

THE GENDER INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

**concrete strategies for creating a safer
and more accepting school climate
for all students.**

GENDER
Spectrum 

ABOUT GENDER SPECTRUM

OUR MISSION

Gender Spectrum provides education, training and support to help create a gender sensitive and inclusive environment for all children and teens.

WHAT WE DO

In a simple, straightforward manner, we provide consultation, training and events designed to help families, educators, professionals, and organizations understand and address the concepts of gender identity and expression. Our accessible, practical approach is based on research and experience, enabling our clients to gain a deeper understanding of gender all along the spectrum.

We present an overview of how society currently defines gender and how these restrictive definitions can be detrimental to those who do not fit neatly into these categories. We then help you identify and remove the obstacles so all are free to be our authentic selves

www.genderspectrum.org

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WELCOME & Introduction

Welcome to *The Gender Inclusive School*. In seeking to build greater understanding of gender, you join a community of educators committed to the well being of all of their students. The following pages and materials provide you with concrete strategies for creating a safer and more accepting school climate for all students. In establishing settings for students to simply be themselves, you will create conditions in which all students are able to learn and grow safely.

In this guide, Gender Spectrum presents a model of gender that recognizes multiple dimensions of gender. The foundation for this work is grounded in the concepts of gender diversity and gender inclusion.

“Gender Diversity” can best be understood as including the following principles:

- There is broad variation in the ways in which individuals experience and express gender.
- There is no single way to be male or female.
- There exist unique understandings about what constitutes an individual’s gender across cultures and throughout history.

Every child is gender diverse. How they do things, think, act and feel in relation to their gender is unique, whether it is more common or less so. Rough and tumble or soft and gentle, tomboys or tomgirls, kids who see themselves as both male and female or as neither, young people who move fluidly across and between, transgender children—all of these students in fact represent the incredible diversity of gender present in our schools today.

“Gender Inclusion” then can be understood to mean the practices, policies, conditions and other actions that are in place to make certain that regardless of one’s gender or gender expression, individuals are openly and freely included in the group or organization without restriction or limitation of any kind.

The Gender Inclusive School rests on the principle that educators are “protective agents.” We know from years of research across multiple domains that students learn best when they feel safe (Wooley & Rubin, 2006; Dymnicki, et al, 2001; Austin, et al 2007; Scales & Leffert, 1999). In turn, students feel safe when the adults around them take explicit responsibility for the conditions that lead to their safety. Educators as protective agents are committed to every child’s well being. Regardless of personal beliefs, they accept responsibility for ensuring that all of the young people under their care and supervision will be safe.

Operating from these principles, *The Gender Inclusive School* seeks to expand the approaches educators take to help all students feel safe within their schools or classrooms. Recognizing that schools face a multitude of complex factors as they relate to children and issues of gender, the guide flexibly responds to varying situations, communities, and conditions. Schools integrating the ideas and activities with comprehensive policies focused on the protection of all students will lead to the development of campuses grounded in kindness, respect, and acceptance. The result is an authentic, unfettered and inclusive learning community celebrating the gender diversity of all children.

Why a curriculum focused on gender?

The Gender Inclusive School seeks to expand, rather than limit, the approaches educators can take to help all students feel safe within their schools or classrooms.

The fact that you are reading this guide indicates an interest in exploring gender in your school and/or classroom. For a variety of reasons, issues of gender and gender diversity are showing up in ever increasing ways in our schools. For many individuals, this trend is welcome and long awaited. For others, examining and changing understandings of gender raises a great deal of uncertainty including perhaps a concern regarding how these concepts relate to one’s basic beliefs and values. *The Gender Inclusive School* is not intended to settle these different stances about the topic. It is not asking users to abandon their own personal beliefs; we leave the philosophical debates to others. Instead, the materials in this guide are about kids feeling safe and being able to learn. Regardless of personal beliefs, a number of factors point to the need for curriculum that focuses specifically on gender diversity and inclusion.

Gender as a fundamental sense of self

As mentioned earlier, schools and classrooms that choose to explore gender diversity benefit all children. As one of the most fundamental aspects of self, all children and youth have genders. Yet, for many, there is little if any opportunity to explore what gender means. Gender remains perhaps the least examined form of identity. Because notions of gender are rigidly enforced throughout much of western culture, a great deal of assumption about it goes unexplored. Ask any six or sixteen year-old, and they can provide a very clear picture of what they “should be doing” with regard to their gender. Young people are bombarded from all directions with images portraying what it means to be male or female in our culture. There is little room to vary from these models, let alone to consider falling somewhere between or outside the gender boxes. A curriculum that explicitly recognizes and explores gender diversity expands the opportunity to define the meaning and expression of one’s gender for every child.

Gender-based bullying

This limited understanding and appreciation for gender diversity has a very important consequence: bullying. Individuals who are seen as different are frequently targets for mistreatment. But unlike many forms of difference, when individuals perceived as different with regards to gender are the targets, there is frequently an indifference, if not overt approval, for the mistreatment they face. A quick look at any teen program on Disney or Nickelodeon reveals an almost constant refrain: step out of the gender boxes at your own risk. Insults based on gender impact all kids: one study revealed that for every LGBT young person who reported being harassed, four of their straight peers report being harassed as gay or lesbian. In most cases, the harassment was based on the student’s gender expression (Reis & Saewyc, 1999).

Beyond the daily hurts young people face as a result, there exists a far more dangerous impact. From various studies, it is clear that individuals who are bullied based on perceived gender differences face long-term challenges including health disparities, depression and reduced life satisfaction as young adults (Russell, et al, 2010; Swearer, et al, 2010). A gender inclusive curriculum serves to demonstrate that there is no “right way” to be, establishing an expectation of acceptance of each person’s own uniqueness.

- » *50% of elementary and middle school bullying incidents are based on gender or orientation slurs. (Espelage 2009)*
- » *90% of school shootings involve boys taunted with anti-gay epithets. (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003)*
- » *53% of California students reported that their school is unsafe for “guys who aren’t as masculine as other guys.” (Russell, et al, 2010)*
- » *Because of their gender expression:*
 - *Nearly nine out of 10 transgender students experienced verbal harassment at school in the past year*
 - *More than half experienced physical harassment*
 - *More than a quarter experienced physical assault (Greytak, et al, 2009)*

Increasing legal protections

The link between gender and bullying is being recognized on an increasing basis. Federal, state, and local protections that specifically name gender are becoming more and more common. Currently, 14 states provide explicit protections around gender expression and/or identity (GLSEN, 2011). Additionally, in many of the states where such protections are not in place, local districts are taking steps to do so. For example, while Florida does not have statewide protections in place fully, 60% of the students in the state are protected by local district measures. With legal protections growing, including proposed federal legislation, it is incumbent on schools to proactively address gender diversity. Curriculum that serves to expand students' understanding of one another means that rather than reacting to student mistreatment, schools can positively work to prevent it in the first place.

Safety in schools linked to improved academic success

Studies from across the country indicate that when students and teachers report feeling safe, the academic performance of the students increases, emotional distress decreases, attendance improves, and school climate becomes more positive. Expanding students' understanding about gender results in greater sense of acceptance, thus reducing stigma and strengthening the school's environment.

Entry point for other forms of diversity education

“Exposing children to diversity at an early age serves the important social goals of increasing their ability to tolerate differences and teaching them respect for everyone’s unique personal experience.”

– Superior Court Judge Linda Giles in landmark MA case protecting transgender students' right to free expression at school, 2001

Gender applies to all students; as a fundamental aspect of self, it provides a common ground upon which to talk about differences. As such, learning about gender diversity is a springboard into conversations and activities that serve to explore other forms of difference as well. In embarking on a path to expand students' understanding about gender diversity, schools set a tone in which the examination of differences across multiple domains is accepted and encouraged.

Building critical thinking skills

In building students' perspectives about gender and gender diversity, schools are able to introduce notions of ambiguity and degree. Coming to recognize gender in all of its complexity allows students to see concepts in more realistic terms. Helping them recognize and understand the idea of a spectrum—a range of possibilities and not simply the “opposite ends” of a range—builds their capacity to critically examine concepts in other areas of learning as well as building their appreciation for gender diversity.

It is already being “taught”

All around them, students are already receiving “lessons” about gender. Whether on the yard, in their communities, through the media or from other sources, our children receive a steady diet of messages about gender. But is it the message we want them to be getting? Because they are often immersed in very narrow frameworks for understanding gender, students need safe and structured opportunities to consider the messages they are receiving, and the chance to examine them and how they match their own understandings and experiences.

Social emotional considerations

As with any opportunity to learn about others and how different people experience the world, a gender inclusive curriculum is an excellent way to reinforce school climate and community expectations of acceptance, kindness, and respect. While learning about other people with experiences different than their own, children have a chance to develop empathy and compassion. In becoming familiar with notions of gender diversity, they have the opportunity to increase their skills as allies.

Being a lifeboat

There is one other reason for the creation of gender inclusive schools and classrooms. While this work is important because it helps all students appreciate the diversity of gender, for the child who is transgender or gender nonconforming it can be a lifeboat. Your classroom or school may be the one sanctuary of safety for them. In a culture just coming to understand this complex subject many gender diverse young people have few if any adults or other children around them who simply accept them for who they are. By explicitly taking steps to increase gender awareness of all kids, you create perhaps the only place in a child’s life in which it is OK to simply be oneself.

A word about resistance

What if people object to this expanded understanding of gender, or feel that their child should not be exposed to it? As mentioned previously, discussions about this topic, especially as it relates to kids, can be a “hot button” issue. Inevitably, there will be members of your school community who are uncomfortable with notions about the diversity of gender. Whatever the source, such feelings are often deeply held and integral to the individuals and families that hold them. To not recognize them is to be exclusive.

“The stakes of gender conformity are especially high for boys; undoubtedly, much of the LGBT school victimization that they experience is also rooted in a peer culture that demands conformity to masculine gender.”

- Russell ST, Ryan C, Toomey RB, Diaz RM, Sanchez J. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adolescent school victimization: implications for young adult health and adjustment. *J Sch Health*. 2011; 81: 223-230.

“*The goal of Gender Inclusive Schools is to create schools grounded in the values of kindness and respect...Every child deserves to attend school and feel safe. Gender Inclusive Schools rests on the assumption that this is a community value that everyone can support.*”

An important point to remember as you work to create a gender inclusive school is that it is not the school’s responsibility to change the beliefs of the students and families they serve. Of course, one hope is that **Gender Inclusive Schools** will expand people’s perspectives about one another, in service of greater understanding and acceptance. However, rarely if ever will an entire community reach such a place. Instead, the goal of **Gender Inclusive Schools** is to create schools grounded in the values of kindness and respect. Not all children will be best friends. Families have traditions and beliefs that can be contrary to one another. These differences are common in any diverse community. But such differences cannot be used as the basis to be hurtful or discriminatory. If a child’s gender is inconsistent with someone else’s own understandings and beliefs regarding gender, that is not an excuse to be unkind. Every child deserves to attend school and feel safe. **Gender Inclusive Schools** rests on the assumption that this is a community value that everyone can support. For specific examples of

possible responses to concerns, see “*Common Questions and Concerns Regarding Speaking About Gender Diversity with Children*” on pages 59–61 in the Resources section.

Using this Guide

The Gender Inclusive School is organized into four distinct sections:

1. Foundations of Gender
2. Characteristics of Gender Inclusive Schools and Classrooms
3. *The Gender Inclusive School* Curriculum
4. Resources and Other Support Information

1. Foundations of Gender provides an overview of basic concepts and definitions about gender diversity. Using a framework grounded in multiple dimensions of gender, this section will provide educators with a working knowledge of gender that:

- Distinguishes gender identity, expression and biology.
- Differentiates gender and sexual orientation.
- Describes the shifting understandings of gender across cultures and time.

This section also provides an opportunity to formally reflect on your own experiences with gender—both personally as well as in your role as an educator. In working with students, having examined gender in your own life will serve to ground you in this more expansive understanding of this complex subject.

2. Characteristics of Gender Inclusive Schools and Classrooms presents information about various entry points in schools for developing greater acceptance of gender diversity. Recognizing that the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” this section provides a brief overview of the multiple ways in which schools can increase their level of gender inclusiveness. Recognizing different schools and classrooms exist in varying contexts, this portion of *Gender Inclusive Schools* describes multiple approaches for beginning the process of creating a more accepting school environment.

3. The Gender Inclusive School Curriculum is the heart of this guide. With specific lesson plans and materials gauged for different grade levels, the curriculum is organized for implementation across a school. For each age range, the curriculum offers three possibilities for using these materials in classrooms:

1. Individual Lessons: given the huge number of curricular pressures facing teachers, the first level of implementation consists of a single lesson plan. Should a teacher wish to devote one discreet block of time to the subject, the activities within the lesson provide a compact way for teachers to raise and briefly explore the topic of gender. These individual lessons range from 30 – 60 minutes, and typically include two or three activities that can be done in one sitting as a group over the course of the day or week. If used across the grade levels, these individual lessons will provide students with a foundation for understanding gender diversity over time as they move through the school.

2. Unit Plans: for classrooms wishing to delve more deeply into gender, the unit plans offer a sequence of lessons exploring gender diversity. Whether used in succession over several days or spread out over time, this series of lessons serves to provide students with an in-depth set of activities that will deepen their appreciation for the complexity of gender. If implemented school wide, the unit plans provide a thorough investigation of gender, and will provide a level of “gender literacy” that will last a lifetime.

3. Curricular Integration: either in combination with the above, or on its own, this third level of implementation provides ideas for integrating gender education within one’s instructional practices throughout the year. Utilizing the perspective of gender diversity, this section of ideas and suggestions seeks everyday opportunities across the curriculum to insert gender diversity considerations in the regular goings-on of the classroom.

