

GENDER DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN:

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PARENTS

INTRODUCTION

This resource guide will help you define some key terms, identify common misconceptions that sometimes arise, and discover ways to support your child including the resources available to them.

Challenging our perspectives can be difficult and uncomfortable; we encourage you to lean into that discomfort and proceed with an open mind.

DEFINITIONS

Some relevant terms that are important to be familiar with, from the Gender Spectrum and the Human Rights Campaign:

Gender Binary: The notion that there exist only two genders, each solidly fixed, biologically based and attached to various expectations for behavior, appearance and feelings.

Transgender (or, trans): In addition to being a gender identity, transgender or trans is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender (or, cis): A term used for individuals whose gender identity and/or expression aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

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Gender Identity: The way a person experiences gender. It is not always visible to others and does not always align with what society expects based on assigned sex.

Sex: The designation made at birth as “male” or “female” based on an individual’s genitalia. Frequently assumed to be the same as gender, a person’s sex is only one of the dimensions that may constitute an individual’s gender.

Gender Transition: The processes by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward manifestations. Transitioning includes **social transition** (e.g., clothing, make-up, pronouns, etc.), **medical** or **physical transition** (e.g., hormone therapy, hair removal, etc.), and **legal transition** (e.g., legal name change, etc.). It is important to note that transitioning is not necessary to self-identify as transgender or trans, and there can be many reasons someone might choose not to transition.

COMMON MISCONCEPTION #1

★ *Gender identity affects sexual orientation*

Attraction and gender identity are separate and distinct components of a person’s identity and are not necessarily related.

Some people may identify as BOTH trans and gay. Other trans people may identify as trans and straight.

COMMON MISCONCEPTION #2

★ *Children who have not reached puberty do not have a fully developed sense of their own gender identity.*

“Being trans is part of one’s innate sense of self. No two experiences of gender identity development are alike. Some may know from a very early age. Others may not have the language to articulate their sense of self until much later.”



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★ MISCONCEPTION #3

Not conforming to dominant gender norms or expressing gender in unique ways are signs that a child is trans or will identify as trans when they grow up.

While anyone (trans or cis alike) may not subscribe to every gender norm imposed on them by the social systems they live in, children who are trans are usually consistent and insistent with their need to be recognized for who they are.

★ MISCONCEPTION #4

Being transgender is a choice.

Just as being cisgender is not a choice, being transgender is not a choice. That said, trans people (just like cis people) can still make choices about when, where, and how they embrace and express their true authentic selves.

WAYS TO SUPPORT ANY CHILD ON YOUR LIFE ★

1. Learn more about gender, children and youth with the many resources linked.
2. Share your own experiences and reflections of growing up and how that has shaped how you view gender.
3. Give your child the space to feel comfortable to express themselves and show their authentic self.
4. Find spaces for expressing your own feelings about your child's gender through support groups, online forums, or conferences.
5. Make sure the people around your child are respectful and know how to refer to them.

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RESOURCES

[Gender Creative Kids](#) – A Montreal-based resource that offers support groups and resource guides.

[Affirming Adults Guide](#) - A collab between Egale (Toronto-based organization for 2SLGBTQI people and issues) along with the Public Health Agency of Canada, this is a lengthy guide for adults on how to support gender diversity in children and youth.

[Gender Spectrum](#) – An organization that has many resources for gender-expansive children and offers support groups.

[Direct online and phone support for LGBTQ+ Youth](#) - From the Human Rights Campaign

[Supporting Your Young Gender Non-Conforming Child](#) - Resource Guide

[Transestrie](#) - Support groups for parents and children in Montreal

[Transitionner](#) - Information on transitioning in Quebec (French only)

[Transestrie](#) - Gender affirming gear guide

[The Trevor Project](#) - Provide support and information on gender identity

[Human Rights Campaign](#) - Supporting for and caring for Gender Expansive Youth Resource Guide

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CONCLUSION

Gender is different for everyone and can be expressed in many different ways. These resources can help you better support your gender diverse child. Take the time to read through the many guides and access the services that these organizations offer.



IMPORTANT DATES

MAR

31

International Transgender Day of Visibility

JUL

14

International Non-Binary People's Day

OCT

23

International Pronouns Day (every 3rd Wednesday in Oct)

QUOTE

"When you become the image of your own imagination, it's the most powerful thing you could ever do." - RuPaul, public figure

FEEDBACK

Let us know if you think anything is missing or what other resource guides you would like to see! [Click here!](#)

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