

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. 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.



MENTAL HEALTH

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 STIs. 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.



GENDER AFFIRMING CARE

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.



AVOID REJECTION

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

Avoid rejecting behaviors such as threatening, shaming, name-calling, punishing, pressuring, or silencing your child. Don't exclude them from family events or allow family to mistreat them for their identity.

It's important to recognize the necessity of supportive community, so avoid restricting access to information or events about LGBTQ identities and topics, or cutting your child off from supportive friends.



SHOWING ACCEPTANCE

From [OptionB](#)

Actions that can help make your child feel accepted include asking about their experience or how you can help them feel supported, listening without interrupting or arguing, and telling them you love them and expressing affection.

Help your child to find LGBTQ role models in their community, and encourage family and friends to show support as well. Get to know your child's queer friends or partner, and support the way they express their gender.

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](#).



SHOWING ACCEPTANCE

From [OptionB](#)

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](#).

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.

If your child is mistreated for their identity, stand up for them, and practice challenging homophobic and transphobic comments.

Help your child access therapy if they need mental health support or another adult to talk about their identity to.

Note: conversion therapy, which attempts to stop people from being queer, is not based in science, and is traumatizing for queer people to undergo.



ABOUT QYA

Queer Youth Assemble is a queer youth-led nonprofit serving queer and trans youth under 25 in the United States.

To find more resources like this one, learn more about our work, or get involved yourself, go to our website queeryouthassemble.org or visit our Instagram [@queeryouthassemble](https://www.instagram.com/queeryouthassemble).