4. Resources and Other Support Information includes activities, an annotated bibliography of children’s books, organizations, links, policies, references and other materials designed to enhance the educator’s ability to effectively implement *The Gender Inclusive School*.

FOUNDATIONS of Gender

When a child is born, the first question most commonly asked of the new parent is “what did you have__a boy or a girl?” In fact, this focus often precedes the child’s birth. But it is this seemingly simple question that is at the root of our understandings, or misunderstandings, about gender. In the following section, we will explore how complex this question actually is, as well as how a more nimble understanding of gender as a concept opens up space for all kids. In taking this topic from static, single aspect to a more dynamic, multi-dimensional understanding, we more accurately reflect the richness and diversity that is human gender.

Foundations of Gender – Summary

The following represents an overview of the discussion about gender. For more in-depth consideration of these ideas, see the full version of *Foundations of Gender* found in the Resources section.

Gender Biology

The terms “gender” and “sex” are often used interchangeably. For many people, this understanding is cause for little, if any, dissonance. Yet biological sex and gender are different; gender is not inherently nor solely connected to one’s physical anatomy. In fact, gender is a complex concept with multiple dimensions.

Biological sex or “gender biology” includes physical attributes such as external genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonads, hormones, and internal reproductive structures. At birth, it is used to assign gender in one of two rigidly fixed options: male or female. However, even if gender is to be restricted to basic biology, this **binary model** still fails to capture the richness of gender biology observed in human beings. Individuals can

be born with numerous “intersex” conditions, including “ambiguous genitalia,” internal vs. external mismatches of tissues or organs, and chromosomal, hormonal, or protein-based differences. This spectrum of anatomical variations by itself should be enough to dismiss the myth of gender as a simple binary of male or female.

Gender Expression

Gender expression is the second dimension of gender. Gender expression refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, and other forms of presentation. As with gender biology, gender expression should be seen as a spectrum. There is a range of ways in which an individual might present gender and the norms for the expression of gender shift over time and across cultures. Gender expression is about preferences.

“Gender expression refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, and other forms of presentation.”

Despite this shifting nature, it is on the basis of gender expression that many children face mistreatment from those around them. Society frequently and artificially genders many forms of expression—toys, clothes, activities, etc. When children step outside of these expectations, the reactions from those around them can often be cruel. For educators, understanding and interrupting this dynamic is critical in the creation of a gender inclusive school or classroom. Patterns of gender expression are not rules. Because gender expression is based on one’s preferences, there is no right or wrong way. Rather than “girl toys” and “boy toys,” there are instead just “kid toys.”

Gender Identity

The third dimension of gender is gender identity, which refers to one’s innermost concept of self as male, female, both, or neither. Many people develop a gender identity that matches their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological or assigned gender. Gender identity represents an internal aspect of one’s authentic gender. While biological sex can be assigned and expectations of gender expression imposed, gender identity comes solely from within. Like the other dimension of gender, identity also offers a spectrum of possibilities rather than a simple binary. Gender identity for some means a sense of self that is at once both male and female, or fluidly moving between them. Others will declare that they are neither, where their own understanding of self fails to align with categories that do not resonate with their lived experience.

Some individuals will have a gender identity that is “opposite” that of their assigned gender. That is, someone born with a penis knows herself to be female, or an individual born with a vulva firmly identifies himself as male. A term that is often used for individuals such as these is transgender. While there are a great many ways individuals use this term, for the purposes of this guide we will use it to refer to individuals whose gender assigned at birth does not match their gender identity (the prefix *trans-* literally means across, on the other side of).

Gender in 3-D

Alone, each dimension of gender challenges the binary. But when considered as a whole, the full complexity of gender truly unfolds. It is this interaction of the three dimensions that really captures gender’s intricacy.

For many, the dimensions of gender are “aligned.” Gender Biology (assigned gender), Gender Expression (presentation of gender) and Gender Identity (internal sense of self) line up. A term sometimes used to capture this idea is cisgendered. The prefix *cis-* comes from Latin and means “on the same side as” or “on this side of.”

Another possibility is for biology and identity to line-up, but for expression to be seen as inconsistent. Of course, the norms for expression that are seen as “male” or “female” we have already suggested are artificial. But there remain in many people’s minds certain expectations.

For instance, a child assigned and identifying as female may gravitate towards the masculine in terms of her expression of gender, while another child assigned and identifying as male is seen to favor more feminine expression. To varying degrees, either of these profiles may face disapproval from those around them.

Finally, some individuals will be assigned one gender based on biology while identifying as the other. Where *cisgender* refers to someone whose identity is “on the same side as,” their assigned gender, *transgender* refers to someone whose identity is “across from” their assigned gender.

In summary, a three- dimensional model provides a far more dynamic way to think about gender. Instead of a static, binary notion linked solely to a physical understanding of gender, a far richer texture of biology, gender expression, and gender identity intersect in a multidimensional array of possibilities. Quite simply, the gender spectrum represents a more nuanced, and ultimately truly authentic model of human gender.

“*Gender identity represents an internal aspect of one’s authentic gender. While biological sex can be assigned and expectations of gender expression imposed, gender identity comes solely from within.*”

“*Know that there are no “right” answers; each of us comes by our own understanding of gender in context.*”

” **My Gender Journey**

As educators, there is a unique and influential role to be played in helping create the conditions where children can be safe in authentically expressing and identifying their gender. By embracing the richness of the gender spectrum, teachers and other adults working in schools can help to broaden children’s understandings of gender, and in so doing, help every child feel seen and recognized. An important part of that work is to consider one’s own experiences, messages, and beliefs about gender, both growing up as well as in your role as an educator.

Spend a few minutes looking over and answering the questions on the following pages. Write your answers down, and hang on to them. You may find it interesting to revisit your reflections at some point in the future, after you have had a chance to work with these materials with your students. Know that there are no “right” answers; each of us comes by our own understandings of gender in a context. Messages and traditions associated with gender are complex reflections of society, family, culture, community and other socializing forces. Use this opportunity to pause and examine your own gender history.

The exercise is divided into two parts: the first asks you to think about your own personal experiences with gender, while the second looks at your professional experiences.

1. Growing up, did you think of yourself as a boy, a girl, both, neither or in some other way? How did you come to that recognition? When?

2. What messages did you receive from those around you about gender? Did those messages make sense to you?

3. What's your first memory of gender defining or impacting your life?

4. How were students who did not fit into expectations about gender treated in school by other students? By the adults around them? By you?

5. Have you ever been confused by someone's gender? How did that feel for you? Why do you think you felt the way you did?

6. Has anyone ever been confused by your gender, possibly referring to you in a manner not consistent with your own sense of gender? How did that feel for you? Why do you think you felt the way you did?

7. Is there anyone in your immediate circle (family, close friends, colleagues) who is transgender or gender nonconforming? How would you characterize your comfort level about their gender?

8. If you were to describe your gender without talking about how you look or what you do, what would you share?

- 1.** How have issues of gender and gender diversity “shown up” in your work as an educator or in your role at school?

- 2.** What are your reflections and/or questions about the multi-dimensional model for understanding gender?

- 3.** Is there a student with whom you have worked that was/is transgender or in some other way gender diverse? What was your level of comfort in the situation?

- 4.** What training have you received about gender, gender diversity, and/or gender inclusive practices?

- 5.** How would you characterize your school’s overall level of safety for students whose gender is seen as different by those around them?

- 6.** How would you characterize your school’s overall level of acceptance for students whose gender is seen as different by those around them?

- 7.** What is your own comfort level with discussing issues of gender diversity with: Colleagues? Parents? Students?

Characteristics of GENDER INCLUSIVE Schools & Classrooms

The development of a safe and supportive learning environment is a fundamental responsibility of any successful school. As they encounter increasingly diverse populations of students, it is incumbent upon educational institutions to understand the characteristics of the communities they serve.

Creating gender inclusive schools and classrooms does not happen overnight, or by accident. No single action, policy, training, or classroom activity by itself will magically transform a campus' environment. The development of a gender inclusive setting at school is the result of intentionality and commitment. Further, inclusive campuses are not static; rather, they evolve within a larger framework and set of values about children, learning, and safety. What follows are some general characteristics that are found in schools working to be welcoming of all students, regardless of gender.

Stance: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts...

Perhaps no factor is more important in the creation of an inclusive school than the stated commitment to do so. You will notice that the word "gender" did not precede the word "inclusive." This is because there are some basic tenets that are the foundation for a positive campus culture. From years of research about school climate, we know that schools attending to students' affective needs—their sense of safety, need for equal respect, worth as individuals, and chances to discuss feelings (*Scales, et al, 2005; Cohen, 2006*)—are schools in which kids thrive. Higher achievement, better attendance, reduced levels of conflict, and increased aspirations are just some of measurable outcomes resulting from a supportive school environment.

Such environments do not develop by chance. Earlier, the idea of educators as "protective agents" was introduced. Regardless of the educational philosophy,

instructional focus, or school model, these individuals share certain characteristics:

- A bottom line assumption that children will treat one another and be treated with kindness and respect
- The belief that in order to be successful at school, students must feel safe
- Absolute commitment to the idea that adults are responsible for ensuring that all children are provided with safe spaces at school
- A sense of efficacy that as adults, they can effectively shape, and if necessary change, the conditions in their schools

Taken together, these principles result in an overall stance that is at the heart of an inclusive school. Educators who operate from this set of beliefs do not ask “if” their school is inclusive, but “how” they will make sure that it is.

When it comes to gender...

When focusing explicitly on developing gender inclusive school settings, it is helpful to think in terms of three discrete entry points for their establishment:

- Structural
- Relational
- Instructional

These entry points represent concrete areas in which schools can strategically work in service of more accepting spaces for gender diversity. Depending on the context, one or more of these entry points may be the most logical starting point. Aspects of some are subtle, or easily implemented. Others are more complex and require concerted effort and proactive planning to create the necessary conditions for their implementation. All of them are possible, and will create greater inclusiveness for all students.

Structural entry points for gender inclusive schools are concrete steps that create a foundation for gender inclusive practices to take hold. Examples of structural approaches include:

- **Policies/Administrative Regulations** that explicitly prohibit discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender identity or gender expression (see GLSEN Model Policy in resources section).
- **Systematic Staff Training** that builds the capacity of teachers and other staff to a) understand gender from a multi-dimensional perspective, and b) apply that perspective to the professional roles they play on campus.

- **Written Materials and Information** for families, students, and staff that provide a more in-depth picture about gender.
- **Student Information Systems** that allow families and students the ability to use preferred name and pronoun, including on documents that will potentially be seen by other students such as posted lists, office slips, or roll books.
- **Procedures/Forms** that demonstrate a non-binary understanding of gender (i.e. including options for guardians/students to identify gender other than male or female, to list a preferred gender pronoun, that include space to describe “any other information about my child’s gender,” etc.).
- **Signage/Visual Symbols** that send affirmative and proactive messages of acceptance of gender diversity and highlight examples of people who step outside of expected gender roles.
- **Restrooms/Facilities** that provide privacy for any student who desires it, but that are not designated for gender diverse students.

Relational entry points are the various ways in which individual interactions are utilized to reinforce a school’s commitment to gender inclusion. Supported by many of the structural components, relational aspects nonetheless require intentional behaviors in the day-to-day interrelationships of a campus. They include:

- Interrupting gender stereotypes by providing counter examples (i.e. “I know boys who like the color pink.”)
- Learning together and sharing one’s own reflections with colleagues about gender diversity
- Creating explicitly intentional spaces such as GSAs or Club Rainbows that promote inclusion and acceptance
- Teaching and reinforcing specific gender-inclusive language
- Grouping students in ways that do not rely on gender, such as “appointment clocks” (pg. 82) or characteristics such as birthdate, shoe color, etc.
- Seeking “teachable moments” in which gender inclusive messages or themes can be recognized, such as comments made by students, stories used in class, or items in the news
- Assuming a public “inquiry stance” about examining one’s own practice and the degree to which it is gender inclusive
- Recognizing and celebrating examples of gender inclusion that you observe among your students
- Modeling gender diversity in your own manner of expression

Instructional entry points are specific ways in which teaching and learning are used to instill greater awareness and understanding about gender. Whether standing alone or integrated into other aspects of instruction, instructional approaches are the most direct way to impact students. In some ways, instructional approaches are the most easily accomplished. Teachers in their classrooms have a great deal of autonomy for what takes place there. Yet at the same time, in an era of increasingly scripted curriculum, or environments in which controversial subjects are highly scrutinized and regulated, instructional methods for creating gender inclusion can have the highest stakes for a teacher or other educator. Instructional approaches include:

- Lesson plans designed to expand understandings of gender
- Open ended assignments/projects that include gender-related topics
- Transgender or other gender nonconforming individuals presenting or working in classrooms
- Guest speakers who work for greater gender equity in education, law, or another field
- The use of video or other media that present specific ideas about gender
- Integrating gender into curriculum areas through story problems, writing prompts, readings, art assignments, or research projects

Depending on the context, any one of these entry points might be the appropriate starting place for creating a gender inclusive school climate. Your own comfort level, the community in which you work or the degree of autonomy available to you are all factors to consider as you consider where to begin or expand your gender inclusive practice. When looked at as a whole, the suggestions may feel overwhelming. Instead of thinking “how will I do it all?” think about “how will I start?” Like any great journey, creating a gender inclusive school begins with a first step.

