



HEALTHY CPS

OFFICE OF STUDENT HEALTH & WELLNESS

Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People: Tips for Parents and Caregivers

In 2019, 22.7%¹ of CPS High School Students identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ+). To learn more about LGBTQ+ Identities, check out our Key Terms for Understanding LGBTQ+ Identities Guide.

Here are our tips for supporting an LGBTQ+ young person in your life:

- ❖ **Lead with love.** Make sure your child knows that how much you love them hasn't changed. And remember that actions that show how much you love your young person might mean even more to them than words.
- ❖ **Have open and honest conversations** with your child about their sexual or gender identity. Make sure they know that you are willing to listen.
- ❖ **Process your feelings about your young person's identity on your own.** Telling you about their LGBTQ+ identity was probably a very stressful thing for your young person to do. It's important not to cause more stress by expecting them to help you process your own feelings about it.
- ❖ **Remember that your loved one is the same person they have always been!** They haven't changed – only the way you see them has. The fact that they felt comfortable enough to be open about who they are is something to celebrate.
- ❖ **Ensure your child has access to LGBTQ+ role models.** Consider borrowing a book from the library by an author who shares their identity. Or, be intentional about watching movies and shows made by LGBTQ+ folks, with LGBTQ+ representation.
- ❖ **Find out if your child's school has a Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA).** If your child wants to be involved in a GSA, support the organization however you can. Or, connect your child with other LGBTQ+ community organizations.
- ❖ **Do your research.** Remember that it is not the responsibility of someone with a marginalized identity to educate others - even their family - about their identity or experiences. Do your own research so that you can be more comfortable and prepared for further conversations with your young person.
- ❖ **Be an advocate** for your young person in other areas of their life. For example, require that your family support your child's identity, or help your child come out to teachers and staff at school when and if they decide to do so.

For more information, check out these resources:

PFLAG's Our Children: Questions and Answers for Families of LGBTQ youth and adults

https://pflag.org/sites/default/files/OUR%20CHILDREN_PFLAGNational_FINAL.pdf

Supportive Families Health Children Report from the Family Acceptance Project

https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/FAP_English%20Booklet_pst.pdf

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019 (Chicago)