Discuss the role of genes and hormones in gender development (8+16 marks)

AO1
Supporters of the biological approach believe that genes and hormones are what effects gender development. Genes are what determines your sex as male or female. The male chromosomes being XY and the females XX. The sex chromosomes have a direct link with gender development and also the development of external and internal genitalia. Genetic transmission explains aspects of gender due to the link between genes, genitalia and hormones.

AO1
At 6 weeks, the testes and ovaries develop and begin to produce different levels of sex hormones, oestrogen and testosterone. Hormones actually have an even bigger impact on gender development, produced both prenatally and in adolescence, they govern a lot of your development. Testosterone is the male sex hormone, produced by the testes, this hormone is what triggers changes like facial hair and muscle growth. On the other hand, oestrogen is produced by the ovaries and is the female sex hormone. This triggers the onset of menstruation and breast growth.

AO2
Geshwind and Gallaburda (1987) stated that sex differences may be caused by the release of testosterone. They believed that as male brains are exposed prenatally to testosterone, they have a more masculinised brain, the reason why men are better at spatial navigation and women better and socialising and empathising. Therefore suggesting that hormones have an effect on sex differences in men and women.

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