The Gender Inclusive School **CURRICULUM**

The Gender Inclusive School Curriculum is the heart of this guide. With specific lesson plans and materials gauged for different grade levels, the curriculum is organized for implementation across a school. For each age range, the curriculum offers three possibilities for using these materials in classrooms:

1. Individual Lessons: given the huge number of curricular pressures facing teachers, the first level of implementation consists of a single lesson plan. Should a teacher wish to devote one discreet block of time to the subject, the activities within the lesson provide a compact way for teachers to raise and briefly explore the topic of gender. These individual lessons range from 30 – 60 minutes, and typically include two or three activities that can be done in one sitting as a group over the course of the day or week. If used across the grade levels, these individual lessons will provide students with a foundation for understanding gender diversity over time as they move through the school.

2. Unit Plans: for classrooms wishing to delve more deeply into gender, the unit plans offer a sequence of lessons exploring gender diversity. Whether used in succession over several days or spread out over time, this series of lessons serves to provide students with an in-depth set of activities that will deepen their appreciation for the complexity of gender. If implemented school wide, the unit plans provide a thorough investigation of gender, and will provide a level of “gender literacy” that will last a lifetime.

3. Curricular Integration: either in combination with the above, or on its own, this third level of implementation provides ideas for integrating gender education within one’s instructional practices throughout the year. Utilizing the perspective of gender diversity, this section of ideas and suggestions seeks everyday opportunities across the curriculum to insert gender diversity considerations in the regular goings-on of the classroom.

Lesson Title:

Introducing Gender: Girls, Boys, and More!

K-2 LESSON PLAN

Main Concepts/Goals/Purpose (Why do this?):

This introductory set of activities is designed to help students recognize that what they like is not about being a boy or girl, but rather about individual choice. Students will be able to recognize that their favorite colors, toys, activities and other aspects that are frequently stereotyped by gender are in fact simply preferences. Rather than “boy things” and “girl things” see them as simply “kid things.” The overall theme is “there are lots of ways to be a kid, not simply boy ways or girl ways.” This lesson plan includes three activities, each of which can also be done alone or in any combination.

Objectives (Students will...):

- be able to define gender
- explore favorite colors, toys, and activities and the degree they are linked to gender-based expectations
- color pictures of clothing and hairstyles that appeal to them
- listen to the book *My Princess Boy* and reflect on the character’s experiences

TIME REQUIRED

- 40-55 minutes (all 3 activities)

MATERIALS

- chalkboard, Whiteboard or butcher paper
- *Which Outfit* and *Which Hairdo* handouts (pgs. 29-30)
- crayons, markers, pencils for coloring
- book: *My Princess Boy* by Cheryl Kilodavis

PREP

- copy *Which Outfit* and *Which Hairdo* handouts, 1 of each per student
- obtain copy of *My Princess Boy* (optional)

KEY TERMS

- **Gender:** *all the ways to be a girl, or a boy or both*

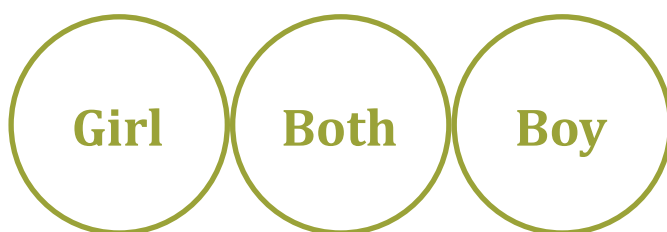
Overall Introduction: Introducing Gender

This lesson begins with students seated as a group. The teacher states that, “today we are going to be talking about gender. Gender is about all the ways there are to be a girl, or a boy, or both.”

Activity #1 - Girl, Boy or Both? (15 minutes)

Framing the Activity: All of us have different things that we like—colors, toys, activities and so on. Who decides what things we like and what things we don’t like? We are going to start by talking about those different things and whether they are for girls, or boys, or both.

1. Ask the students to think about a color that they really like.
2. After everyone has thought of a color, ask them to share with a partner.
3. Draw three circles, next to each other. Label the left one “girl”, the middle one “both” and the right one “boy.”



4. Ask a student to volunteer to share a color.

SAMPLE DIALOGUE

Teacher: Who will share a color with us?

David: I like green.

Teacher: So is green a color for boys, a color for girls, or a color for both?

David: I think green is a boy color...

Teacher: Let’s test it out with the class. Raise your hand if you like green. Look around at your classmates...hmm...it looks like green is a color that both boys and girls can like. Since both seem to like it, can it go into the “Both” circle? What do you think?

David: OK...I think it is for both.

Teacher: Does someone else want to share a color?

Nicole: I like red.

Teacher: So is red a color for boys, a color for girls, or a color for both? Which circle should it go in?

Nicole: The girls’ circle.

Teacher: Let’s test it out with the class again. Raise your hand if you like red? OK, do boys and girls both seem to like red?

Nicole: But I still want to put it in the girl circle.

Teacher: OK. Here’s a question for all of you. If you are a boy, do you have to like red? Is it OK if you like red? If you’re a girl, can you like red? But do you have to like it? Red seems like a color anyone can like, boys and girls. If I put it in the “both” circle, does that mean that Nicole can’t like it? Of course not!

5. Typically, within 3-5 examples, students will point out that all the colors should go in the “both” circle. If they haven’t, ask them if they notice anything about where all the colors seem to be ending up. If it has not come up, be sure to include pink. If no boys raise their hands when you test it with the class (which is rare), ask them if they know any boys who like pink. If still no one raises their hand, then mention that you know some who do.
6. Once you have determined that all colors really should go in the “both” circle teach them the phrase “colors are colors” and write it on the chart. At this point you can also suggest that rather than three circles, perhaps we should just have one that is labeled “kid.”
7. Conclude the “color” activity by pointing out, “colors are just colors. They don’t have a gender; they’re just colors!”
8. Depending on the attention span of the group, you can repeat the process for toys, and then for activities, each time emphasizing that there aren’t boy or girl things, just kid things. Colors are colors, toys are toys, and activities are activities.

Activity #2 - Which Outfit, Which Hairdo? (10 – 15 minutes)

Framing the Activity: Students return to their seats for this next activity. After they are seated, point out “We just learned that whatever your gender, you can like what ever you like. What about certain hairstyles or types of clothing? Let’s explore.”

1. Distribute the handouts *Which Outfit* and *Which Hairdo*.
2. Read the information at the bottom, and then tell students that they can take a few minutes to color the sheets, choosing the hairdo(s) and outfit(s) that they like, or make up their own on the back.
3. As the students work, again emphasize the notions of things are just things. If kids are saying that certain hairstyles or clothing is only for girls or boys, again “test” by asking students if they or someone they know likes that particular style or clothing. This is also a good time to talk about patterns (“more girls wear dresses”) versus rules (“boys can’t wear dresses”).

Lesson continued on next page >>

Activity #3 - Reading: My Princess Boy (15 minutes)

Framing the Activity: “We are seeing that there are so many ways to be a kid. Even with things like hair and clothes, what ever feels comfortable and makes you happy is OK! Now let’s read about a boy who has the courage to be who he is and like what he likes.” Hold up the book *My Princess Boy* and read the cover. Invite students to make predictions about the book based on the cover.

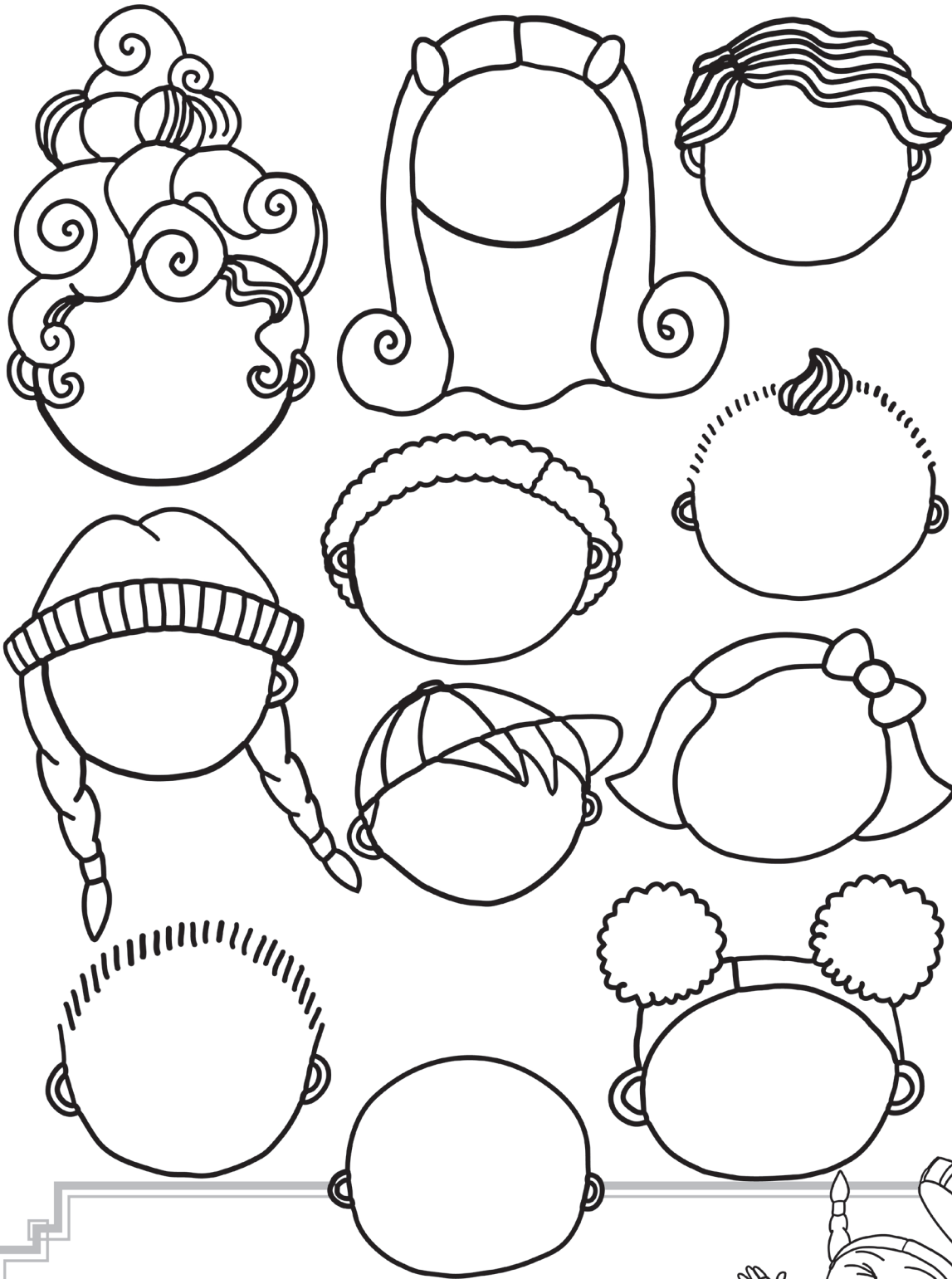
1. Read the book to students, showing the pictures on each page.
2. After finishing the book, initiate discussion with the following questions:
 - i. What was your favorite part of the book?
 - ii. How do you think the Princess Boy feels when his brother plays with him or his dad tells him he is pretty?
 - iii. How do you think it feels when people laugh at him when he buys sparkly clothes or pink bags?
 - iv. How do you think the mom feels when people laugh at her child?
 - v. How do you feel when someone laughs at something you like to do or wear?
 - vi. What did we learn earlier about colors, and toys, and activities?
 - vii. What if princess boy came to our classroom tomorrow; how would we welcome him?

Wrapping up the Lesson: Introducing Gender

Wrapping up the lesson: Regardless of how many of the three activities you use, conclude the lesson by reviewing these main ideas—

- Gender is all about the different ways for us to be girls, boys, or both.
- There are lots and lots of ways to be you. Not simply boy ways or girl ways. Growing up is partly about figuring out what is right for you. Wouldn’t it be terrible if we were told we couldn’t like something simply because of our gender? Colors are colors, toys are toys, activities are activities, clothes are clothes, hair is hair, etc. We can like the things that make us feel good and comfortable.
- Point out that while there are lots of ways to be a kid, there are some patterns. More girls than boys probably do play with dolls, but it is not because they are girls. Some girls don’t like dolls, and some boys do. We all get to decide for ourselves what we like, and it is important that kids feel safe to like, and wear and do whatever they like! If you don’t like something that’s ok; just be sure you don’t make fun of someone who likes something that you happen not to like.

Which Hairdo?



Long, Short, Medium. Curly, Braided, Spiked. Fancy, Plain, Baseball-capped. Our hair says a lot about us and how we feel.

What Hairdo do you like?

Color the hair and draw your own face on the head, or heads, with the hair that feels most like you. Or use the blank one to draw your own hairdo!



Which outfit?



If you opened up a closet and could choose any clothes you wanted, what would you choose?

Color and circle any and all clothes that feel perfect for you. If you don't see clothes that are perfect for you here, find some empty space on the back of this page and make up your own outfit!

K-2

UNIT PLAN

OVERVIEW

- **LESSON 1:**
Introducing Gender: Girls, Boys and More! (preceding pages 25-30)
- **LESSON 2:**
All I Want to Be is Me
- **LESSON 3:**
Short or Tall, That's Not All!
- **LESSON 4:**
What No One Can See
Self-Portraits
- **LESSON 5:**
U-niquely You Self-Portraits
- **LESSON 6:**
What Can I Say (in a nice way)?

Unit Plan Overview:

This sequence of lessons builds on a basic understanding of gender developed in the *Introducing Gender* lesson. The lessons provide students with additional models of gender diversity, challenge them to observe the many ways gender is portrayed around them, and building their skills and language for responding to gender stereotypes.

