

Kid's sex change at six

by Antonella Lazzeri

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LITTLE Hallie Baker told her parents she would kill herself if she didn't get her way but this was no childish tantrum.

For the six-year-old was begging her mum and dad to let her transform herself into a BOY.

And for the three years since then, Hallie has had her way, answering to the name Hal, while being treated as a lad at home and school.

Now "he" plans to start taking hormones at the onset of puberty to stop him growing breasts.

This week, Hal's disturbing story was told on the Oprah Winfrey show in America, when his mother Karen sobbed as she looked at pictures of Hallie looking cute in a dress.

Karen, who has another daughter, said: "It's painful to look at photos of Hallie. I had dreams of my girls growing up together, doing the whole wedding thing.

"Those are pictures of a little girl that is gone and she'll never come back. I had to grieve that.

"For a while I felt a little guilty about that, because other parents truly have lost their children. I did - but I gained a son. Although I miss my daughter, I am so lucky to see my son Hal happy."

Karen added: "She was my beautiful baby girl but from a very young age she kept saying she wanted to be a boy.

"We thought she was just a tomboy, then we thought she might be a lesbian. But she insisted she was a boy. We went to a therapist who said they believed Hallie was transgendered.

"We thought, 'Well, let's give it a try.' We let him live as a boy and he just blossomed."

And talking about his decision to take hormones when he reaches puberty, Karen added: "He knows his options about hormones. It will be his decision.

"But we have told him, 'If you ever change your mind, you tell us.'"

Hal, who wore trousers, a shirt and tie for his TV appearance, looked at photos of himself as a girl and told Oprah: "While living as Hallie I really started to hate myself.

"I felt trapped and uncomfortable. I told my parents slowly, I didn't tell them everything at once. It was difficult but that's over. That's in my past, and this is my future."

An obviously shocked Oprah said: "I've been doing this show for a lot of years and I have to admit this is an eye-opener for me."

Also on the programme was 11-year-old Kayla, who is already on hormone treatment to stop breast growth and periods after living as a boy called Kaden for a year.

As with Hal, Kaden's school has accepted his change of sex and has even given him his own toilet.

Kaden's mother Angelina said he had refused to dress as a girl from a young age.

She said: "He didn't even like girls' knickers. He never played with girls' things, he was into dirt and bikes."

Kaden said: "When people used to say I was a girl, I said, 'No I'm not, I'm a boy.' Counsellors said it was a phase I was going through.

"I got really angry. Then I saw an Oprah show where a boy was expressing his feelings about being the opposite sex. I knew this is who I was. It was like a miracle."

Angelina said: "He spends ages binding his breasts in the morning. He wants testosterone and a full sex change as soon as he is old enough."

Talking about his future, Kaden said: "I imagine myself in a big house with a wife and kids. I wish I'd been born a boy it would have been a lot easier."

Oprah's programme also featured five-year-old Dylan, who was shown screaming at his parents: "I want to be a girl!" and bursting into tears when his dad Derek took his dolls away.

His mum Sharon said: "Last year he stated that he wanted to become a girl.

"I explained to him, 'It's not possible, Dylan, because you have a penis.'

"He replied, 'Well, then I want my penis to fall off so that I can be a girl.'

"He's been saying he's a girl since he was two-and-a-half. I thought it was a phase but now he tucks his willy between his legs so you can't see it."

Derek said: "I dreamed of having a son who played football for his college.

"The other day Dylan told me he wanted to be a cheerleader. When I said boys could be cheerleaders too, he said, 'No, a girl cheerleader!'"

Hal and Kaden's parents said they let their children change sex after therapists told them they could be transgendered - boys trapped in girls' bodies.

But Jana Ekdahl, a clinical psychotherapist and gender specialist, thinks they might have acted too soon.

She said: "The one concern is that people move a little bit too fast in this process. Hal is a kid, so he should enjoy being nine years old. Try not to think too far into the future."

Of Dylan, she said: "Three things could happen - he could grow up to be gay, he could be transgendered, or he could grow out of this behaviour."

However, she added: "If the child is transgendered, they're transgendered. There's really nothing you can do to change that."

"It occurs in the womb - the brain develops in one direction and the body in another."

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