



# Pediatric LGBTQIA+ Health and Wellness





# What does LGBTQIA+ stand for?

The LGBTQIA+ community represents a diverse group of individuals who identify with a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities, including, but not limited to:

- **L**esbian
- **G**ay
- **B**isexual
- **T**ransgender
- **Q**ueer
- **I**ntersex
- **A**sexual



# Important Definitions and Distinctions

## Biological Sex

- The physical characteristics you are born with and develop, such as chromosomes, hormones, reproductive organs, body shape, voice pitch and body hair.

## Sexual Orientation

- Inherent and enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

## Gender Identity

- A person's innermost concept of themselves as male, female, a blend of both or neither.
- How individuals perceive themselves and what they want to be called.
- Can be the same or different from sex assigned at birth

## Gender Expression

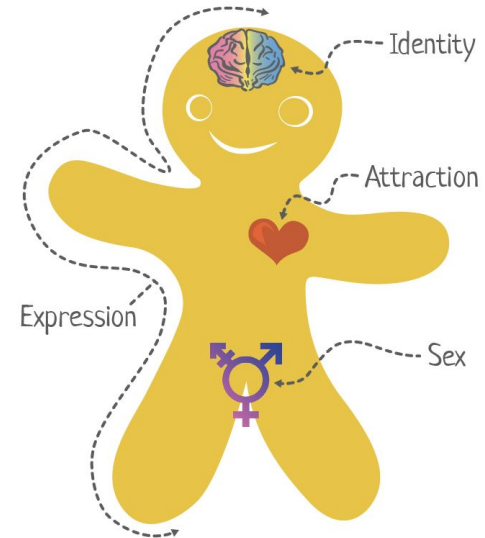
- External appearance of one's gender identity, usually through clothing, body characteristics or voice, or may not conform to masculine or feminine norms

## The Genderbread Person

A helpful diagram to help explain how **biological sex**, **sexual orientation/attraction**, **gender identity** and **gender expression** are all independent parts of our identities!

Each part of our identities can exist on a **continuum or spectrum**, rather than a binary.

Each component is an independent part of what makes up our complex identities!



⌚ means a lack of what's on the right side

Gender Identity

⌚ → Woman-ness  
→ Man-ness

Gender Expression

⌚ → Femininity  
→ Masculinity

Anatomical Sex

⌚ → Female-ness  
→ Male-ness

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex  
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth  
□ Female □ Intersex □ Male

♥ Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)

⌚ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People  
→ Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

♥ Romantically Attracted to...

⌚ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People  
→ Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

# More Definitions

<b>Gay</b>	Attractions to the same sex.	<b>Cisgender</b>	Used to describe a person whose gender identity lines up with the sex assigned at birth.
<b>Lesbian</b>	A woman who has attractions to other women. Some women prefer to use "gay" instead.	<b>Transgender</b>	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex assigned at birth.
<b>Bisexual</b>	Attraction to more than 1 gender, not always at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.	<b>Gender fluid</b>	A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.
<b>Pansexual</b>	Describes a person who has the capacity to form enduring attractions to any person, regardless of gender identity.	<b>Gender non-conforming</b>	Used to describe people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectation of their gender.
<b>Demisexual</b>	Describes a person who does not experience attraction or romantic feelings until a strong connection is formed.	<b>Non-binary</b>	Describes a person who does not identify exclusively as a girl/woman or boy/man.
<b>Asexual</b>	Describes a person who does not experience sexual attraction. May be shorted to "ace."	<b>Genderqueer</b>	Describes a person who may reject fixed categories of gender and embrace a fluidity or spectrum of gender identity, or may fall outside of these categories completely.
<b>Questioning</b>	May be used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation / gender identity.	<b>Intersex</b>	Describes a person with one or more inherited sex characteristics, including genitals, reproductive organs, chromosomes that do not fit into "female" or "male."
<b>Queer</b>	May be used when a person's sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual / straight.	<b>Transitioning</b>	A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This may include <b>social transition</b> (changing name, pronouns), <b>medical transition</b> (hormones or surgeries), and <b>legal transition</b> (changing legal name / government IDs)



# Development of Gender Identity

Awareness of gender identity happens **early in life**:

- \*1 - 2 Years: Understand boy vs girl
- \*3 Years: Understand themselves as boy / girl
- \*4 Years: Stable period of gender identity

During this time, children may start to display gender-role confusion and **gender dysphoria**.

