

# Understanding & Raising A Trans Child



The word “trans” is used as an umbrella term to describe people who are transgender, gender diverse or non-binary.

Trans people have always existed, in many cultures around the world.

There are as many trans people as there are people with natural red hair, around 2% of the population.

## Did I do something wrong?

No. A child being trans is not anyone’s fault. They are being honest about who they are.

## Is it just a phase?

Some children explore, but many know who they are from a young age. Even if they haven’t mentioned it before. Listen and keep an open heart.

## What did I miss?

Nothing. We often make assumptions about people, and we hold stereotypes and ideas about how people should act, feel or dress. But we know this is not helpful.

Your child is growing into who they are. Everybody affirms their identity throughout their life. For example, the clothes and haircuts we choose, having a tattoo, wearing an indigenous flag, belonging to a club, playing a sport, wearing the clothes that make us comfortable.

Gender affirmation means validating the gender that feels right for you. For example, many people wear make up to ensure they are seen the way they wish to be seen. Or they go to the gym. Trans people do this too.

## What if I make a mistake?

That’s okay. If you use the wrong name or pronoun, say sorry, and try again. Your effort shows you care.

## What does “trans” “gender diverse” or “non-binary” mean?

Trans, gender diverse and non-binary people are people whose gender is different from what people thought when they were born.

This is a normal, human experience.

There is no right or wrong way to be trans.

## Why Support Matters

- When kids feel loved and safe, they are happier and healthier.
- Kids who are supported at home do better at school and in life.
- Living in an environment that is not supportive is linked to poor mental health, homelessness and suicide.
- Support from family and caregivers leads to higher self-esteem and better mental health.

## You Don’t Have to Understand Everything

You don’t have to understand everything right away. Just showing love, listening, and learning bit by bit makes a big difference.

It’s ok to have questions. It’s ok to feel emotional, confused, sad or anxious. You are not alone, many parents feel this way.

There are people who can help you learn. Talking to other parents or support workers can help.

# Supporting A Trans Child in Your Care

Support does not mean encouragement- it means listening and believing the young person and finding the right care pathways for them with the help of professionals with the right experience.

Here are some things you can consider:

## STEP 1: Build Trust

Building trust, respect, and emotional connection with young people is important for their wellbeing and sense of safety. When a young person shares they are trans, gender diverse, or non-binary, your reaction can either support or hurt them. There's no "right" way to feel—but your response matters.

Ask what they need to feel supported:

- Listen without judgment
- Ask open-ended, curious questions
- Reassure them that you love and accept them

## STEP 2: Find Support for Yourself

Families and caregivers may face challenges in understanding their child and may experience concerns for both their child and themselves.

It is ok to feel confused, to experience grief, or to not know what to do. You are not alone. Here are some things you can do to support yourself:

**Learn about gender diversity** – If you need more information, you can ask for help to find resources.

**Connect with other families** – Find others in similar situations. Join local parent groups or speak with someone to help you find groups or activities.

**Remember it's a journey** – Everyone in the family or household may need support at different times. Be patient and kind with each other.

**Look after yourself** – Caring for yourself helps you care for your child or the child in your care. Think about what you need to stay well.

Showing love, support, and willingness to learn goes a long way in helping a child feel safe, confident, and accepted.

## Easy Ways to Show Love

- Use their name and pronouns
- Listen when they talk
- Let them wear what feels right
- Help them find appropriate medical and psychological care

## Do

- Use their chosen name and pronouns
- Tell them you love them and support them
- Ask how they feel
- Learn together
- Get support if you need it

## Don't

- Call them by their old name
- Say: 'you're too young to know'
- Ignore their words or feelings
- Laugh at or dismiss their identity
- Try to 'fix' or change them