

As a parent, you will need to help your child in many parts of his/her life, depending on the age of your child.

- Work with your child's teachers and school personnel for appropriate bathrooms, sports teams, after school activities. Most likely you will have to educate the school staff.
- Work with your family doctor to understand your child's special medical needs, including the option of puberty delaying drugs.
- Teach your child how to cope with others who may try to bully or tease your child.
- Learn about your child's legal rights around the issues of name and gender changes on official documents, applications, ID cards, passports, drivers licenses.
- Educate all your friends, and parents of your child's friends on appropriate pronouns that will be helpful and not hurtful to your child.
- Be alert for signs of deep depression or suicidal thoughts in your child and seek professional care if needed. Being transgender or intersex is not a mental illness, but children feeling rejected by their families have a much higher risk of suicide.
- Teach your child about healthy sexual behavior, seeking relationships that are non-violent, mutual, supportive and respectful.
- Be prepared to open your home to the transgender friends of your children whose parents are unable to accept them in their own homes.

*We are commanded by God to love all of God's children whether transgender or not, yours or another's, orphaned or homeless, rich or poor, neighbor or stranger
—to love them all!*

Getting Help

You may need help for your child, yourself, your partner and your relationship, your extended family and your church.

The Parents Reconciling Network, an extension ministry of Reconciling Ministries Network, offers:

- Printed materials, biblical/spiritual resources and suggestions on how to obtain various resources.
- Individual consultation by email, phone, letter or in person; and, connection with an understanding volunteer in your region.
- Our newsletter, *Kindred Connection*
- A PRN Contact list on the RMN website: www.rmnetwork.org
- Resources about the Reconciling Ministries Network's national Convocation, which offers special sessions for parents.

PFLAG

www.pflag.org
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
There are local chapters in many cities.

For basic information about transgender and intersex conditions:

www.thetaskforce.org

www.isna.org—for information on intersex

www.religiousinstitute.org—national leadership organization working at the intersection of religion and sexuality issues.

www.transequality.org—a good resource for information on the legal aspects of transgender issues. Click on "issues".

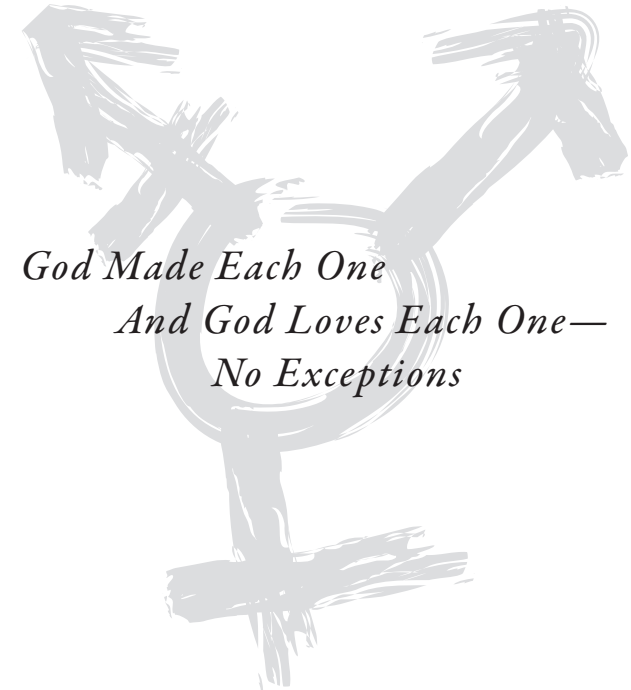
<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu> Family Acceptance Project

www.glma.org Gay & Lesbian Medical Association—health care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals

www.aiclegal.org Advocates for Informed Choice—legal advocacy for intersex children

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OUR **transgender** AND **Intersex Children**



*God Made Each One
And God Loves Each One—
No Exceptions*

The Parents Reconciling Network

is an extension of the
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Local contacts:



On the day your child was born, you were told “You have a boy!” or “You have a girl!” You were never told that this fact could change. The first facts you told others about your new baby were your baby’s weight and sex—even before you offered information about the baby’s health, features or personality.

A child’s sex has been regarded as unmistakable, permanent and distinct—male or female. Gender is intimately related to the expectations of society for behavior and appearance. Both the assumed gender and the sex declared at your child’s birth have shaped your plans and dreams for your child, your image and expectations and your relationship with your child. All that changes when you learn that you have a transgender or intersex child.

TERMS:

LGBTI stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex persons. Q is sometimes added to include people who are questioning or call themselves Queer.

Transgender is a general term describing people whose gender identity is different from the sex that was assigned at birth.

Intersex describes people who are born with external genitals, internal reproductive systems or chromosomes which are not typically male or female.

These children are loved by God just as they are.



Research has not yet determined exactly how many persons are transgender or intersex, but you likely have had transgender or intersex persons in your life and not known it. Some estimates are that up to 1 in 500 is transgender* and about 1 in 1500 or more is intersex**. So, what caused your child to be transgender or intersex?

What causes a person’s sexual orientation is unknown. Causes for people being transgender or intersex are not fully understood. A huge variety of factors are at work in making each individual the person that they are and there is no one reason that causes people to be transgender. It has nothing to do with anything you did or did not do, nor anything your child did or did not do.

Families love their children and want what is best for them. You cannot change your child. However, you can change your response to your child. Your specific response can improve your child’s health and happiness. Your consistent parenting and unconditional love does have a central and enduring influence on your child’s life. Here are some parenting guidelines, shown by research, to improve the physical and mental health of LGBT children.

*On the Calculation of the Prevalence of Transsexualism By Femke Olyslager and Lynn Conway September 6, 2007

**Blackless, Melanie, Anthony Charuvastra, Amanda Derryck, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Karl Lauzanne, and Ellen Lee. 2000. How sexually dimorphic are we? Review and synthesis. American Journal of Human Biology 12:151

Behaviors that Help

Some Family Behaviors that Reduce Your LGBT Child’s Risk for Health & Mental Health Problems & Help Promote Their Well-Being

- Talk with your child or foster child about their LGBT identity.
- Express affection when your child tells you or when you learn that your child is gay, transgender, or when you learn your child is intersex.
- Support your child’s LGBT identity even though you may feel uncomfortable.
- Advocate for your child when he or she is mistreated because of their LGBT identity.
- Require that other family members respect your LGBT child.
- Bring your child to LGBT organizations or events.
- Connect your child with an LGBT adult role model to show them options for the future.
- Welcome your child’s LGBT friends & partners to your home.

Behaviors to Avoid

Some Family Behaviors that Increase Your LGBT Child’s Risk for Health & Mental Health Problems

- Hitting, slapping or physically hurting your child because of their LGBT identity.
- Verbal harassment or name-calling because of your child’s LGBT identity.
- Excluding LGBT youth from family and family activities.
- Blocking access to LGBT friends, events and resources.
- Blaming your child when they are discriminated against because of their LGBT identity.
- Pressuring your child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine.
- Telling your child that God will punish them because they are gay, transgender or intersex.
- Telling your child that you are ashamed of them or that how they look or act will shame the family.
- Making your child keep their LGBT identity a secret in the family and not letting them talk about it.

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