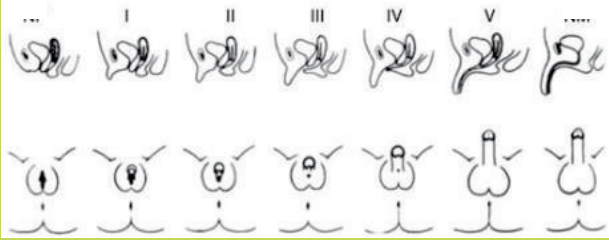


How do doctors decide what gender marker they should indicate on a person's birth certificate?

Doctors decide which gender marker to assign an individual at birth based on something called the Prader Scale. The Prader Scale is a visible representation of various genitals that range from a typical vagina to a typical penis and gonads.



While the first two images on the scale are clearly typical vaginas and the last two are clearly typical penises, the three in the center are considered to be more open to medical interpretation. When someone is born with genitals somewhere in between the range of II, III, or IV, they are typically considered to be intersex. **Intersex means, "having a combination of both male and female biological traits"**. The old standard in the United States has generally been for doctors to remove parts of the exterior genitalia and form the remaining tissue into a vagina in order to "normalize" the infant. Thankfully, this practice is slowly coming to an end as it has been shown to cause pain, incontinence, infertility and psychological damages to those on its receiving end.

Around 1.7% of people are born intersex, comparable to the amount of people born with red hair. People born with genitals that do not fit the binary idea of male or female by way of having either a penis or a vagina are typically what we think of when discussing intersex people. There are, however, a myriad of chromosomal patterns that can lead to a person being intersex even if they have clearly identifiable genitals. Some examples of this are **Klinefelter Syndrome, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, and Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia**. Genitals are not a clear indicator of a person's gender, only their sex (their physical biological characteristics).

Do young people even comprehend all of these things about gender?

Yeah, for the most part. Most children are able to understand and contextualize stereotypical gender groups between the ages of 18-24 months old. They begin developing a category for their own gender by 3 years old, and it's typically solidified by age 4.

Many people identify with both a romantic and a sexual orientation. A person's romantic orientation identifies which genders, if any, they are inclined to form an emotional attraction to, whereas a person's sexual orientation identifies which genders, if any, a person may be inclined to form a physical relationship with.

Here's a quick breakdown of some romantic & sexual orientations:

Under the Asexual, or Ace spectrum, we also have: Demisexual- A person who does not experience sexual attraction to someone until after they have formed a strong emotional bond with them and **Grey ace-** A person who experiences limited sexual attraction (can be used as a separate identity or for anyone on the ace spectrum who feels that their experience is not fully defined by the term asexual).

Homoromantic	Romantically attracted to the same gender
Heteroromantic	Romantically attracted to members of the opposite gender
Biromantic	Romantically attracted to two or more genders
Panromantic	Romantically attracted to others, but gender is not a factor in the attraction
Aromantic	Experiences little to no romantic attraction, usually satisfied with other non romantic relationships such as friendship
Homosexual	Sexually attracted to the same gender
Heterosexual	Sexually attracted to members of the opposite gender
Bisexual	Sexually attracted to two or more genders
Pansexual	Sexually attracted to others, but gender is not a factor in the attraction
Asexual	Experiences little to no sexual attraction, or primarily experiences emotional attraction

We understand that some of the information in this packet may be uncomfortable for you to hear or even contradict things you've been told before, but it's important. According to The Family Acceptance Project, youths who have families with high levels of LGBTQIA+ rejecting behaviors are **8x more likely to attempt suicide, 6x more likely to be depressed, 3x more likely to experiment with illegal drugs, and have 3x the risk of contracting STDs** than those with families who have low or no rejecting behaviors. As a caregiver, you help set the tone for how the world will receive your youth and it is your responsibility to give them the support that they need to be successful. Need help? Email us! We've got you. Welcome to the family!

Welcome to the Family of the QUEER!

