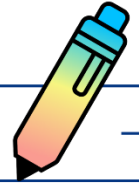




# RESPECTING YOUR LGBTQIA+ CHILD



Thank you for reading this handout. Just by picking this up, you have shown a willingness to learn more and support your LGBTQ+ child, and that matters. We created this handout for parents and caregivers who want to create an inclusive environment in their homes, regardless of your children's orientation and gender. Here, you will find suggestions for respectfully communicating with your LGBTQ+ child and tips for demonstrating your support of their identity.

## Tips for Understanding and Communicating Respectfully With Your LGBTQ+ Child

**Mirror your child's language.** Listen to how your child identifies, the terms they use, and the way they talk about people who are important to them, then mirror that language. If your daughter identifies as queer, don't refer to her as a lesbian, use her language. Have conversations with your child about the terms you should be using, what they mean to your child, and how you can be the most respectful in your language when speaking with your child and with others.

**Avoid trying to figure out why.** Your child is not LGBTQ+ because of that time you let them paint their fingernails or allowed them to cut their hair really short. No one knows why some people are straight and others aren't. There is no data on why some people are cisgender and others are transgender. Resist the temptation to blame anything or anyone for your child's LGBTQ+ identity. Not only is there no causal evidence but blaming implies that your child is somehow defective. Not cool.

**Try not to confuse orientation and gender.** Orientation is who we are attracted to. Gender is who we are. They are completely different things. In other words, if your son has come out as gay, it doesn't mean that he really wants to be a woman. If your daughter has come out as transgender, you have no idea what her orientation is unless she tells you.

**Don't get caught up in stereotypes and preconceived notions.** A great deal of our impressions and understanding of LGBTQ+ individuals come from the media, where LGBTQ+ people are often portrayed in very stereotypical ways. Try not to get caught up in preconceived ideas of what being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender means and looks like. Your lesbian daughter may love makeup. Your transgender son may hate sports. Allow your child the freedom to express themselves however they want and engage in activities of their choosing.

**Use the GTQ identities as adjectives.** Many people think the words gay, transgender, and queer are nouns, but they're adjectives. Saying "the gays" is offensive. Please say "gay men" instead. A person is not "a transgender," they are "a transgender individual."

**Remember that orientation and sexual behaviors are different.** Just because your child has come out as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, it doesn't mean that they are necessarily having sex. Think about how old you were when you first knew whom you were attracted to. It's common for people to know whom they are attracted to long before they engage in any sexual activity.

**Use the "Switch It" Technique.** Not sure how to talk with your LGBTQ+ child about relationships and sex? Your interactions should be no different than they would be with a non-LGBTQ+ child. Do talk with your LGBTQ+ child about healthy relationships, safety, and access to appropriate care. Don't ask your LGBTQ+ child intimate sexual questions that you wouldn't ask a non-LGBTQ+ child.

### **Parenting Resources for Supporting Your LGBTQ+ Child**

Family Acceptance Project: A research-based, culturally grounded approach to help ethnically, socially, and religiously diverse families to support their LGBTQ+ children and youth at:

<https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

Gainsburg, Jeannie. *The Savvy Ally: A Guide for Becoming a Skilled LGBTQ+ Advocate*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, March 2020.

Gender Spectrum: Education, resources, and support for parents, teens, and children at

<https://genderspectrum.org/>

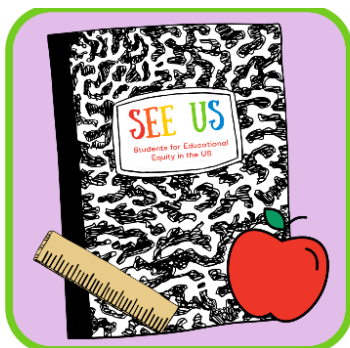
Loving Families: Online support, education, and links to local groups offered by PFLAG, the nation's oldest and largest organization for parents, families, and allies of LGBTQ+ people at:

<https://pflag.org/loving-families>

My Kid is Gay: Education and resources to help families understand their LGBTQ+ kids at

[www.mykidisgay.com](http://www.mykidisgay.com)

Savvy Ally Action: Free handouts and videos on how to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ communities at: [www.savvyallyaction.com](http://www.savvyallyaction.com)



This flyer is presented courtesy of Students for Educational Equity in the United States. SEE US was founded in 2020 to offer support to students and families who face challenges accessing a safe and inclusive educational experience. For more information, visit <https://studentsforeducationalequity.org>

Thank you to Savvy Ally Action for the following information. Visit <https://www.savvyallyaction.com> for more resources and information. Portions of this information were taken from

*The Savvy Ally: A Guide for Becoming a Skilled LGBTQ+ Advocate.*