

## TOP TEN TIPS FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

1. Your child does *not* experience their gender as others may see them.
2. This is significant and your child takes it very seriously
3. Continue providing your child unconditional love.
4. If you feel overwhelmed, get support and accurate information. You are not alone!
5. This isn't about anything you've done or are doing wrong.
6. This doesn't mean your child is gay or lesbian. They may or may not be...sexual orientation is different from gender identity.
7. The most current research indicates that in most children, gender identity variance is neither an illness nor a psychiatric disorder.
8. It's not important right now where your child is going to "end up" related to gender.
9. Your child has every good chance of growing up to be an exceptional and successful person.
10. Respect your child's feelings about their gender identity above all else.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The following online pamphlets and books are available for download from the internet. In some cases you'll need the free Adobe Acrobat PDF reader to view them.

**A PARENT'S DILEMMA: THE TRANSGENDER CHILD**  
[firelily.com/gender/gianna/dilemma.html](http://firelily.com/gender/gianna/dilemma.html)

**MOM, I NEED TO BE A GIRL**  
[ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Evelyn/Evelyn.html](http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Evelyn/Evelyn.html)

**CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S GENDER BEHAVIOR**  
[www.dcchildrens.com/dcchildrens/about/pdf/GenVar.pdf](http://www.dcchildrens.com/dcchildrens/about/pdf/GenVar.pdf)

## ORGANIZATIONS

**PFLAG**  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

**TRANSFAMILY OF CLEVELAND**  
[www.transfamily.org](http://www.transfamily.org)

**THE TRANSGENDER LAW & POLICY INSTITUTE**  
[www.transgenderlaw.org](http://www.transgenderlaw.org)

**AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION**  
[www.aclu.org/getequal](http://www.aclu.org/getequal)

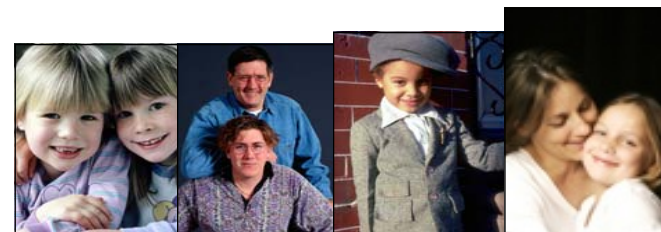


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*TransYouth Family Advocates is a  
501(c)3 non-profit organization*



Our Support...Means The World To Them

**WWW.IMATYFA.ORG**

**TransYouth Family Advocates (TYFA)** is a coalition of parents, family, friends and caring adults dedicated to educating and raising public awareness about the medical and cultural challenges faced by children with gender variant and gender questioning identities and the families who love them.



## OUR VISION

*Whenever children are able to express or articulate their gender identity, however young, they have the right to a caring atmosphere supporting that identity.*



### TransYouth Family Advocates (TYFA)

believes that all people, especially children, have the right to be listened to when they express something as core to their sense of self as gender identity, particularly when that gender identity expression differs from their assigned birth sex.

**TYFA** believes that anyone who supports and honors a child's gender identity expression deserves in return the support and respect of their extended families, neighbors, communities, schools, child welfare agencies, the courts and last, but not least, the medical community.

**TYFA** believes there is no greater gift we can give or positive role-modeling we can do than to teach our children to respect and cherish diversity

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Do you think a child you know might be transgender, gender variant or questioning?  
How can you tell? *What can you do?*

These questions come up every day in homes, schools, day care centers, workplaces, medical offices and legal settings. The simple answer to the last question is to begin by respecting the child's gender expression, whatever that may be. Talk to the child about how they feel about themselves as a boy or a girl...or someone somewhere in-between. Let them know that whatever they feel is OK.

Listen to the child...and then help them find others who will listen to them...and respect them.

## HEALTH

Gender variant & gender questioning identity in children is NOT a mental disorder. Clinical studies indicate that gender identity is hard-wired from birth and has little to do with physical anatomy. It is important that physicians and therapists understand the special needs of these children and adolescents. While gender identity variance is not a mental disorder, the disapproval transgender youth may receive from family and society can have a lifelong impact on their self-esteem. Gender identity CAN NOT be changed through aversion therapy, reparative therapy, shaming or any other variation of such aimed at forcing or coercing a child to conform to what might be considered an arbitrary definition of "typical" binary gender expression.

## EDUCATION

Schools should join families, friends and caring adults in their support of transgender, gender variant and questioning children. Administration, faculty and staff must be aware of the need to provide a nurturing and non-discriminatory environment for our trans children and to make every effort at protecting them from bullying and cruelty from their peers and/or insensitive adults.

Our children must be treated with the respect they deserve as human beings. Schools should work with families to facilitate changing of school records so as to reflect the child's gender identity expression and children must be allowed to use school restroom facilities appropriate to their gender expression.

## ACCEPTANCE

Trans and gender variant children and youth are simply being themselves. Nothing more and certainly nothing less. There is nothing a parent could have done, or not done to encourage or discourage their child's gender expression. Most importantly, there is nothing wrong with that child...

No child would choose to consistently express a sense of self-identity that brought nothing but disapproval from family, friends and society in general unless that sense of self was so strong that it was central to who they are as a person.

Trans, gender variant and questioning children and youth deserve caring, respect and understanding for the courage they display and the challenges they and their families face as a result of growing up "different" in a culture that sadly, often does not celebrate difference. Parents, family, friends, caring adults and helping professionals need to work together to make the world a more welcoming place for these extraordinary children and youth.

## LOVE & LIBERTY

Like any child, trans, gender variant and questioning youth need **love**, encouragement and support. Given that, these children will grow to be healthy and happy people. They can and will become doctors, teachers, law enforcement officers, artists, musicians, scientists, parents, theologians and anything else they dream of...just like any other child.

If we **respect** our trans, gender variant and questioning children for who they are TODAY, without projecting upon them our fears, prejudices, guilt or concerns about who they might become TOMORROW, we will give them the gift that each of us values more than any other...the **liberty** to be an individual...the **liberty** to be a child who is **loved** simply for being who they are.