<<<Lesson #1: Introducing Gender: Girls, Boys, and More! Can be found on the previous pages 25-30

Lesson #2

Lesson Title:

All I Want to Be is Me

Main Concepts/Goals/ Purpose (Why do this?):

This lesson builds on the themes of Lesson #1 (Introducing Gender: Boys, Girls and More!) by showing and describing a variety of children whose gender is different from what others around them expect. While the first lesson tells children they can like, or do, or wear the things that make them feel good, this next lesson provides colorful examples of what that can look like. Through story and song this activity provides positive imagery about gender diversity.

Objectives (Students will...):

- Be able to articulate various ways of expressing gender
- Identify positive self-images associated with gender non-conforming children
- Answer the question: "What does 'All I want to be is me,' mean to you?"

TIME REQUIRED

- 30 minutes (with option for extension/homework)

MATERIALS

- song from website/mp3; DVD Player; (see below)
- lyrics to song
- book: *All I Want to Be is Me* by Phyllis Rothblatt

PRE-REQUISITES

- none required; understanding of the gender spectrum will enhance activity's impact

PREP

- obtain copy of *All I Want to Be is Me*
- if using, secure A/V equipment and copy lyrics to song
- have art supplies available if doing "Going Deep!" activity

KEY TERMS

- **Assume:** *to think you know something before you really do*

All I Want to Be is Me Lesson Plan

Framing the Activity: We have started to learn about gender, all the different ways to be a boy or a girl. We are now going to look at a book that shows boys and girls doing the things they really like, and how the people around them feel about it.

1. Introduction of Activity:

- i. Tell students that today we will be reading a story out loud and learning a new song about gender.
- ii. Define gender as whether someone is a boy, a girl, or both. Remind students of some of the ideas discussed in the Introduction to Gender lesson.
 - a) There are lots of ways to be boys and girls.
 - b) There may be some things that are patterns, like girls wearing dresses, but these are not rules—you can do, or like, or be anything you wish -- whatever your gender!
- iii. First we will read the story out loud. Then we will listen to the song. After that we will listen to the song again with the lyrics and try to sing along.

2. Read Story:

- i. Read the story out loud with the students (or “read” via LCD projector).
- ii. Pause to talk about each vignette. What happened in each situation? How do you think it felt for the child involved?

3. Listen to Song:

- i. Play the song for students, and ask them to close their eyes and listen to the words.
- ii. Ask them to remember at least one idea that the song talked about.
- iii. What happened to some of the children?
- iv. How did people around them respond when they did things that people thought were for a different gender?

4. Think/Pair/Share:

- i. Students first think for a minute about the part of the song they like best.
- ii. Students discuss with a partner what they heard.
- iii. Invite students to share out their answers.

GOING DEEP

- Have students illustrate their words with images that demonstrate their own ideas of the phrase’s meaning.
- Have older students teach the song and read the story to younger students.

Lesson continued on next page >>

5. Sing Song:
 - i. Hand out lyrics and play song again (or use powerpoint to “scroll through” the song).
 - ii. If students are unable to read the lyrics, then review the chorus with them and emphasize that.
6. Conclusion:
 - i. Use Think/Pair/Share to have students answer the question “What does ‘all I want to be is me’ mean to you?”
 - ii. After they have shared, students can write down their answers, or teacher can capture them (anonymously if they choose). Post these on the wall.

All I Want to Be Is Me

Song Lyrics

I'm the kid with long red hair
That everybody calls a girl,
But I just like to wear my hair long
'Cuz I love to feel it whirl
When I'm running with my puppy
Or climbing in a tree,
I want to be all of me.
All I want to be is me.

I'm the kid with lots of freckles,
I love sports of every kind
Most people think that I'm a boy
And I never really mind
'Cuz ever since I was two
I knew that's who I'm meant to be
I want to be all of me.
All I want to be is me.

I'm the kid who looks down slowly
When we line up as boys and girls
I'm not sure which line to go to,
And it makes me want to curl
Into a ball, until you see
I'm so much more than my body
I want to be all of me.
All I want to be is me.

*Don't call me he, don't call me she
Please don't assume who I must be
'Cuz I don't feel like just one of these
I want to be all of me.
All I want to be is me.*

I'm the kid who's great at soccer
For Christmas I got cleats,
When Grandma tried to get me in a dress,
I told her my new name is Pete.
Well she looked a little shocked,
And then a little scared
Then she smiled at me and
Said she didn't care,
'Cuz she wants me to be all of me,
That's what she wants me to be

I'm the kid dressed as a princess
I love really sparkly clothes
Everybody wonders,
But no one really knows
What its like to be me, in my body
It takes a lot of courage
Not to fit inside a box
I feel trapped inside a body,
That has so many locks
But when I look inside my heart,
I'm really free
I want to be all of me.
All I want to be is me.

*Don't call me he, don't call me she
Please don't assume who I must be
'Cuz I don't feel like just one of these
I want to be all of me.
All I want to be is me.*

I'm the kid out on the school yard
Other kids like to tease,
They say mean things to hurt me,
And push me to my knees
But my friends all gather 'round me,
And shout out to the bullies
"We can all be who we want to be,
Don't mess with me!"

*Don't call me he, don't call me she
Please don't assume who I must be
'Cuz I don't feel like just one of these
I want to be all of me,
All I want to be is...
I want to be all of me,
All I want to be is...
I want to be all of me,
All I want to be is me.*

Lesson #3

Lesson Title:

Short or Tall, That's Not All!

Main Concepts/Goals/ Purpose (Why do this?):

This lesson is designed to help students distinguish between the ideas of binary versus spectrum- or range-based concepts. In this activity, students will have an opportunity to consider words that seemingly offer only two possibilities for describing something, and then spend time exploring the various “in-betweens” that actually exist.

Objectives (Students will...):

- Be able define the term “binary”
- Identify ways that apparent binaries are in fact more spectrum based

TIME REQUIRED

- 15-20 minutes (with option for extension/homework)

MATERIALS

- chalkboard, Whiteboard or butcher paper

PRE-REQUISITES

- none required

PREP

- none required

KEY TERMS

- **Binary:** *when there are only two possibilities - yes or no; big or small.*
- **Spectrum:** *something that has many possibilities rather than just two. Rather than black or white, there is a spectrum of colors.*

Short or Tall, That's Not All! Lesson Plan

Framing the Activity: Sometimes we like to divide things into one of two groups. Today we are going to talk about how putting things into two groups can be confusing. We are going to see that a lot of things don't fit so neatly into one box or another box.

1. Begin by writing the prefix bi- on the board. Ask students if they have ever seen the prefix before. Explain that the prefix means "two" as in a bicycle has two wheels. Then introduce the word binary, and explain that it means something with only two possibilities. Say "We are going to look at some different ideas and see if they are binary or not."
2. Next, ask students to think to themselves whether they are "tall" or "short." After writing the two words on the board, ask the students who consider themselves to be tall to raise their hands, and then the students who consider themselves to be short to raise their hands. Now ask all the "tall" students to stand in one part of the room, and the "short" students to stand in a different part.
3. While in these two groups, ask "Is everyone in the tall group the same height? What about in the short group?" Point out that it seems like "tall" and "short" are not great at really capturing each child's height.
4. To emphasize the range of possibilities, ask the students to stand in order of their heights. Again, point out that drawing a line between short and tall seems pretty hard to do—who decides?
5. Have students return to their seats/spots, and ask, "Is a person's height binary? Are there only two ways to be, tall or short?"
6. Now ask them about some other descriptors. Good words to use include: night and day; black and white; hot and cold; big and small. For one or two of these, ask students to think about the "in between" spaces.

GOING DEEP

- Ask students to think of some other categories and see if they are binary or not. Challenge them to find examples of other things that are best described as a range or a binary.
- Ask students to make drawings that show how many things can be described by a range of examples, instead of a binary.

7. Conclude by talking about how certain words are good as general descriptions, but that few things really fit neatly into one of two categories.

Lesson #4

Lesson Title:

What No One Can See Self-Portraits

Main Concepts/Goals/ Purpose (Why do this?):

Having learned previously that our different preferences for toys, colors, clothes, etc. are not bounded by gender, students will now have an opportunity to show something about themselves that others may not know about them. Through this project we can bring parts of our self that we may hide or don't publicly acknowledge together with the parts we share with other people. This project also allows us to expand our perception of others. What can't we see when we look at someone else?

Objectives (Students will...):

- Draw a self portrait
- Reflect on the different parts of themselves that others don't see or know about
- Learn about the concept of "making assumptions"

TIME REQUIRED

- 30-40 minutes

MATERIALS

- two mediums: Pencils and pastels. Watercolors and crayons. Etc.
- 1 sheet of paper (per student)

PRE-REQUISITES

- none required

PREP

- obtain art supplies

KEY TERMS

What No One Can See Self-Portraits Lesson Plan

Framing the Activity: There are many things about each one of us that people can see, and many things they can't see that make us special. Today we are going to draw pictures of ourselves that show how some things about us are inside and how important it is to remember that there is more to each person than what you can see.

1. Begin by explaining that when we look at another person, there are things we see and things we don't see. Sometimes, based on what we see, we think we know something about the person that may or may not be true. This is called "making an assumption" about a person.
2. There are also things about each of us that people can't tell by looking. Things that make us happy, our favorite color, who we love and many more parts of who we are cannot be figured out simply by looking at us. We have to tell you about these things.
3. Brainstorm things about us that we can't tell about someone just by looking, and list on the board.
4. Drawing self-portraits: with one medium, like the pencil, draw a picture of yourself.
5. With another medium, like watercolors or watercolor pencils, draw onto your picture something about you that someone can't see by looking at you.
6. After students have drawn their pictures, ask them to post them, and then invite them to do a "gallery walk" looking at one another's drawings. Depending on the class, you may invite students to explain their "unseen self" to others.
7. Conclude by asking students if they learned something about someone else that they did not know. Finally, remind them that who we are is often not obvious, and how important it is to let others tell us who they are, and not make assumptions about them. This includes thinking something about another person because of their gender.

GOING DEEP

- Invite students to interview an adult in their life to learn about what they might include in their own drawing.

Lesson #5

Lesson Title:

U-niquely You Self-Portraits

Main Concepts/Goals/ Purpose (Why do this?):

This lesson continues to build on the idea that “activities are just activities.” By focusing on creating and then viewing art about the vastness of gender expression, the educator can support a classroom experience that speaks more than words. What is commonly represented in popular media for “girl” and “boy” is far too limiting to adequately acknowledge the rich and layered experience we have in real life. This activity allows students to celebrate their unique set of abilities and interests in a fun and colorful way!

Objectives: (Students will...):

- Identify and draw activities that they enjoy
- Recognize the activities their classmates enjoy
- Understand that what you like to do is not about your gender - you can like whatever you want!

TIME REQUIRED

- 20-30 minutes

MATERIALS

- 2-3 sheets of paper (per student)
- a colorful medium: pens, crayons, watercolors, pastels, etc.

PRE-REQUISITES

- lesson #1 - Introducing Gender: Boys, Girls, and More!

PREP

- obtain art supplies

KEY TERMS

- **Unique:** *something that is special and different about a person*

U-niquely You Self-Portraits **Lesson Plan**

Framing the Activity: We have been learning about all the different things each one of us can do, and like and be. In this art activity we will look at some things that boys and girls like to do, and how each of us gets to decide for ourselves what we like to do.

1. Begin by writing on the board the words “girl” and “boy.” Leave a column open between these two words. Brainstorm with the class about what activities should go under each heading. Remind students about what we learned about colors, and toys and clothes. Again, re-emphasize that some activities may be more common or less common to a specific gender, but that does not mean they are restricted to that gender. Focus on activities specifically. If the class decides an activity does not fit specifically in one or the other, write it in the middle column.
2. Draw attention to seeing that there are many different ways to be and in fact there are as many different ways to be as there are students in the class. Everyone is the same in some ways and everyone is U-nique in some way.
3. Ask students to think about at least two of their favorite activities. Begin charting the activities that they like.
4. Take a piece of paper and fold it in half. On one side draw yourself doing an activity that is commonly considered to be a “girl” activity.
5. On the other side of the paper draw yourself doing an activity that is commonly considered to be a “boy” activity. Cut paper in half dividing the two portraits.
6. Now take a new piece of paper, at the bottom (or the top) write in bold letters I AM U-NIQUE! Or just UNIQUE! You may have to write this on the board for younger children to copy. Explain that this is an important thing to learn and remember. Explain that “unique” means that each person is completely different than everyone else and each person has something special that only they can do in the special way that they do it.
7. Brainstorm for a moment if necessary to find what each child’s unique activity is, then instruct them to draw a picture doing their special thing in their own special way. This could be anything.
8. Display the very special U-nique Art Show in the classroom. Do not post any of the pieces of art from one student together, but mix them up. Mix all of the portraits up and if possible display them in one continuous line, in a circle around the room.

GOING DEEP

- Have students bring in pictures from magazines and create a “U-nique Collage” as a bulletin board or display on campus.
- Have a “U-nique” show and tell where students share something that is unique or special to them.

9. With the children, play a game of following the images with their eyes and noticing all the changes, the different activities and the different colors. Are there similarities? Are there differences? Notice again that there are as many different ways to be as there are students in the classroom.

Lesson #6

Lesson Title:

What Can I Say? (in a nice way)

Main Concepts/Goals/ Purpose (Why do this?):

Teaching students to understand that gender is a spectrum is one thing, but helping them translate that information into action is another. One of the most powerful ways to begin shifting the culture on your campus is to teach and practice specific language students can use when confronted by gender stereotypes, or when observing someone else being confronted.

