

**RAISING HEALTHY  
AND HAPPY  
LGBT &  
GENDER  
NON-  
CONFORMING  
CHILDREN**

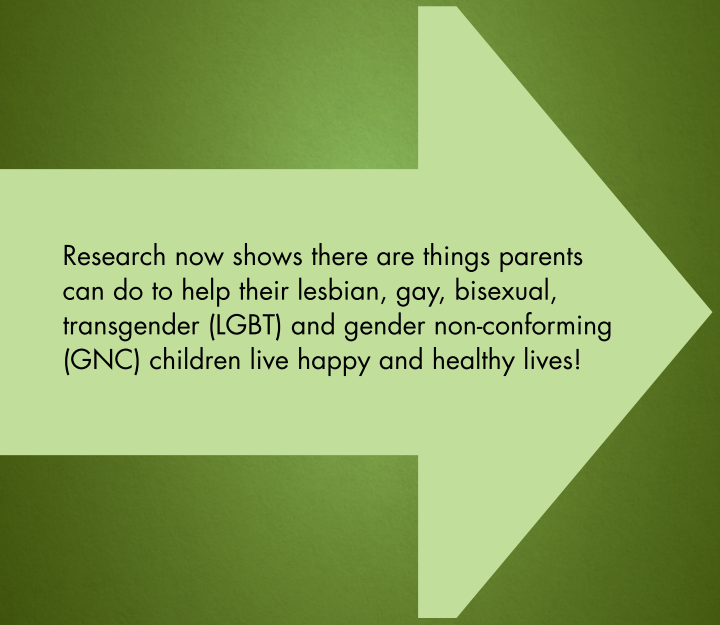


**YOU LOVE YOUR  
CHILD AND WANT  
THE BEST FOR THEM!**



**You want them to be healthy and happy and to have a good life.**

**So, you do your best to give them all the support they need and protect them from harm.**



Research now shows there are things parents can do to help their lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and gender non-conforming (GNC) children live happy and healthy lives!

The research-based information in this publication is adapted from research conducted by the Family Acceptance Project and published in "Supportive Families, Healthy Children: Helping Families with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Children" (2009). Please note we have included gender non-conforming children in this publication because these children have the same needs for affirmation and support and face many of the same challenges as LGBT children.

# HELPFUL BEHAVIORS

- Talking to your child about being LGBT or GNC
- Listening to your child with an open mind and open heart
- Telling your child you love and support who they are
- Sharing affection with your child—like by hugging or kissing them—when you find out they are LGBT or GNC
- Getting correct information about LGBT or GNC people and help in the community for your child and your family
- Giving your child LGBT books and magazines that are right for their age and letting them participate in LGBT activities that are right for their age
- Asking family members to act respectfully and lovingly towards your child, and stopping them from saying or doing mean things to your child because they are LGBT or GNC
- Standing up for your child when they are treated badly for being LGBT or GNC
- Bringing your child to LGBT organizations and activities



- Talking with the leaders of your faith community about how to support your child
- Connecting your child with an LGBT or GNC adult who can be a positive role model and show your child they can have a good life
- Welcoming your child's LGBT or GNC friends into your home
- Letting your child wear clothes and hairstyles and do activities that express the way they feel inside about being a girl or a boy or both or something else
- Believing your child can have a happy life as an LGBT or GNC adult

**WHEN PARENTS DO THESE THINGS, GREAT THINGS CAN HAPPEN FOR THEIR CHILDREN!**

**THE CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO:**

- Feel good about themselves
- Feel happy about their lives
- Have close relationships with their families
- Stay away from drugs
- Protect themselves from sexually-transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS
- Believe they will have a good life and be happy adults
- Want to have a family of their own





Sometimes parents don't know what to do to help their LGBT or GNC children. And sometimes the things we do to protect them accidentally hurt them, instead.

# HURTFUL BEHAVIORS

- Pressuring your daughter to be more feminine or your son to be more masculine by making them wear certain clothes, style their hair a certain way, or do certain activities
- Telling your child that you are ashamed of them or that how they look or act will embarrass the family
- Trying to change your child's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression
- Telling your child to hide or lie about being LGBT or GNC
- Telling your child it is their fault they are being treated badly because they are LGBT or GNC
- Telling your child God will punish them because they are LGBT or GNC
- Not allowing your child to participate in family activities, like weddings, holiday dinners, or family reunions
- Not letting your child get information about being LGBT or GNC or LGBT activities (like youth groups or dances), or communicate with LGBT or GNC people
- Calling your child names because they are LGBT or GNC



- Not being affectionate with your child, like not hugging or kissing them
- Slapping, punching, or kicking your child because they are LGBT or GNC

**Research shows that doing these things makes it more likely that our LGBT and GNC children will:**

- Feel alone, confused, sad, and scared
- Get bad grades
- Use drugs
- Have unprotected sex and get a disease, like HIV/AIDS
- Not believe they will have a good life and be a happy adult
- Not want to have a family of their own
- Commit suicide (or try to commit suicide)



# WHAT DO ALL THESE WORDS MEAN?

**LGBT** stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

**Lesbians** are girls who are emotionally and sexually attracted to girls.

**Gay boys** are boys who are emotionally and sexually attracted to boys.



**Bisexual youth** are young people who are emotionally and sexually attracted to both boys and girls.

**Transgender girls** were born with male bodies, but feel like girls inside and **transgender boys** were born with female bodies, but feel like boys inside.

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual are **sexual orientations**. Sexual orientation is about who a person is emotionally and sexually attracted to.

Transgender is a **gender identity**. Gender identity is the sense a person has of being male, female, both, or neither.

**Everyone has a sexual orientation and a gender identity.** Children usually figure out their gender identity around age 3 and their sexual orientation around age 10, although everyone is different and there is no “normal” time for every person to understand these things about themselves.

**Gender non-conforming children** (or GNC) are children who act and look different than what society expects of a girl or a boy.

**Gender expression** is how people show others their gender, through the way they dress, style their hair, talk, walk, etc.

# WHERE ELSE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

## FOR FAMILIES

- **Family Acceptance Project** [familyproject.sfsu.edu](http://familyproject.sfsu.edu)
- **Gender Spectrum** [www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

## FOR YOUTH

### foster care

- **It's Your Life**  
[www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/child/PublicDocuments/its\\_your\\_life.authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/child/PublicDocuments/its_your_life.authcheckdam.pdf)
- **Queer & Trans Youth in California Foster Care Have Rights: A Know Your Rights Guide**  
[www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/fosteryouth012105.pdf](http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/fosteryouth012105.pdf)

### school

- **Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Network**  
[www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)
- **Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**  
[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

### legal

- **Lambda Legal** [www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)
- **National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)**  
[www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)
- **Transgender Law Center** [transgenderlawcenter.org](http://transgenderlawcenter.org)

### hotlines

- **The Trevor Project** (crisis/suicide hotline)  
[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org) • (1-866-488-7386)
- **National Runaway Safeline** [www.1800runaway.org](http://www.1800runaway.org)  
(1-800-RUNAWAY/1-800-786-2929)

