



# When The Apple Does, And Does Not, Fall Far From The Tree: Strategies For Parents Raising LGBTQIA+ Children





When The Apple Does Not  
**PRESENTATION**  
Does Not, Fall Far From The Tree:  
Strategies For Parents Raising  
LGBTQIA & Children  
Jeri Rochman



# PRESENTATION

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- ❑ Introductions
- ❑ Terminology Review
- ❑ The Coming Out Process
- ❑ LGBTQIA+ Kids and School Life
- ❑ LGBTQIA+ Kids and Family Life
- ❑ Ask Us Anything!





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Jen Gruskoff (she/her) is a member of the Kaleidoscope Advisory Board. She has worked as a writer for over 20 years, mostly in motion pictures and TV. In 2016, Jen co-founded the Girls Soccer Network, a digital media company that connects, educates, and inspires the thriving community of female players, coaches, and fans. As the GSN Editor in Chief, Jen provides daily original content and curated stories across [girlssoccernetwork.com](https://girlssoccernetwork.com) and multiple social media platforms. Jen identifies as cisgender/lesbian and she is the proud parent of a genderqueer child and a cisgender daughter.





# LGBTQIA+

What do these letters stand for?

- ❑ **Lesbian** –a woman who is predominantly sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women.
- ❑ **Gay** -a man who is predominantly sexually and/or romantically attracted to other men.
- ❑ **Bisexual** – a person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to both people of the same, and different genders. **Pansexual** – a person who is attracted to people of any or all genders.
- ❑ **Transgender** – a person whose gender identity doesn't conform to their sex assigned at birth.
- ❑ **Queer** refers to people of any sexual orientation/gender identity/gender expression that isn't cisgender/straight. **Questioning** refers to a person who is still exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and in the process of coming to know themselves.
- ❑ **Intersex** - a person born with anatomy, genetics or hormones that vary from "male" or "female".
- ❑ **Asexual** - a person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to any gender.
- ❑ **Plus** – refers to people whose sexualities, sexes, and genders we haven't included or do not feel comfortable or covered by the above defined words.



# Gender Identity / Gender Expression

- ❑ **Gender Identity** - The part of a person that is their sense of self as a male, female, neither, or both. Gender Identity is completely internal, it is not visible.
- ❑ **Cisgender** - Gender Identity that corresponds to sex assigned at birth.
- ❑ **Transgender** - Gender Identity that does not correspond to sex assigned at birth.
- ❑ **Non-Binary** - A person who doesn't identify as a man or a woman or either.
- ❑ **Gender Expression** - The part of a person that conveys how a person identifies. Gender Expression is external, it is visible.





# The Coming Out Process

- ❑ “Coming out of the closet”, also known as “Coming Out” is a metaphor used to describe LGBTQIA+ people’s self disclosure of their sexual orientation or their gender identity.
- ❑ The Coming Out Process is when a person decides to reveal an important part of who they are to someone in their life.
- ❑ This is an incredibly personal decision. There is no right or wrong way to do it. Some people chose not to formally “come out” and instead just be who they are.
- ❑ Examples of ways people have come out: phone call, text, email, letter, in person
- ❑ Some times young people will “test the waters” - Examples, “How do you feel about marriage equality?” “What do you think about Jonathan Van Ness?”





# How Should I Respond?

- ❑ If a LGBTQIA+ young person decides to share their authentic self with you, it is likely that it took them a lot of strength and courage to be so open and honest.
- ❑ How should you respond? With your own courage, commitment and support. Examples: "I am honored that you are sharing this with me" "I am here for you, I love you, I will support you no matter what."
- ❑ And complete honesty is ok too! "I very much want to say the right thing but I am not totally sure what that is. But I really want you to know that I am proud of you and think that you are a wonderful person."
- ❑ Acknowledge that the Coming Out Process is not a one time thing. LGBTQIA+ people "come out" many, many times in their lives - true strength!





