

Supporting Queer Youth: A guide for parents



By queer youth, for queer youth



Introduction

Having a queer kid can be scary - living in a world you know will oppose and marginalize your child's identity is never easy. Despite this, regardless of whether you yourself can change the world, you can make a difference for your own queer child.

Queer, especially nonbinary and transgender youth are disproportionately impacted by mental health struggles, peer bullying, and familial rejection.

Queer youth, just like any other demographic, need love, compassion, and support. As a parent, guardian, or family member, your unconditional efforts to love and understand are immeasurably valuable to a queer child.

This guide, put together by queer youth for parents of other queer youth, will walk you through the reasons your support is so critical, and how you can demonstrate it to your child.



The Why

From [The Trevor Project](#), the [CDC](#)

- Queer youth who feel valued by their parents are **less likely to experience depression**, attempt suicide, use substances, or become infected with STI/Ds
- Queer kids who have a positive relationship with their parents are more likely to have safer sex
- Young adults with accepting families attempt suicide at significantly reduced rates compared to those in less accepting families (31% versus 57%)
- Trans children who have socially transitioned demonstrate comparable levels of self-worth and depression as non-trans children
- Trans kids have **lower suicidal ideation** and behavior when their chosen name is consistently used
- Pubertal suppression for trans youth is associated with decreased behavioral and emotional problems as well as decreased depressive symptoms



The Why

From [The Trevor Project](#)

- Gender affirming hormone therapy decreases suicidality, and **increases emotional wellbeing**
- Trans youth who legally change their name have **improved access to care** and increased socioeconomic stability
- **Regret is low** for gender-affirming care interventions, and a study of 55 transgender adults who transitioned as teens showed that not one individual experienced regret
- Many major medical organizations have guidelines for working with transgender individuals centered around respect for the patient, with some releasing statements explicitly opposing efforts to prevent access to gender-affirming care



The How

From [OptionB](#)

Accepting behaviors and actions:

- ask your child about their experience and how you can help them feel supported
- listen without interrupting or arguing
- tell them you love them and express affection
- learn together about issues LGBTQ youth face by joining an LGBTQ family support organization, such as [PFLAG](#), [Gender Spectrum](#), [Gender Odyssey](#), or [Strong Family Alliance](#)
- stand up for your child when they are mistreated
- help your child find an LGBTQ role model
- talk to your religious leaders about helping your place of worship become more supportive, or find a more supportive place of worship at [gaychurch.org](#), [Q Christian Fellowship](#), [Keshet](#), or [Muslims for Progressive Values](#)
- encourage family and friends to check in with your child and show support
- challenge homophobic comments, especially from family
- get to know your child's LGBTQ friends and romantic partner
- support your child's gender expression



The How

From the [CDC](#), [OptionB](#)

- Take time on your own to learn about your child's identity, and use respectful language and an open mind when speaking with your child
- Help your child access therapy if they need mental health support
 - Note: conversion therapy is not based in science—it is traumatizing for queer kids, and should not be used

Rejecting behaviors to avoid:

- hitting or threatening your child
- shaming, name-calling, or silencing your child
- excluding them from family events
- standing by silently if family/others bully them
- blaming or punishing your child for who they are
- restricting access to information or events about LGBTQ identity and topics
- cutting them off from supportive friends
- withholding affection
- pressuring your child to be more or less masculine or feminine
- punishing them by cutting off financial support



Thank you for reading!



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