



Gender Identity

- Being straight, gay, bisexual or transgender is not something a person can choose.
- Kids usually start to figure out who they are attracted to between 9 and 12.
- Being gay is NOT caused by early childhood experiences, parenting or the way someone was raised.
- There is nothing wrong with children who want to adapt non-traditional gender roles (boys wearing dresses, girls playing with trucks) nor is it a guarantee of their future sexual orientation.
- Parents often struggle with the lack of uncertainty accepting a child that is different and often need help.
- Families need support navigating criticism from their community
- All children need a supportive home life, an inclusive and accepting school environment and support for any harassment they feel for being different
- Kids are often singled out for being different. Teasing, and being called gay can be extremely upsetting to children too young to understand their sexuality.
- A parent's fears about their child being gay is often less to do with acceptance and more to do with the discrimination their child will face.
- Your child's happiness is not related to their sexual orientation
- All children need to know that they are loved and accepted by their parents.
- Gay youth try and take their lives four times as often as their straight peers.

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Tips & Tricks (from parents and professionals)

- ✓ Make the effort to understand how your child is feeling.
- ✓ Make the distinction between their feelings and yours. If you are having difficulty with your feeling as a parent- seek assistance.
- ✓ Watch your words. Recognize the way you talk about gay people sends a very clear message to your children about your level of acceptance.
- ✓ Follow your child's lead- if they don't want to talk about their sexuality, respect that too.
- ✓ Don't assume. The only person who really knows how they feel is your child. Pushing them to be something they are not or forcing them to explain themselves before they are ready can be equally stressful.
- ✓ Remind your child you love them very much no matter what they are.
- ✓ Children who are gay have a high chance of depressions, suicide and drug use. Get informed and seek support so you can be there for your child.

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Resources:

PFLAG
www.pflag.org

LGBTQ parenting network
www.lgbtqpn.ca

Ten tips for parents of a gay, lesbian,
bisexual or transgender child
www.advocatesforyouth.org

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
www.glsen.org

Belong To- supporting LGBT youth in Ireland
www.belongto.org