



GENDER

WHAT IS GENDER?

Gender refers to the norms, behaviors, and roles involving femininity and masculinity.

What does gender look like for your child?

Children are often taught gender cues from an early age. Even if their caretakers' perspective on gender is broad, children will often pick up signals on what are "girl" things and what are "boy" things.

Some children don't identify with either male or female gender expression in clothing, toys, activities, or more. For other children, their assigned gender might differ from the gender they identify with – often making them feel trapped or anxious.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GENDER



professionals when supporting a child who may not fit traditional gender categories.

Start a conversation

Start by noting that even though our society sometimes likes to define things for "boys" and "girls," those rules don't always work for everyone.

Tell them there is no one right way to be a boy or a girl. Some children aren't comfortable being seen as a boy or a girl.

In conversation

Ask how long your child has been feeling this way, and ask what it has been like to feel the way they have.

Remember not to confuse gender identity (one's sense of feeling male/female) with sex (biological features) or sexual orientation (to whom one is attracted).

Understand the conversation

Ask your child gently if they've encountered any hateful behavior due to gender. Then, ask if there's anything else you should know and if there's anyone they've felt comfortable talking to about their gender questions.

Remind them that you are here and ask if there's anything you can do to help.



they know you support them. Tell your child that you love them – and that your love for them has nothing to do with their gender identity. The more you can show your support, the more they will continue the conversation with you in the future.

Select another emotion or topic



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Our Conversation Starter Pack (CSP) is an interactive resource, available in English and Spanish, that supports parents, caregivers, trusted adults and young people in discussions about emotional wellness. It includes reflection questions, dialogue prompts and activities everyone can take part in.

START A CONVERSATION



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