Objectives (Students will...):

- Learn to recognize gender stereotypes that they hear
- Learn specific responses to gender exclusive language they hear from others

TIME REQUIRED

- 30 minutes to Introduce/30 minutes to then practice using scenarios. Alternatively can be used periodically

MATERIALS

- gender stereotype book(s)
- pre-written "scenarios" on cards & Phrase Cards (see handouts at end of lesson)
- chalkboard, Whiteboard or butcher paper

PRE-REQUISITES

- previous discussion of stereotypes will deepen understanding.

PREP

- obtain book to use to discuss stereotypes
- have phrases written on the board but covered up
- cut Phrase cards and Scenario cards

KEY TERMS

- **Stereotype:** *judging someone because they are in a group - example: "all tall people like to play basketball"*
- **Response:** *an answer back to someone*

What Can I Say? (in a nice way) Lesson Plan:

Framing the Activity: Sometimes people tell us what we can or can't do just because of our gender. This can make us mad and want to say something back that might be unkind. Today we are going to learn ways to tell people that you can do whatever you like, but in a nice way that isn't mean. Then we will get to try practicing using these sayings.

1. **Stereotypes: An Introduction.** Begin this lesson by talking about the word stereotype. Explain how sometimes when we see people, we look at them and think we know about them. This might be because of the way they look, or their gender, or the group they are in, or the language they speak. When we think we know something about someone because of the group they are in or the way they look, this is called "making a stereotype" or "stereotyping." A stereotype might be that "All teenagers are grumpy," or "People who wear glasses only like to read." Stereotypes can be about something good or something bad. Sometimes, stereotypes are used to keep people from being able to do something they really like. Consider sharing a stereotype that is specific to your own experience.
2. **Reading:** we are going to read a book that makes some stereotypes based on the character's gender. Listen carefully to what people think or do just because of the gender of the character. Excellent titles for this include: *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*; *Paperbag Princess*; *William Wants A Doll*; *Horace And Morris But Mostly Delores*; *White Dynamo and Curly Kid*, *Sissy Duckling*.
3. After having reviewed the different ideas you have been learning about gender, tell students that they are now going to practice using different phrases to respond to other people who use stereotypes about gender. These are not phrases that are mean or put downs (i.e. "that is stupid") but instead are words that can often stop or **interrupt** the stereotype.

i. Brainstorm

- a) What are some times that we see or hear gender stereotypes?
- b) If students can't think of anything or are reluctant to share their ideas

out loud, begin with a "Think/Pair/Share" activity to get students started. Alternatively, you can provide some initial situations (i.e. on the playground some one might say "girls can't play;" when something is described as a "girl" toy, or someone says a piece of clothing is "not for boys" etc.)

GOING DEEP

- Have students work in pairs to come up with other scenarios and phrases and act them out for the class.
- Develop posters that express the phrases graphically.
- "Tell and Show"! Ask students to notice times in the next week or two when they used a phrase and report to the class how it went.

Lesson continued on next page >>

ii. What Can I Say?

- a)* After you have generated a list of items, introduce, one at a time, the phrases from the Phrase Cards (pg. 45).
- b)* Begin by selecting one of the ideas from the brainstorm list of stereotypes generated above or use one from the Scenario Cards at the end of this lesson.
- c)* Read or ask a volunteer to read the statement.
- d)* Respond with one of the phrases.
- e)* Now write it on the board or show it if pre-written.
- f)* Have the students read it out loud, all together.
- g)* Now reread the scenario and have students say it all together in response.
- h)* Repeat using some other items from the brainstorm of stereotypes and new phrases.

iii. Use Over Time

- a)* You might use this lesson over time by introducing different phrases on different days. For instance, you could introduce one phrase a week and use the week to practice saying it.
- b)* This lesson is also a nice “sponge” activity or activity to transition between activities.

What Can I Say (in a nice way) Phrase Cards

<p><i>Who decided that?</i></p>	<p><i>You may think so, but I don't.</i></p>	<p><i>You may not like it, but I do.</i></p>
<p><i>Live and let live!</i></p>	<p><i>I disagree! I know lots of boys/girls who...</i></p>	<p><i>You can't say, "Girls/Boys can't play."</i></p>
<p><i>Not True! Gender doesn't limit you!</i></p>	<p><i>There is not such thing as "boy/girl _____ (clothes, toys, hair, colors, bodies, shoes, etc.)." _____s are just _____s!</i></p>	

What Can I Say (in a nice way) Scenario Cards - Page 1

Mark and Steve are playing on the jungle gym, and Sylvia wants to join them, but they tell her that she can't. They say "Girls can't play this game." What do we tell Mark and Steve?

Lisa, Laura and Mary are playing on the jungle gym and Andrew wants to join them. They tell him, "Only girls can play this game." What should we tell Lisa, Laura and Mary?

Esteban and Manuel are playing with blocks during playtime in class. Tina really likes playing with blocks and decides to join Esteban and Manuel, but they tell her, "Girls can't play with us today!" What should we say to Esteban and Manuel?

Chrissy and Mike are playing at Mike's house. They decide to pretend like they work in a hospital. Chrissy says that she wants to be a doctor, but Mike tells her, "You can't be the doctor. You have to be the nurse." So, what do we say to Mike?

Emily is playing outer space with her friend Sammy, and she wants to be an astronaut too. Sammy says, "You can't be the astronaut. You have to be the alien." What do we say to Sammy?

Jessica and Yvette are pretending that they are dancers. Mario wants to be a dancer too, but they say, "You can't be a dancer. You have to be in the audience." What do we say to Jessica and Yvette?

Samantha is really excited because she got a fancy new haircut. It is a short haircut like her mother's. When she shows up to school, Marcus says, "Why do you have a boy's hair cut?" What do we say to Marcus?

What Can I Say (in a nice way) Scenario Cards - Page 2

Rick goes to school wearing a pink shirt. Beth says, "Why are you wearing a girl's shirt?" What do we tell Beth?

Megan is doing her math homework in class, and her classmate Brandon says, "Boys are better at math than girls." What do we tell Brandon?

Oliver takes ballet lessons outside of school. At the talent show, Lisa tells him, "Girls are better at ballet than boys." What do we tell Lisa?

Melissa and Derek are playing with a play fire engine during recess. Derek tells Melissa that she can't play with the fire engine because only boys can become firefighters. What do we tell Derek?

Sumen is playing in her room with her Barbie doll. Her brother Raj comes in and starts to play with another Barbie doll. Sumen tells Raj that he can't play with the Barbie doll because only girls can play with Barbies. What do we tell Sumen?

OVERVIEW

- The Integrated Approach represents ways to fold gender into daily curriculum

The lessons and activities in the preceding pages represent specific ways in which educators can make sure that the topic of gender diversity and inclusion is brought up with students. These opportunities can be powerful ways for students to learn about their own gender, as well as that of their peers. However, as with any form of teaching and learning, if done without context, it can be difficult, particularly for younger students, to translate and apply their learning into new situations.

Many educators have taken the step of working to actively integrate gender into various aspects of their teaching. Rather than a series of isolated activities, they seek opportunities to apply the lens of gender diversity and inclusion to their day-to-day work and interactions with students. It should be noted that this approach does not preclude educators from employing the lessons described previously. Having provided a discreet lesson or unit about gender, school staff can reinforce the concepts of gender inclusion through the daily goings-on of the school or classroom. There are a number of reasons why this integrated approach can be the right match for your school or classroom.

Teachable moments

Throughout the course of a year, there will frequently be moments that lend themselves to a focus on gender diversity with your students. A comment by a pupil, an article or story from the news, a conflict between classmates and many more happenings on a school campus will be wonderful “entry points” for expanding students’ perspectives about gender.

Consistent language

By using an integrated model for teaching and learning about gender diversity, a school can develop shared language and approaches among the adults. In so doing, students see a consistency that reinforces notions of inclusion. A great sign is when a student makes a mistake about something related to gender, and before you can check in with them about it, they are already correcting themselves, quite possibly using your or your colleagues’ words. When this happens, you know the concepts are sinking in!

Curriculum pressures

One of the most powerful methods for ensuring that examples of gender inclusion are “showing up” is through the everyday language in the classroom.

There are few, if any teachers who are lacking for content. Regardless of the setting, most instructors find they have way too much to teach in way too little time. Taking time to add content seems impossible. Through a systematic use of integrated language and activities, teachers can bring the notions of gender diversity to the work they are already doing with students, without giving up the precious and limited amount of time they have to teach their kids.

External curricular limitations

Even if time is not an issue, there are many contexts in which curriculum is highly regulated, giving instructors little if any autonomy to bring topics already not “approved” into their classrooms. Whether a school or district is concerned about students discussing and learning about “controversial topics,” or restricted in its curricular autonomy due to external accountability measures, a teacher may simply not have the ability to explicitly bring lessons about gender diversity into the classroom. Once again, an integrated approach can allow for concepts to surface while still remaining consistent with the curricular limitations a teacher may be facing.

Integrated Approaches for Gender Inclusive Teaching

Language

One of the most powerful methods for ensuring that examples of gender inclusion are “showing up” is through the everyday language in the classroom. This language is grounded in reinforcing the fundamental notions about gender diversity:

- There is broad variation in the ways in which individuals experience and express gender.
- There is no single way to be male or female.
- There exist unique understandings about what constitutes an individual’s gender across cultures and throughout history.

Throughout the day, teachers can use specific language that reinforces these ideas.

- 1.** In forming groups, use characteristics other than gender. When needing two groups, rather than dividing students into boy and girl, use odd and even birth dates/birth months or addresses, long and short hair (kids get to decide!), tennis shoes and not tennis shoes, playing cards (“hearts over here, clubs over there!”), or some form of pre-arranged process like colored dots, table groups, etc.
- 2.** When needing students in pairs or small groups, there are again a number of ways to do so other than “find a boy or girl.” Some teachers use an “appointment clock” (see Resources section) where students find other students and “sign up” to each other’s “one-o’clock,” or “four o’clock” etc. When needing pairs, the teacher can say simply “find your seven-o’clock appointment” and they’re on their way. Playing cards again can be a wonderful way for creating groups—“red fives find a black five,” or “all the aces get together” are quick and easy ways for avoiding gendered groupings.
- 3.** Teachers frequently need to get all of their students’ attention at one time. Rather than saying, “boys and girls, your attention over here,” use things like “calling all readers,” “hey fabulous learners” or something similar. Another approach is to have your class come up with a name for themselves at the beginning of the year. Then it is a simple matter of “calling all dolphins” or “hello purple pirates” when you need to speak with them as a group.
- 4.** In cases where you do find yourself referring to specific genders, try to be consistent in using “boy, girl, both and neither.”
- 5.** There are also innumerable opportunities that come up that call for a teacher to “interrupt” a gendered statement or occurrence among the students. Some of the phrases on the following page are good to “have in your pocket” for when these situations arise.

PHRASES TO “INTERRUPT” A GENDERED STATEMENT

- Clothes are clothes, toys are toys, hair is hair, and colors are colors.
- Sometimes this is confusing. We get messages about some things being for boys and some things being for girls. I think they are just for kids!
- Are there activities that are just boy activities and activities that are just girl activities? Who decides?
- Kids can do or be or like or want anything because they are people who like things, or want to do things. This is not because they are boys or girls.
- Who we are (or who others think we are) on the outside is not always who we are on the inside; think of all the wonderful things about yourself that no one else knows about by just looking at you!!
- How can we all work together so that everyone can feel safe and be themselves in this class/school?
- Gender is about what’s in our hearts and minds, not our underwear!
- Certain types of bodies are thought of as boy and certain types as girl, but that’s not true for everyone .
- Kids can be boys, girls, both, or neither.
- Have you ever been teased? How does it feel when you are teased or treated as an outsider?

Literature

Another perfect chance to raise questions about gender is through literature. In the resources section of *Gender Inclusive Schools*, there are dozens of titles that can easily be used to ask students to think about gender. Whether it is the *Paperbag Princess* saving the prince, *The Story of Ferdinand* and his wonderful pasture of flowers, or *William’s Doll*, these books provide concrete ways in which gender is unfolding for youngsters in non-traditional ways. While many of the titles examine gender expression issues, several also take on gender identity in positive and engaging ways.

Another way to use literature to trigger gender discussions is to simply take a popular book and switch the pronouns or leave them out entirely (it’s not easy—definitely practice this one!). As you read the story, play with the pronouns and see how students react. This is a perfect opportunity to ask, “Does it have to be a boy?” or “What if you didn’t know the character’s gender?” A great source to use is Dr. Seuss. In many of his books, you will note that gender is frequently

not mentioned. In some stories where gender seems clear (is it really?), take a look at who you assume to be the girls and the boys. In some, hair length might literally be the only thing distinguishing the children.

Even if you are not using books like these explicitly, having them available on your shelves is important. Some teachers will choose to put a group of titles together and require students to pick one of them. This can be a way to “moderate” how atypical the readings are in communities or classes that might be less ready for *Oliver Button is a Sissy*.

Visual Messages

A teacher’s classroom is a wonderful palette for painting a picture of gender inclusion. By having pictures, signs, or sayings that emphasize gender diversity, an environment can be created that literally screams inclusion. Whether it is people in non-stereotypical roles (male nurses, female firefighters, girls with football helmet or boys at the ballet barre), or examples of cultural variations in dress, or androgynous people, pictures of adults breaking out of the gender boxes can be powerful ways to remind students about their ability to break molds. Signs such as “All Genders Welcome” or “Think Outside the Boxes,” again send a powerful message of inclusion (see sign examples in Resources section). In classrooms where personal photos are permitted, include people (or yourself) challenging gender norms.