LGBTQIA+

INFORMATIONAL GUIDE

For Family and Chosen Family of LGBTQIA+ Youth
2023 Version

E-mail and website:
Info@QUEERfamily.org
www.QUEERfamily.org

Exploring gender and sexuality can be a difficult task for teens and their loved ones to tackle together. There's so much information available on these subjects, from so many vastly different viewpoints, that it's difficult to know what is factual and what is prejudiced. We hope to help clarify some of that for you and bring you to a place where open and honest discussions around gender and sexuality can be more comfortable for you and your youth. We understand that some of this may be new for you- and that's okay! The Family of the QUEER is happy to help you navigate this information without shame or judgment of any kind. We all have to start where we are and we're honored that you're choosing to step forward with us.

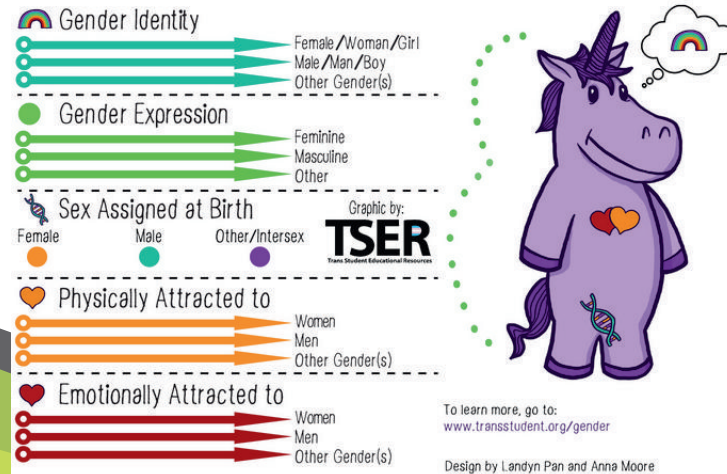
Let's start with the basics- WTF is LGBTQIA+?

- L- Lesbian
- G - Gay
- B - Bi
- T - Trans
- Q - Queer/Questioning
- I - Intersex
- A- Asexual (Ace)

+ Someone who does not define themselves as being both heterosexual and cis (we'll talk more about this word later) but does not feel represented by the other letters. It is also meant to signify that this acronym is always evolving to be more accurate and inclusive.

It's also important for us to acknowledge our allies- but what is an ally? An ally is Someone who advocates and supports a community other than their own. Allies are not part of the communities they help. A person should not self identify as an ally but show that they are one through action.

Now that you're familiar with all of the letters, let's take a more comprehensive look at gender using The Gender Unicorn graphic from our friends over at TSER.



Gender Identity:

Gender identity is the way a person feels on the inside. For some people, those feelings fall under **one** definitive category such as boy or girl. For non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer people, and others, those feelings can fluctuate between male, female, both, or neither and are not concrete. For this reason (among others), some people prefer to use they/them ze/xe or other gender neutral pronouns. While the use of the word “they” as a singular pronoun has been around for as long as the word itself, it is often debated as being too confusing or otherwise inconvenient to use when referring to people who do not fall under the binary concept of gender. This is an easy argument to debunk as “they” is routinely used as a singular pronoun for people of unknown gender who do fall under a binary concept of gender. For example:

Look at that. A singular “they” casually existing in the wild. And we all survived.

“My cousin is coming over for dinner.”
 “What time will they be here?”
 “Around five.”

Gender Expression:

Gender expression is the way a person chooses to present themselves to the world. This can range from feminine, to androgenous, to masculine, to neutral. **Androgenous** means to present in a way that combines both masculine and feminine characteristics into a single form so that the person is neither distinguishably masculine or feminine and can be used both as a gender identity and as a form of gender expression.

Gender expression exists independently of gender identity, and it's okay if someone's gender expression doesn't sync up perfectly with what another person might assume someone with that gender identity should look like. It's all a matter of personal preference.

Sex assigned at birth:

The assignment and classification of people as male female, intersex, or another sex based on physical anatomy at birth.

What does it mean to be cis?

Cis is short for cisgender. Cisgender simply means that the gender you are now is the same as the gender the doctor presumed you to be when they marked your birth certificate. It's basically the opposite of being trans.

What does it mean to be trans?

Trans is short for transgender. Being transgender means that the gender you are now is not identical to the gender the doctor presumed you to be when they marked your birth certificate.