access to education. While young men went to university, young women stayed at home and learnt all they would later need in their married lives.

Nevertheless, differences in individual families' approach to children must not be overlooked. Royal offspring would be used to further the interests of their fathers; their childhood was therefore virtually non-existent. Children from poorer families would have to take part in their parents' labours and how much time they were able devote to children's games still remains a big unknown. Some contemporary sources mention children's games and archaeological excavations prove the existence of children's toys. However, children were generally viewed as small adults and parents would wish their small children to grow up into independent adults as soon as possible. This desire was also due to high infant and child mortality.

In conclusion, although childhood would most likely have existed in the Middle Ages, it only could have done so in a perspective markedly different from how we view it today.