# Affirming Support is an Absolute Necessity

- ❑ LGBTQIA+ young people are three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts. And LGBTQIA+ young people who have families that reject them are eight times more likely to have suicidal thoughts.
- ❑ If your child is withdrawing from you and their friends, or is losing interest in things they once loved, you might have a reason to be concerned.
- ❑ If you suspect your child may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, address it calmly and immediately. Let them know you love them and you will help them with consulting with a mental health professional for support.
- ❑ Study and study shows that having just one accepting adult in their life can reduce the risk of a suicidal attempt by a LGBTQIA+ young person by 40%





## What is school often like for LGBTQIA+ students?

- **98%** of LGBTQIA+ students report hearing the word “gay” used in a negative way.
- **70%** of LGBTQIA+ students report being verbally harassed based on their sexual orientation. **28%** report being physically harassed. **60%** said they simply do not feel safe at school because of their sexual orientation.
- **50%** of LGBTQIA+ students report verbal harassment based on their gender expression. **20%** report being physically harassed due to their gender expression.
- **54%** of LGBTQIA+ students report hearing homophobic remarks from adults on campus.
- **21%** of LGBTQIA+ students say being bullied at school is the biggest problem they face. **18%** said their biggest problem is worrying about kids at school finding out they identify as LGBTQIA+.



# Strategies for Partnering With Your Child's School To Create a Safe Campus

- Be in contact with your child's teachers so you will know if an issue arises on campus.
- Advocate for inclusive sex education.
- Push for your child's school to have a gay/straight or gender/sexuality alliance.
- Push for LGBTQIA+ information across curriculum
- LGBTQIA+ family nights, Rainbow flags, Pronouns in email signatures.





# Tips for LGBTQIA+ Students At School

- ❑ You don't have to come out at school unless you feel safe and ready.
- ❑ You deserve to have your name, pronouns, and gender identity respected by everyone. And it's OK if you are still figuring it out.
- ❑ Ask for help if you need it. It takes strength to ask for help!
- ❑ YOU know yourself best! No other kid or teacher can decide if your identity is "real" or "valid".
- ❑ Try to connect with a teacher or counselor. It is helpful for when you feel like talking or need help and advice.



# LGBTQIA+ Family Life

- As of 2020, an estimated 1.1 million US households were headed by a same sex couple. 15 % of these households have at least one child under the age of 18.
- There is no such thing as a “typical” LGBTQIA+ family. Some same-sex couples decide to have a child together, others bring children from previous relationships. Families are created much like straight couples with children being the biological child of one of the parents, conceived through donor insemination, surrogacy, or through adoption or foster care.





# LGBTQIA+ Parenting

- The research shows that children raised by two moms or two dads do not differ from children raised by a mom and a dad in terms of emotional functioning, sexual orientation, gender role behavior, behavioral adjustment, gender identity, learning or academic grades.
- When there were differences, the difference often favored the same sex parents. One study found that children in LGBTQIA+ households were more likely to feel able to talk about emotionally difficult topics and were often more resilient, compassionate and tolerant.
- The biggest challenge faced by same sex households was found to be living in a culture that can often support homophobic attitudes and beliefs.
- Research shows that children of LGBTQIA+ parents are not more likely to identify as LGBTQIA+. Children of LGBTQIA+ parents are not more likely to show differences in gender identity (whether they think of themselves as male, female, or non-binary/non-conforming) and not more likely to show differences in their gender expression (male, female, or non-binary/non-conforming behaviors).



# Tips for Parents for Supporting LGBTQIA+ Children

- Parents should learn about sexual orientation and gender expression, and be able to explain it to all family members, from cousins to grandparents. Clearly explain that it is not a phase and not something that needs to be changed.
- Require that all family members treat each other with respect and embrace each family member's sense of self.
- All family members should use inclusive language and never tolerate disrespectful language.
- Create opportunities for positive interactions such as family dinners, fun family outings, and activities (game nights, movie nights, talent show nights!)





# Q & A!



Ask Us Anything!

