

Supporting Your LGBTQIA+ Child



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The day your child comes out to you is an emotional day for both of you. Whether you had a feeling all along, or the news was a surprise, the most important thing for you to do is to listen, accept them for who they are, and do your best to be there for them. By seeking out and reading this article, you are already showing supportive, loving actions.

What else can you do to support your child?

Let them know you love them as they are. Tell them you love them. Tell them you accept them for who they are. Reassure them that nothing has changed because they came out to you. You might assume that it's obvious you would still love and support your child, regardless of their orientation or identity, but your child needs to hear you say the words. Say them, and say them often.

Use their chosen pronouns. If your child has come out to you as transgender, ask them what pronouns they want you to use. Use them. Their preferred pronouns may change over time.

Use their chosen name. Many transgender individuals change their names to match their gender identity better. Use the name they have chosen. Research has found that using a transgender teen's chosen name reduces their risk of depression and suicidality. Using their chosen name may literally save their life.

This can be emotionally difficult for a parent since you gave them their birth name. However, when they were born, you had no way of knowing what their gender identity would be in the future. They, are not rejecting you by choosing another name.

Go to Pride with them. Look up when there is a Pride parade or festival in your area and go to Pride with your child. Allies attend Pride, as well as the gay community. You will be welcome there. As a parent of a queer or trans child, going to Pride to support your child will be celebrated.

Advocate for them. Sadly, bullying can be a major challenge for LGBTQIA+ children. Be their advocate. Watch for signs of bullying, and follow-up if you think your child is being mistreated.

Educate yourself on the LGBTQIA+ world. Learn the terms, history, and culture. Your child will see your effort to educate yourself as a deep form of support.

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Refer to their partner as their partner—not their “friend.” Or refer to their partner in whatever way they have asked you to. If they come home with a same-gender partner, for example, calling this person their “friend” instead of their partner or their boyfriend or girlfriend can be hurtful.

Don’t imply or say to them that it’s “just a phase” they will outgrow. Their gender identity or sexual orientation *may* change but the odds are, it won’t change. When you indicate to your child that they will “grow out” of their current orientation or gender identity, you are unintentionally implying that who they are now is not acceptable.

Get them in a support group or get them counselling if they are struggling. The risk of suicide and depression is high in the LGBTQIA+ community. Seek out support for your child. Look for support groups, meet-ups, or gay youth groups. Get them a private counsellor.

Find counselling for yourself. You can love and accept your child for who they are, but still struggle with having an LGBTQIA+ child. You may be fearful of their future or worry about the discrimination they may experience. You may grieve over what you imagine their lives to be. If you’re going to support your child fully, you need support, too.

Here are some links.

[LGBTQ young people | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk)

[MindOut | Mental Health Charity for LGBTQ community](https://www.mindout.org.uk)

[Support & Networking Groups for Sefton - Sefton Sexual Health Service](#)

[Welcome - FFLAG](#)

[Support for parents of LGBTQ - Strong Family Alliance](#)

You can always contact our Health and Wellbeing Advisor, come in for a chat and a coffee.

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