- **Gender dysphoria**: emotional distress of having a gender identity that is different from biological / assigned sex at birth.
  - May resolve in adolescence.
  - Others may continue to feel dysphoria and seek steps and treatment to transition to the gender that most aligns with their true gender identity.



# Development of Sexual Orientation

Typically emerges before or during early in adolescence.

Can continue to evolve throughout the lifespan.

May be delayed or complicated by stigma, homophobia, and cultural expectations and norms.



# How does sexual orientation and gender identity contribute to a person's health and wellness?

- **Having an understanding and acceptance of one's own identity is key to emotional, mental and physical health.**
- Due to factors like stigma, rejection, judgment, homophobia, discrimination, and lack of supportive resources, LGBTQIA+ individuals are **at risk for higher rates of:**
  - Struggles with self-image and self-esteem
  - Social anxiety
  - Bullying and harassment
  - Depression and suicidal ideation
  - Substance abuse
  - Risky sexual behaviors
  - Homelessness
- **Supportive family networks and schools and access to educational, community and mental health resources all serve as protective factors.**





# Treatment Considerations for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Youth

## Transitioning

Individuals who experience gender dysphoria or who wish to take steps to align themselves and their bodies with their true gender identity, may start the process of transitioning.

- **Social transition**: Using a **name**, **pronouns** and **outward gender expression** that are more aligned with their identity.
- **Medical transition**: The use of **hormones** to either suppress puberty or to induce pubertal changes that are more aligned with their identity.
- **Gender Affirming Surgery**: Surgical procedures that masculinize or feminize appearances.

**Psychological care** is recommended and often required for many steps of the transition process.

The risks associated with transitioning often outweigh the risks associated with suffering with gender dysphoria.



# Comprehensive Care for LGBTQIA+ Pediatric Patients

- Trusting, nonjudgmental and affirmational relationships
- Inclusive language and use of personal pronouns
- Confidentiality between patients and providers
- Support in sorting out feelings and identity
- Promoting healthy sexuality and practices
- Promoting strengths and assets
- Providing education and resources
- Preventive care and addressing risks
- Referrals for mental health support
- Referrals for transgender services
- Provide support and resources for parents of LGBTQIA+ youth



## Resources for LGBTQIA+ Youth and Their Parents

CDC Resources for LGBT Youth and Parents: <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm>

The Trevor Project: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/> (Help for LGBTQ youth in crisis)

It Gets Better Project: <https://itgetsbetter.org/>

PFLAG: <https://pflag.org/> (For parents and families of LGBTQIA+ youth)



# Resources

1. David A. Levine, the COMMITTEE ON ADOLESCENCE, Paula K. Braverman, William P. Adelman, Cora C. Breuner, David A. Levine, Arik V. Marcell, Pamela J. Murray, Rebecca F. O'Brien; Office-Based Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth. *Pediatrics* July 2013; 132 (1): e297–e313. 10.1542/peds.2013-1283
2. [https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms?utm\\_medium=ads&utm\\_source=GoogleSearch&utm\\_content=Glossary-List&utm\\_campaign=GoogleGrant&utm\\_source=GS&utm\\_medium=AD&utm\\_campaign=BPI-HRC-Grant&utm\\_content=620437481249&utm\\_term=list%20of%20genders&gclid=CjwKCAjws--ZBhAXEiwAv-RNLyq-QKV7jqgOCjSK1rmJfOjeNHTNCqGBCCVIBRLbYd72Yo3vMQO6oBoCo2lQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms?utm_medium=ads&utm_source=GoogleSearch&utm_content=Glossary-List&utm_campaign=GoogleGrant&utm_source=GS&utm_medium=AD&utm_campaign=BPI-HRC-Grant&utm_content=620437481249&utm_term=list%20of%20genders&gclid=CjwKCAjws--ZBhAXEiwAv-RNLyq-QKV7jqgOCjSK1rmJfOjeNHTNCqGBCCVIBRLbYd72Yo3vMQO6oBoCo2lQAvD_BwE)
3. <https://www.genderbread.org/>
4. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Gender-Diverse-Transgender-Children.aspx>
5. [https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/4/e20182162/37381/Ensuring-Comprehensive-Care-and-Support-for?\\_ga=2.267995534.1009258306.1664902753-426707854.1664753644](https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/4/e20182162/37381/Ensuring-Comprehensive-Care-and-Support-for?_ga=2.267995534.1009258306.1664902753-426707854.1664753644)