

10 ways to promote positive childhood experiences (PCEs) for transgender and nonbinary children and youth handout

All children and youth need positive childhood experiences (PCEs) to thrive as adults. Those who identify as transgender (or trans) and nonbinary, too, need the same PCEs such as strong and secure relationships; safe environments to live, learn and grow; and opportunities for engagement and emotional growth. They grow up in a world that operates largely in a gender binary, leaving them, often at a very young age, needing to understand and accept who they are. While many trans and nonbinary children and youth are supported by friends and family, it is common for trans and nonbinary youth to experience disapproval and bullying, leading to a higher risk of anxiety and depression.

The health and well-being of trans and nonbinary children and youth have been a topic of much political debate over the past year. These young people should be able to learn about themselves and their identities in a supportive environment. Issues of healthcare belong to them and their parents, with the advice and guidance of professionals who can offer care.



Like all other children, trans and nonbinary children and youth who are trans and nonbinary need us to actively support their health and resilience.

Here are 10 ways to promote PCEs for transgender and non-binary children and youth.

**1**

Check your local library. Are there books there about trans and nonbinary youth? If not, [consider donating some](#). Help youth feel seen and represented in their community.

2

Ensure your community offers a safe place for children and youth who are trans and nonbinary to gather - such as a community center, a school club, or a local nonprofit. All children need to feel like they belong, and they matter.

3

Include trans and nonbinary children and youth in school and out-of-school program sports. Youth sports are about fostering important life skills like teamwork, persistence, and the art of losing gracefully! Remember that the goal of youth sports is to develop lifelong health and enjoyment - not just to produce professional athletes. All children and youth should be allowed to choose the activities that match their interests, whatever their gender identity.

4

Make sure your place of employment clearly posts their nondiscrimination policy on their website or in the office. Some organizations post the Pride or Trans and Nonbinary Pride flag to let others know that they have created a safe place for trans and nonbinary children and youth.

5

No one should feel uncomfortable when they need to use the restroom. Help create a safe environment by ensuring your building has at least one bathroom option for “all genders.”

6 Stop name calling, teasing, taunting, and bullying when you see it.
Be an upstander not a bystander!

7 Get into the habit of sharing your pronouns when you introduce yourself. This is a very small thing that everyone can do to create a safer space for those whose pronouns may not be immediately obvious. The Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio has a [comprehensive guide](#), complete with great videos, on asking for and sharing pronouns.

8 Talk with the children in your life about what it means to be transgender and nonbinary. People tend to fear what they do not understand. Help our children be supportive friends to their trans and nonbinary classmates.

9 Be a safe relationship for the trans and nonbinary children and youth in your life. We know that every child needs the support of at least two adults who are not their parents. Some trans and nonbinary children and youth have an even greater need when they do not get unconditional support from members of their own families.

10 Gender-affirming healthcare dramatically helps trans and nonbinary youth. Whenever access is threatened, call your legislators and tell them that medical decisions need to be made for each individual child, not by the government.