Spelling and History and Math, Oh My!

Various content areas also lend themselves to gender diversification. If doing simple math, avoid using boys and girls, or at least don’t always use boys and girls as the “actors” in story problems. This can be a chance to say something like: “In the classroom, there are 12 girls, 14 boys, and two students who feel like both. How many students total?” Obviously, there are many variations that can introduce terms like “Girlboys” or “Tomgirls.” Depending on the context, you can also use the term transgender for some of the “players” in your word problems.

Spelling too provides a great stage for further normalizing gender diversity. “The word is ‘microscope.’ While playing with his dolls, Jonathan and Maria pretended they were doctors looking through a microscope.” These seemingly inconsequential moments can be momentous in broadening students’ awareness about gender in all of its forms.

As students get older, and begin writing stories, or keeping journals, create prompts that again challenge norms around gender, or ask students to think about something they observed that

“When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.”

– Adrienne Rich

had a message about gender. These of course can include cisgender as well as less typical examples. The point is to be sure that you are showing students it is OK to explore gender, and that there are lots of ways of “doing” gender.

In science, there are lots of wonderful ways of directly introducing gender diversity to your students. Each week, highlight an animal such as the seahorse or parrotfish that break the “rules” of gender. Or you can again put pictures up and include a description. Students can be introduced to the animals in nature that are

highlighted in *The Gender Now Coloring Book*, and challenged to find real pictures of them for a bulletin board. This wonderful resource also has information about gender diversity across cultures and history that can be used.

Another great way to integrate gender across the curriculum is through art and related activities. Having students color pictures that show people stepping out of the gender boxes (see *The Gender Now Coloring Book*, and *Sometimes the Spoon Runs Away with the Spoon* for examples), or collecting pictures from magazines that show examples of gender “in action” can further deepen the discussions.

Communication with Families and Caregivers

In communications with the adults in your students’ lives, you can once again insert gender inclusive language, images and ideas. Many teachers send home “about your child” or similar forms to be filled out by an adult. Including questions that indicate gender diversity can signal that your classroom is an openly gender inclusive place. An example is shown in the figure to the right.

Questions like these become even more powerful when they show up on official school or even district documents. Other teachers use the newsletters they send out to insert a gender diversity topic, fact, or essay.

Conclusion

The examples above are just some of the great ways to insert gender diversity and inclusion into the everyday happenings in a classroom. There are surely many more great ways for doing so. This integrated approach in many ways takes pressure off of the educator to “get it right,” something that can be a common and understandable concern when doing specific lessons or units on the subject. An integrated approach means there will always be another way to expand the circle of gender. It provides an instructor with the chance to raise questions, rather than simply have the answers.

However, an integrated approach does not simply happen because a teacher wants to be more inclusive. Through careful examination of their classroom, curriculum, procedures, communications and climate, they seek opportunities to make sure the topic is not disappearing into a binary hole. By seeking opportunities to continually reframe ideas about gender into a more inclusive understanding, you create space for all of your students to be themselves. In so doing, you can really change the world.

QUESTION CARD EXAMPLES

_____boy _____girl _____other

What pronoun does your child use? Or Does your child have a preferred gender pronoun?

_____he/him/his

_____she/her/hers

_____they/them/their

_____zi/zir

Is there anything else about your child you wish to share (learning needs or strengths, details about gender, specific areas of passion, medical, etc.)?

RESOURCES

& Other Support Information

In this section, you will find a variety of resources to help support the development of a gender inclusive school. These are excellent tools for your own learning, as well as for working with school leaders, colleagues, families and others that will be essential to the development of a truly inclusive school. Included are:

- Contacting Gender Spectrum
- School and Classroom Gender Inclusiveness Assessment
- Common Questions and Concerns Regarding Speaking about Gender Diversity with Children
- Foundations of Gender - In Depth
- A Word About Words
- Gender Identity Myths and Facts
- Readings for Adults about Gender and Children
- Bibliography of Children's Book about Gender Diversity
- Classroom Gender Diversity Signs
- Appointment Clocks
- Policy and Research
- Organizations
- References

Contacting Gender Spectrum

For more information about *Gender Inclusive Schools*, or any questions about gender at your school, please contact us!

Gender Spectrum provides education, resources and support to help institutions create a more gender sensitive and inclusive environment for all children and teens.

- School trainings (leadership, staff, parents and students)
- School district policy and curriculum consultations
- Individual teacher coaching and support
- Family support programs and consultations
- Medical and mental health provider trainings
- Annual Family Conference

For more information, contact:

Gender Spectrum
info@genderspectrum.org
510-567-3977

School & Classroom Gender Inclusiveness Assessment

Use the following scale to help you get started with assessing the level of gender inclusiveness on your campus and in your classroom(s).

1 = Strongly Disagree 3 = Agree DK = Don't Know
 2 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Agree N = Not applicable

FOCUS AREA	1	2	3	4	D K	N
Our school district has an <u>explicit</u> safety policy that names gender identity and gender expression as protected classes						
Our school district has clear guidelines, administrative regulations or other directives for working with and supporting gender diverse students						
Our school district's Student Information System allows for students to use a gender marker and name different from that on their birth certificate						
Our school has an <u>explicit</u> safety policy that names gender identity and gender expression as protected classes						
Our school has participated in <u>staff training</u> explicitly focused on gender expression and gender identity						
Our school has conducted <u>parent training</u> explicitly focused on gender expression and gender identity						
Our school has conducted <u>student training</u> explicitly focused on gender expression and gender identity						
Our school has forms or other ways that allow for a parent to note if their child is gender nonconforming or transgender						
Our school has designated one or more individuals who are responsible for questions or concerns about gender inclusiveness on campus						
Our school provides at least one gender neutral restroom that is available to all students but required of none						
Our school makes available resources for students and families about gender diverse youth						
Our school's dress code is supportive of students dressing in a manner consistent with their own sense of gender						
Our school has a Gay Straight Alliance or other group that includes a focus on the needs of transgender or gender nonconforming students						
Our classrooms have posters/signs/door hangers that name them as safe spaces for all genders						
Our classrooms have posters or pictures of individuals and cultures that present non-binary or non-traditional images of gender						
Our school does not conduct activities that are segregated by gender						
Our classroom activities do not segregate students by gender						
I can point to specific assignments in my classroom designed to examine gender expression and identity						
I have had guest speakers that present atypical gender						
I use particular terms and phrases designed to present a non-binary model of gender						

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School & Classroom Gender Inclusiveness Assessment (CONTINUED)

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree

3 = Agree
4 = Strongly Agree

DK = Don't Know
N = Not applicable

FOCUS AREA	1	2	3	4	D K	N
I have shown videos or other images to students that present a non-binary model of gender						
I can identify specific instances where I have interrupted a behavior that I considered to be gender insensitive						
I am aware of resources that I can provide to families who express the need to better understand their child's gender						
I am comfortable articulating to parents/caregivers the reasons for conducting gender inclusiveness training with students						
I feel comfortable discussing the complexity of gender as it relates to my students and my work						
I feel that I have done my own internal work exploring gender, both my own as well as others'						
At our school it is safe for students to express gender in ways that are not consistent with stereotypically male or female expectations						
At our school it is safe for transgender or gender diverse students to be themselves						

Are there any patterns that you observe in your assessment? _____

How consistent are your answers with your colleagues'? _____

Based on what you see in the assessment, where do you think your school needs to focus in its work to create a gender inclusive school? _____

Based on what you see in the assessment, where do you think you need to focus your work to create a gender inclusive school/classroom? _____

Common Questions and Concerns Regarding Speaking about Gender Diversity with Children

1. Why should my child learn about gender at school?

School is a place where children are taught to respect one another and to learn to work together regardless of their differences. Learning about gender diversity is part of that work. Creating a more tolerant, inclusive, and accepting school environment teaches all children to recognize and resist stereotypes. We teach children to stand up for others, to resist bullying, and to work together.

We also know that many children whose gender is seen as different than what is expected of them can face very difficult circumstances. Too often teasing, bullying and violence are a common experience for a gender diverse child. A growing number of school districts, states (15 as of summer 2012) and federal-protections are in place specifically prohibiting bullying and harassment of students based on gender identity. In most cases, these protections call for proactive education and training to help students understand gender diversity more fully.

2. Isn't my child too young to be learning about gender?

Children are already learning about it. Messages about gender are everywhere, and children receive very clear messages about the "rules" for boys and girls, as well as the consequences for violating them. By learning about the diversity of gender, children have an opportunity to explore a greater range of interests, ideas and activities. For all children, the pressure of "doing gender correctly," is greatly reduced.

Whether in or out of school, children will encounter other children who exhibit wide ranges of gender expression. This is normal and, with a little reflection, we can all recognize it as something we encountered during our own childhoods. Tomboys or shy, sensitive boys are commonly recognized examples of children who buck societal expectations of gender expression. These children, and all children, deserve a safe, supportive learning environment in which they can thrive and empower themselves.

3. If you are talking about gender, aren't you discussing reproduction and sexuality?

The simple answer is no. When we discuss gender, we talk about what people like to wear, the activities they engage in, and how they feel about themselves. This is not sexuality. Sexuality involves physical intimacy and attraction. Gender is about self-identity. Gender identity is a person's internal sense of where they fit on the gender spectrum. This includes all kids, "typically" gendered or not.

If discussing anything about physical sex, the discussion uses phrases such as "private parts," and even if anatomical terms come up, nothing specific to human reproduction or sexuality is taught. As adults, we struggle to separate the ideas of gender and sexuality primarily because we were taught that they are one and the same. Children have an ability to grasp the complexity of gender diversity because sexuality does not factor in to complicate their understanding.

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Common Questions and Concerns Regarding Speaking about Gender Diversity with Children

4. Ideas about gender diversity go against the values we are instilling in my child at home. Are you trying to teach my child to reject these values?

Absolutely not. Our children encounter people with different beliefs when they join any community. While one aim for learning about diversity is to become more accepting of those around us, not everyone is going to be best friends. That does not mean however, that they can't get along and learn together. The purpose of learning about gender diversity is to demonstrate that children are unique and that there is no single way to be a boy or a girl. If a child does not agree with another student's gender identity or expression, they do not have to change how they feel inside about it. However, they also do not get to make fun, harass or harm someone either. Gender diversity education is about teaching students to live and work with others; it comes down to the simple agreement that all children must be treated with kindness and respect.

5. Won't my child get confused if we speak about more than two gender options?

Studies show that, with enough information, children of any age are able to understand that there are more than the two gender categories currently recognized by our society. When it is explained to them in a simple, age appropriate manner, gender diversity is an easy concept for children to grasp.

When you discuss gender with your child, you may hear them exploring where they fit on the gender spectrum and why. This shows that they understand that everyone may have some variation of gender expression that fits outside of stereotypical norms. Their use of language or their personal placements along this spectrum may surprise you. We encourage all parents to approach these discussions with an air of openness and inquiry.

6. Don't gender diverse kids have lots of problems? Is gender non-conformity a product of abuse, emotional problems, neglect, divorce, detached/over-involved parents?

No. While it is true that some transgender and gender nonconforming people do experience a tremendous amount of societal abuse and parental rejection, this is not the cause of their gender identity or expression. As a result, when not supported, children whose gender expression or identity is considered "atypical" often suffer from loneliness, lower self-esteem, and other negative feelings. Statistics reveal the devastating impact these young people face when placed into a non-supportive or hostile setting.

A gender diverse child's emotional distress is a response to the mistreatment they have likely faced from those around them. It is not at all uncommon to see a gender diverse or transgender child's distress greatly reduce or disappear when provided with a more positive environment.

7. Won't allowing children to express non-traditional genders cause them to be teased or harassed?

While there is a great deal of data suggesting that gender diverse young people do face teasing, there is a growing body of knowledge that points to the impact gender diverse education can have on reducing that treatment. If children are being treated badly because of who they are, the answer is not to try and prevent them from being themselves. Rather, we should instead ask whether it is worth expanding their understanding about stereotypes and limitations of self-expression to prevent possible teasing.

Common Questions and Concerns Regarding Speaking about Gender Diversity with Children

8. Won't discussing gender encourage my child to be transgender?

Being transgender is not something that a person chooses. Studies show that although parents cannot make their child gay or transgender, they can deeply influence how their child feels about themselves. Parental pressure to enforce gender conformity can damage a child's self esteem and is a high predictor of risk for youth suicide. Transgender youth currently have an extremely high attempted suicide rate: some estimate it being as high as 50%. Discussing gender will have the effect of removing much of the pressure students face to fit into narrowly defined expectations that few if any can actually meet.

9. If transgender people are so 'normal', why are some families so private about it?

A family with a transgender child will decide together how much they wish to share with others. Many children prefer to live their lives as the gender that reflects their internal gender identity and not adhere to what society expects based on their anatomy. In other words, a child who lets her parents know that she is a girl, even though anatomically she is 'male,' may choose to live her life as a female.

Some children and families are open and share this with everyone in their lives. Others choose to maintain a sense of complete privacy, while still others find a blend of these two approaches. In most families, this decision will be determined jointly by the child and guardian(s), often in collaboration with a medical, mental health, or other professional experienced in this area. If a family honors their child's wish for privacy, this can have the appearance of secrecy. In reality, it may be an effort to avoid potential stigmatization.

10. How can I correct or modify the impression I have already given my child about gender?

It is powerful to share with children when we don't know the answer to something, and to let them know that adults as well as children are always learning. Having conversations with your children that reflect your growing understanding is wonderful. It does not undermine your parenting. If you were to discover that you had unknowingly taught your child another form of misinformation about other people, you would correct the impression you had mistakenly given them. With gender it is no different. Gender diversity is something that both society and science are just beginning to explore and understand.

