

Supportive Families, Healthy Children

Helping families with lesbian,
gay, bisexual and transgender (lgbt)
children because families love their
children and want the best for them.

Research has shown that family acceptance of their LGBT children promotes well-being and helps protect LGBT children against risk. Family rejection has a serious impact on a gay or transgender young person's risk for health and mental health problems.

Some Family Behaviors that Reduce Your LGBT Child's Risk for Health & Mental Health Problems & Help Promote Their Well-Being

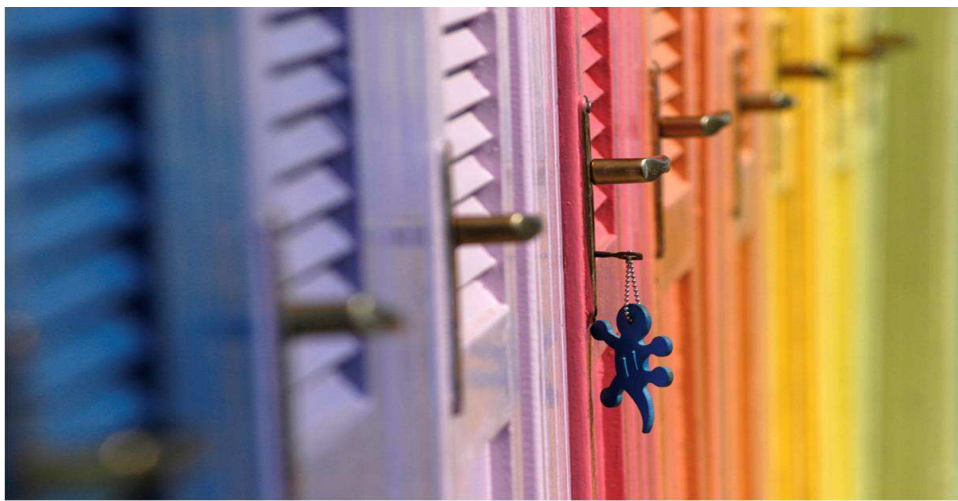
Behaviors that Help

- Talk with your child or foster child about their LGBT identity
- Express affection when your child tells you or when you learn that your child is gay or transgender
- Support your child's LGBT identity even though you may feel uncomfortable
- Advocate for your child when he or she is mistreated because of their LGBT identity
- Require that other family members respect your LGBT child
- Bring your child to LGBT organizations or events
- Connect your child with an LGBT adult role model to show them options for the future
- Welcome your child's LGBT friends & partners to your home
- Support your child's gender expression
- Believe your child can have a happy future as an LGBT adult

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It's a FACT...

Being a little less rejecting and a little more accepting can make an important difference in a young person's risk for serious health problems, including suicide and HIV.



Some Family Behaviors that Increase Your LGBT Child's Risk for Health & Mental Health Problems

Behaviors to Avoid

- Hitting, slapping or physically hurting your child because of their LGBT identity
- Verbal harassment or name calling because of your child's LGBT identity
- Excluding LGBT youth from family and family activities
- Blocking access to LGBT friends, events & resources
- Blaming your child when they are discriminated against because of their LGBT identity
- Pressuring your child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine
- Telling your child that God will punish them because they are gay
- Telling your child that you are ashamed of them or that how they look or act will shame the family
- Making your child keep their LGBT identity a secret in the family and not letting them talk about it

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It's a FACT...

Highly rejected gay and transgender young people were:

More than 8 times as likely to try to take their own lives

Nearly 6 times as likely to report high levels of depression

More than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs, and

More than 3 times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases

compared with gay and transgender young adults who were not at all or rejected a little by their parents—because of their gay or transgender identity.

Source: Caitlin Ryan, Supportive families, healthy children: Helping families with lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender children. Family Acceptance Project, San Francisco State University, 2009

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