

Parenting an LGBTQ+ Child

Parents play an important role in their child's well-being. LGBTQ+ young people face higher risks for mental health challenges. They are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide as their peers (The Trevor Project). Your acceptance, patience and support can make a major difference in your child's life.

How to Respond

When a child comes out, your words matter. Avoid comments that dismiss their identity, such as "It's just a phase." These statements can feel hurtful. Instead, show support. You might say, "Thank you for telling me. I love you, and I am here for you." This helps build trust and keep communication open.

Coming to Terms with Your Own Feelings

It is normal to have questions or feel unsure when your child shares their LGBTQ+ identity. Focus on your child's emotional health first, even if you need time to process your own feelings. You can learn more by reading about LGBTQ+ experiences and seeking support from groups like **Parents, Families & Friends of LGBTQ+ People (PFLAG)** or **The Child Mind Institute**. Talking with other parents who have been through similar experiences can also help.

The Impact of Acceptance on Health

Research shows that family acceptance has a strong effect on LGBTQ+ youth. The Family Acceptance Project found that supportive families help young people have better mental health as they grow into adulthood. Rejection, however, increases the risk of depression, substance use and suicidal thoughts (National Institutes of Health). Your support can protect your child's long-term health.

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Family support has been shown to protect LGBTQ+ youth mental health.

The Family Acceptance Project

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Becoming an Advocate

There are many ways to show support for your child, including:

- Educating yourself:** Learn about LGBTQ+ topics to better understand their experiences.
- Creating a safe environment:** Make your home a place where your child feels accepted and protected.
- Standing up against discrimination:** Speak out when you hear homophobic or transphobic comments in your family or community.
- Supporting their social circles:** Encourage friendships with peers who respect and affirm who they are.

Parents have a powerful role in shaping their child's self worth. By offering steady love, respect and advocacy, you can help your child face the world with confidence.

[#HappyPride](#) [#SupportPride](#)

Reviewed by Medical Director, Doctor of Medicine, MD.