11. I don't really feel like I know how to answer my child's questions.

Once again, explain that you are learning about this, too. It is important, however, to monitor and understand your own feelings before you initiate this kind of conversation. Children can pick up on your feelings towards a subject. So, if you are still feeling uncomfortable about the concept of gender diversity, then consider taking additional time to increase your understanding. Read, talk to others, and further educate yourself. When you have a greater understanding and increased awareness, then you will likely feel more confident to talk with your children.

Answer children's questions simply, and let them take the lead in how deep the conversation goes. Most children are satisfied with this approach. They will guide the conversation from there and rarely ask the complex questions that occur to adults. You may be surprised at how simply children navigate this terrain.

Some parents have responses such as, "Hmmm, I am just learning about that myself. Let me tell you what I know, and then if you would like to learn more, maybe we could do that together."

Foundations of Gender – In Depth

What is Gender?

For many people, the terms “gender” and “sex” are interchangeable. This idea has become so common, particularly in western societies, that it is rarely questioned. We are born, assigned a gender, and sent out into the world. For many people, this understanding is cause for little, if any dissonance. Yet biological sex and gender are different; gender is not inherently nor solely connected to one’s physical anatomy.

“Even if gender is to be restricted to basic biology, a binary concept still fails to capture the rich variation observed.”

Biological sex includes physical attributes such as external genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, and internal reproductive structures. At birth, it is used to assign gender as male or female. Gender on the other hand is far more complicated. Along with one’s physical traits, it is the complex interrelationship between those traits and one’s internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither as well as one’s outward presentations and behaviors related to that perception.

Dimensions of the Gender Spectrum

Western culture has come to view gender as a **binary** concept, with two rigidly fixed options: male or female. When a child is born, a quick glance between the legs determines the gender label that the child will carry for life. But even if gender is to be restricted to basic biology, a binary concept still fails to capture the rich variation observed. Rather than just two distinct boxes, **gender biology** occurs across a continuum of possibilities.

Gender Biology

Individuals can be born with various forms of “intersex” conditions (current nomenclature is “Disorders of Sexual Development” Or DSDs). A baby may appear to have typically female genitalia, while internally they have “male” tissues or even fully formed organs. Some individuals will appear to be one gender, only to masculinize or feminize as they enter puberty. Still others can be born with ambiguous genitalia, or with genitalia not in evidence at all. Even in a small number of “typical” births, specialists are consulted to “confirm” the newborn’s gender biology. Add to this mix variation in chromosomal arrangements, protein processing differences and hormonal inconsistencies and a much more complicated picture of gender biology emerges.

This **spectrum** of anatomical variations by itself should be enough to disregard the simplistic notion of only two genders. Yet gender biology (i.e. sex) is only one dimension of a person’s authentic gender.

Gender Expression

Beyond anatomy, there are multiple domains defining gender, each of which can be independently characterized across a range of possibilities. This includes **gender expression**, which represents the second dimensions of one's authentic gender. Gender expression refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, and other forms of presentation. Gender expression also works the other way around as people assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms, and other gendered characteristics. Like gender biology, rather than a binary concept it too is a spectrum. There is a range of ways in which individuals present their gender. Gender expression is about preferences.

The norms for the expression of gender shift over time, and from one culture to the next. One need only look at the manner in which hairstyles have evolved to see this changing landscape in action.

Perhaps nothing illustrates the dynamic nature of gender expression more than the colors pink and blue. While today these colors are unquestioned as a "girl color" and "boy color," respectively, it has not always been the case. Well into the twentieth century, the opposite prevailed. A Ladies' Home Journal article in June 1918 said, "The generally accepted rule is pink for the boys, and blue for the girls. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl!"

Despite its shifting nature, it is on the basis of gender expression that many children face mistreatment from those around them. In many cultures, the "rules" of gender are rigidly enforced, by adults and kids alike. While there is nothing inherently male or female about colors, toys, activities, mannerisms, or clothes, society frequently genders these and other forms of expression. When children step outside of these expectations, the reactions from those around them can often be cruel.

For educators, understanding and interrupting this arbitrary assignment of gender to objects, personal characteristics, preferences, etc. is critical in the creation of a gender inclusive school or classroom. Gender inclusion does not mean that there is something wrong about having preferences that are seen as typical for one's gender. There are patterns with regard to the expression of gender; for instance, girls more commonly wear dresses than do boys. However, patterns of gender expression are not rules. While girls may wear dresses more than boys, it does not mean they have to, nor does it mean that boys can't. The same goes for toys, colors, activities,

“While there is nothing inherently male or female about colors, toys, activities, mannerisms, or clothes, society frequently genders these and other forms of expression.”

and other forms of expression that have become gendered. Because gender expression is based on one's preferences, there is no right or wrong way. Rather than "girl toys" and "boy toys," there are instead just "kid toys."

Gender Identity

The third dimension of gender is gender identity, which refers to one's innermost concept of self as male, female, both, neither, or somewhere along the spectrum. It is how individuals perceive

themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different than the gender assigned at birth. Individuals become conscious of this between the ages 18 months and 3 years. Many people develop a gender identity that matches their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological sex.

Gender identity represents an internal aspect of one's authentic gender. While biological sex can be assigned and expectations of gender expression imposed, gender identity comes solely from within. Individuals come to know for themselves who they are. Like the other dimension of gender, identity also offers a spectrum of possibilities rather than a simple binary. While many people will have a gender identity consistent with their assigned gender, this will not always be the case. Again, we have a pattern, but not a rule. Gender identity for some means a sense of self that is at once both male and female, or fluidly moving between them. Others will declare that they are neither, where one's own understanding of self fails to align with categories that do not resonate with their lived experience.

Some individuals will have a gender identity that is "opposite" that of their assigned gender. That is, someone born with a penis knows herself to be female, or an individual born with a vulva firmly identifies himself as male. A term that is often used for individuals such as these is **transgender**. While there are a great many ways individuals use this term, for the purposes of this guide we will use it to refer to individuals whose gender assigned at birth does not match their gender identity (the prefix trans- literally means across, on the other side of).

Gender identity is not about preferences; rather, one holds a deeply felt sense of self. Frequently, this understanding of self emerges quite early, and will remain persistent and consistent throughout life. If aligned with the gender assigned at birth, the person experiences little if any dissonance. However, when identity and biology do not line up, the experience can be jarring—a collision within one's sense

“Gender identity is not about preferences; rather, one holds a deeply felt sense of self. Frequently, this understanding of self emerges quite early, and will remain persistent and consistent throughout life.”

of self, as well as with the perceptions of others. In the former, gender dysphoria can emerge. This refers to an individual's experience of anxiety, uncertainty and persistently uncomfortable feelings when the gender that they were assigned at birth does not match one's sense of gender identity. In the latter, when the reaction of others to one's professed identity is negative, or disbelieving, the impact can be devastating. Dysphoria can increase significantly when an individual's professed identity is not accepted by those around them. This does not mean, however, that the internal sense of one's gender changes.

The sum of it parts...

Alone, each dimension of gender challenges the binary model so common in our culture. But when considered as a whole, the full complexity of gender truly unfolds. Just as three dimensions of space provide a more detailed landscape for understanding physical objects, the three dimensions of gender (Figure 1) provide a much richer model for exploring this misunderstood concept. When thinking about gender, it is the interaction of the three dimensions that really captures gender's intricacy.

For many individuals, gender is "aligned." That is, the Gender Biology (assigned gender), Gender Expression (presentation of gender) and Gender Identity (internal sense of self) are seen as "consistent" according to society's expectations for gender. A term sometimes used to capture this idea is **cisgendered**. The prefix cis- comes from Latin and means "on the same side as" or "on this side of." While the most common pattern, even within this

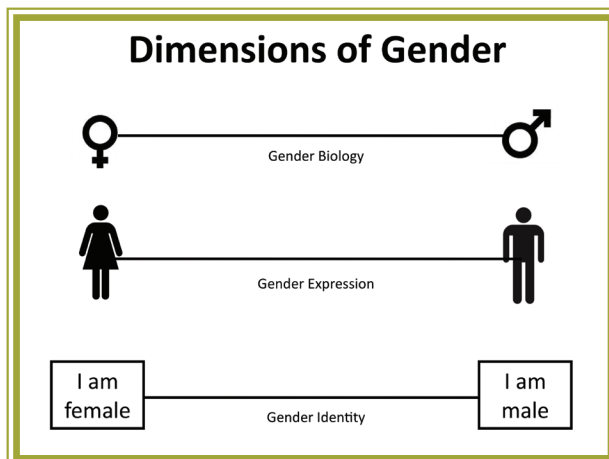


FIG. 1 - DIMENSIONS OF GENDER

arrangement there is tremendous room for variation.

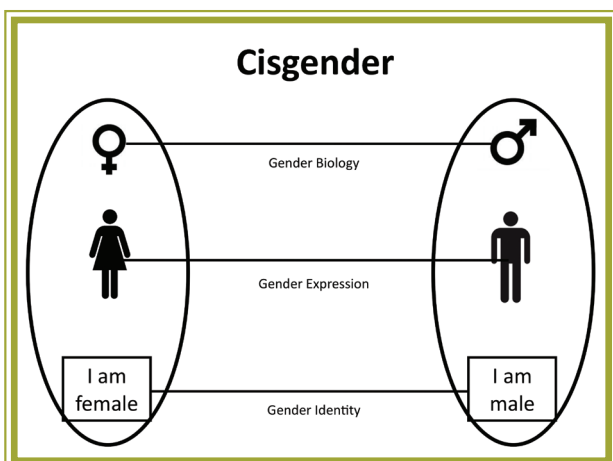


FIG. 2 - CISGENDER MODEL

However, Figure 2 to the left is not the only model available for capturing individual experiences of gender. Another possibility is for biology and identity to line-up, but for expression to be seen as inconsistent. Of course, the norms for expression

that are seen as "male" or "female" we have already suggested are artificial; who decides? But there remain in many people's minds certain expectations, which can be described on the following pages.

Consider the two figures below. On the left (Figure 3), a child assigned and identifying as female is seen by those around her to gravitate towards the masculine in terms of her expression of gender, while the

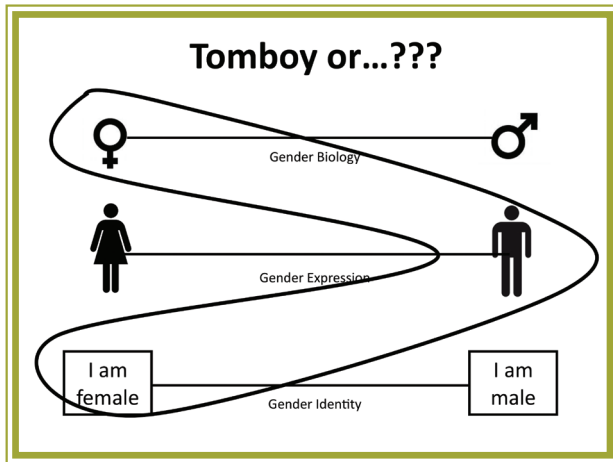


FIG. 3 - "TOMBOY" MODEL

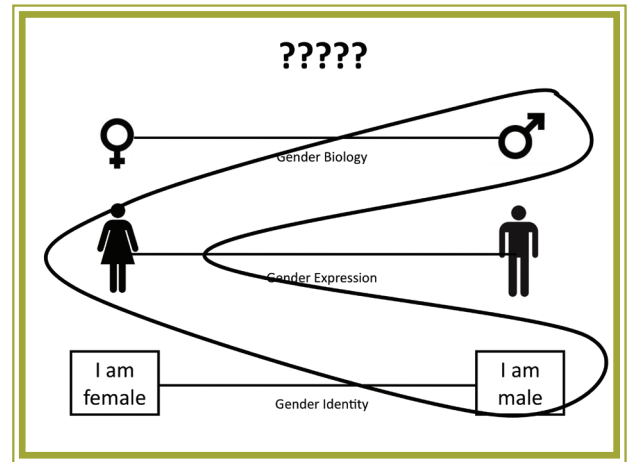


FIG. 4 - ??????? MODEL

child on the right (Figure 4), assigned and identifying as male is seen to favor more feminine expression. To varying degrees either of these profiles can face disapproval from those around them. Particularly when young, the level of disapproval can be different for boys and girls. While the girl on the left may be tolerated (or even celebrated) as a "tomboy," the boy on the right may well become the target of others'

derision. In fact, while the term "tomboy" is sometimes seen as favorable, we have no similar label for the child on the right. Sadly, instead this child often faces taunting with terms like "faggot," "sissy," "homo," or "gay," all being used in a decidedly unkind way. Yet what is the difference between these two young people, who simply have preferences that others have artificially gendered?

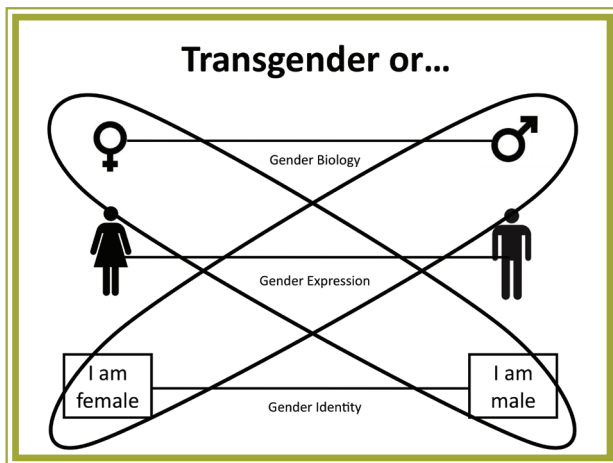


FIG. 5 - TRANSGENDER MODEL

Finally, some individuals will be assigned one gender based on biology while identifying as the other. Where cisgender refers to someone whose identity is "on the same side as," their assigned gender, **transgender** refers to someone whose

identity is "across from" their assigned gender. It is important to note that the term "transgender" is used in a variety of ways and many individuals who have a gender identity other than what they were assigned may or may not label themselves as such.

