



Creating a Welcoming and Affirming Environment

As young people define who they are and where they belong, they are also forming their sexual and gender identities. As a caregiver, you have an important role in providing a safe space where they can explore their identities and express themselves. You don't have to know everything about gender or sexual identity terms to create a loving, positive environment.



HELP YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME

- Support and accept young people in developing their identities.
- Don't make assumptions about a young person's gender or sexual identity
- Recognize that how teens understand and express their identities may change over time.
- Provide access to media with positive representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) characters and storylines
- Help young people connect with LGBTQ+ resources in the community
- Share positive, empowering messages about sexuality

Get to know a young person without making assumptions about them

- "How should I refer to you? I'm [name] and my pronouns are..."
- "Who are the important people in your life?"
- "What are your favorite TV shows right now? Which characters do you like best?"



RESOURCES

[Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays](#) (PFLAG) is a national organization with local chapters across the country. This community support group builds awareness, knowledge, and skills around accepting and appreciating the LGBTQ+ people in your life.

The [Human Rights Campaign](#) is a national organization that advocates for equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. Through stories, data, toolkits, and calls-to-action, they create awareness around the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people and provide solutions against harmful laws.

[The Trevor Project](#) is a national organization that provides crisis support, education, and resources to young LGBTQ+ people. This includes hotlines, handbooks, and more.

The [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) provides resources for child welfare workers serving LGBTQ+ youth, as well as support and guidance for LGBTQ+ youth and their families.