Expression for transgender individuals can be anywhere along the spectrum. There are transgender individuals who express gender in very stereotypical ways, and others who do not. In part, this may be about preferences, and in part this may be indicative of

the context in which they find themselves. In other words, a transgender girl may be forced to dress in stereotypically male ways because the people around her will not allow a more typically feminine style. She could also simply prefer this style of expression.

In summary, the dimensions of gender provide a far more dynamic way to think about gender. Instead of the static, binary model produced through a solely physical understanding of gender, a far richer texture of biology, gender expression, and gender identity intersect in a multidimensional array of possibilities.

Quite simply, the gender spectrum represents a more nuanced and accurate model of human gender.

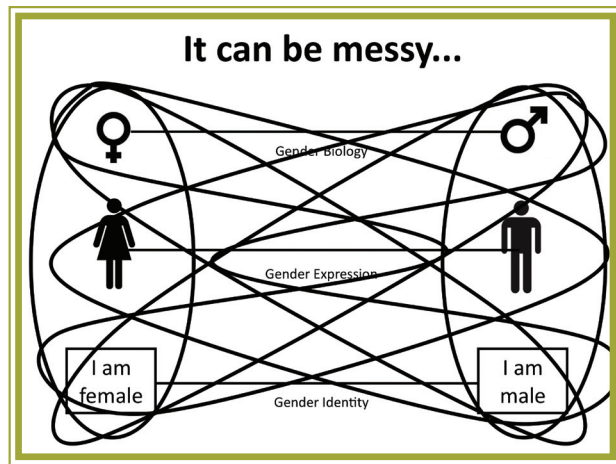


FIG. 6 - COMPLEXITY OF GENDER

Falling Into Line

Gender is all around us. It is actually taught to us, from the moment we are born. Gender expectations and messages bombard us constantly. Upbringing, culture, peers, community, media, and religion, are some of the many influences that shape our understanding of this core aspect of identity. How you learned and interacted with gender as a young child directly influences how you view the world today. Gendered interaction between parent and child begin as soon as the sex of the baby is known. In short, gender is a socially constructed concept.

Like other social constructs, gender is closely monitored by society. Practically everything in society is assigned a gender—toys, colors, clothes, hairstyles and behaviors some of the more obvious examples. Through a combination of social conditioning and personal preference, by age three many children prefer activities and exhibit behaviors typically associated with their biological gender. Accepted social gender roles and expectations are so entrenched in our culture that most people cannot imagine any other way. As a result, individuals fitting neatly into these expectations rarely if ever question what gender really means. They have never had to, because the system has worked for them.

About Gender Nonconformity

Gender nonconformity is when a person's preferences and self-expression fall outside commonly understood gender norms. Gender nonconformity is a normal part of human expression, documented across cultures and recorded history. Non-binary gender diversity exists throughout the world, documented by countless historians and anthropologists. Examples of individuals living comfortably outside of typical male/female identities are found in every region of the globe.

The calabai, and calalai of Indonesia, two-spirit Native Americans, and the hijra of India all represent more complex understandings of gender than seen in many parts of the world.

“*Gender nonconformity is when a person’s preferences and self-expression fall outside commonly understood gender norms. Gender nonconformity is a normal part of human expression.*”

Further, what might be considered gender nonconformity in one period of history may become gender normative in another. One need only examine trends related to men wearing earrings or women sporting tattoos to quickly see the malleability of social expectations about gender. As mentioned earlier, even the seemingly intractable “pink is for girls, blue is for boys” notions are relatively new.

Gender And Privilege

” When someone is cisgender (“typically gendered,”) they benefit from gender privilege. For individuals whose biological sex, gender expression, and gender identity neatly align, there is a level of congruence as they encounter the world. Like many forms of social privilege, this is frequently an unexamined aspect of their lives. Shopping for clothes, using the restroom, filling out forms or showing identification bring few if any second thoughts.

Yet for a transgender or gender nonconforming person, each of these, and many more examples, are constant reminders that they move about in a culture that really does not account for their own experience. Social privilege comes from an assumption that one’s own perspective is universal; whether related to race, or language, or gender, privilege comes from being part of the “norm.” For children who express gender in a way others consider inconsistent, this plays out as the taunts on the schoolyard, the enforced isolation by peers, or hurtful words and lack of understanding from the adults surrounding them.

To understand this more intuitively, think about the last time you were in a public setting and needed to use a restroom. For cisgender individuals, this rarely presents a problem or question (issues of cleanliness notwithstanding!). Yet for an individual who does not fit into narrowly defined expectations of gender presentation or identity, restroom use can present a whole host of challenges, sometimes even becoming a matter of life and death. The daily need to make judgments about what one does, or wears, or says based on other people’s perceptions of their gender is a burden that many people never encounter. These everyday reminders of being different are also constant reinforcement of being “other.”

Conclusion

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of a person's identity, gender deeply influences every part of one's life. In a society where this crucial aspect of self has been so narrowly defined and rigidly enforced, individuals who exist outside its norms face innumerable challenges. Yet this does not have to be the case. Through a thoughtful consideration of the uniqueness and validity of every person's experiences of self, we can develop greater acceptance for all.

A Word About Words...

The power of language to shape our perceptions of other people is immense. Precise use of terms in regards to gender can have a significant impact on demystifying many of the misperceptions associated with gender. However, the vocabulary of gender continues to evolve and there is not universal agreement about the definitions of many terms. Ultimately, individuals define for themselves which words or phrases best capture their identity and experiences. Various terms are included here not to confine people to fixed boxes. Rather, expanding one's vocabulary around gender allows for greater awareness and openness to an individual's self proclamation of identity. Thus, here are some working definitions and examples of frequently used (and misused) terms.

“private parts”

Biological/Anatomical Sex: The physical structure of one's reproductive organs that is used to assign sex at birth. Biological sex includes chromosomes (XX for assigned females; XY for assigned males); hormones (estrogen/progesterone for assigned females, testosterone for assigned males); and internal and external genitalia (vulva, clitoris, vagina for assigned females, penis and testicles for assigned males). Given the natural variation in all of these, biological sex falls along a spectrum or range of possibilities rather than a binary set of two options (see “Intersex”).

“how someone feels”

Gender Identity: One's innermost concept of self as male or female or both or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different than the gender assigned at birth. Individuals become conscious of this between the ages 18 months and 3 years. Many people develop a gender identity that matches their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological or assigned sex. Some of these individuals choose to socially, hormonally and/or surgically change their physical appearance to more fully match their gender identity.

“how someone looks or acts”

Gender Expression: Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. Gender expression also works the other way as people assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms, and other gendered characteristics. Sometimes, transgender people seek to match their physical expression with their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex.

Gender: A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. Gender characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures. Gender is often used synonymously with sex, but this is inaccurate because sex refers to physical/biological characteristics and gender refers to social and emotional attributes.

Gender Role: This is the set of roles, activities, expectations and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Our culture recognizes two basic gender roles: Masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females). People who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender. Other cultures have three or more gender roles.

Transgender: Sometimes used as an umbrella term to describe anyone whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. More narrowly defined, it refers to an individual whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation (attraction to people of a specific gender.) Therefore, transgender people may additionally identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, etc.

Sexual Orientation: Term that refers to being romantically or sexually attracted to people of a specific gender. Our sexual orientation and our gender identity are separate, distinct parts of our overall identity. Although a child may not yet be aware of their sexual orientation, they usually have a strong sense of their gender identity.

Genderqueer: This term represents a blurring of the lines around the various dimensions of gender, and can also overlap with one's sexual orientation as well. Genderqueer individuals typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity (and sometimes sexual orientation). This term is typically assigned an adult identifier and not used in reference to pre-adolescent children.

Gender Normative/Cisgender: Refers to people whose gender assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression (Cis- from Latin meaning "on the same side [as]" or "on this side [of]").

Gender nonconforming/Gender variant:

Refers to individuals whose behaviors and/or interests fall outside what is considered culturally typical for their assigned gender at birth. Someone who identifies as “gender nonconforming” is not necessarily transgender. While their expression of gender may fall outside of those considered typical for their assigned gender, they may identify as that gender nonetheless. Some distinguish between these two terms by how an individual is perceived. That is, a “gender nonconforming” individual may have their atypical expression experienced by others either neutrally or even positively. “Gender variant” is seen by some as carrying negative connotations, and seems to be on the decline as a descriptive term for kids.

Gender Fluidity: Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may change, even from day to day. Gender fluid children do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of girls or boys. In other words, a child may feel they are a girl some days and a boy on others, or a combination, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately.

DSD/Intersex: Disorders/Differences of Sexual Development. About 1% of children are born with chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and/or other sex characteristics that are not exclusively male or female as defined by western medicine. In most cases, these children are at no medical risk, but are frequently assigned a biological sex (male or female) by their doctors and/or families.

FtM (Female to Male)/Affirmed male/

Transboy: A child or adult who was born anatomically female but has a male gender identity.

MtF (Male to Female)/Affirmed female/

Transgirl: A child or adult who was born anatomically male but has a female gender identity.

Transition: The process by which a transgender individual strives to have physical presentation more closely align with identity. Transition can occur in three ways: social transition through non-permanent changes in clothing, hairstyle, name and/or pronouns; medical transition through the use of hormone “blockers” or cross hormones to promote the development of secondary sex characteristics; and/or surgical transition in which an individual’s body is modified through the addition or removal of physical traits.

Transsexuals: Individuals who do not identify with their gender assigned at birth and physically alter their bodies surgically and/or hormonally. This physical transition is a complicated, multi-step process that may take years and may include, but is not limited to, sex reassignment surgery. Not all individuals who undergo this process identify with this term.

Transvestite: A person who enjoys dressing in clothes typical for a different gender, more common and preferred term is cross-dresser.

Transphobia: Fear or hatred of transgender people; transphobia is manifested in a number of ways, including violence, harassment, and discrimination and institutionalized transphobia in the form of legal, employment, and a variety of other contexts.

Gender Identity Myths & Facts

Myth: Youth are not old enough to know their gender identity.

Fact: Because of greater awareness about gender and transgender issues, more and more young people are becoming empowered to express their identity at young ages.

Myth: Youth are identifying as transgender just to be trendy.

Fact: Identifying as transgender brings with it challenges and often discrimination. It is not something people do to be cool. Like in many other areas of their life, some students may be exploring their gender expression and the labels they use to describe themselves. Such exploration is a normal part of adolescent development.

Myth: All gender non-conforming students are white.

Fact: Gender non-conforming students are from all socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

Myth: Transgender youth deceive others about what their “true” gender is.

Fact: Transgender people are not deceiving others by expressing their gender identity. For example, when a student transitions from male to female, she is expressing her true self to the world. She deserves to be recognized and respected like any other girl should be.

Myth: Transgender and gender non-conforming students are actually gay.

Fact: Sexual orientation and gender identity are different. A person’s sexual orientation is related to whether the person is romantically attracted to men, women, or both. Gender identity, on the other hand, is about the person’s own internal identification as male, female, or a gender in between male and female. Just like non-transgender people, transgender people can be of any sexual orientation.

Myth: All transgender youth will eventually take hormones and have sex reassignment surgery.

Fact: Some transgender people take hormones and/or have surgery. However, for a number of reasons, many transgender people do not take either of these steps. Some feel comfortable with their bodies the way they are.

For others, hormones and surgery are inaccessible because they may be too expensive and/or require parental permission.

Myth: Transgender women are not “real” women and transgender men are not “real” men.

Fact: People’s “true” gender is not defined by the sex they were assigned at birth. Our true gender is based on our gender identity. When a person who is transgender expresses an identity different from the one they were assigned at birth, the gender they are expressing is their “real” gender.

Myth: Communities of color are more transphobic or homophobic than white communities.

Fact: No one community is any more transphobic than any other. Unfortunately, most transgender people experience transphobia regardless of the racial or ethnic community they are a part of.

Myth: It’s okay to make fun of girls who are too masculine and boys who are too effeminate because that is just harmless teasing.

Fact: Teasing is never harmless, particularly regarding gender stereotypes. Gender non-conforming youth are often very clear about their gender identity. Their appearance or expression may seem confusing, but that is only because it doesn’t fit into stereotypes we have about gender.

Gender and Sexuality Center

Student Activity Center (SAC) 2.112 1 University Station A4400 Austin, TX 78712

Phone: (512) 232-1831 FAX: (512) 232-1909 www.utgsc.com

Readings for Adults about Gender and Children

Brill, Stephanie & Pepper, Rachel. ***The Transgender Child***. Cleis Press, 2008.

This comprehensive first of its kind guidebook explores the unique challenges that thousands of families face every day raising their children in every city and state. Through extensive research and interviews, as well as years of experience working in the field, the authors cover gender nonconformity from birth through college.

Ehrensaft, Diane. ***Gender Born, Gender Made***. The Experiment 2011.

A comprehensive guidebook for the parents and therapists of children who do not identify with or behave according to their biological gender. Drawing on the case histories of several children, each “gender creative” in his or her own way, Dr. Diane Ehrensaft offers concrete strategies for understanding and supporting children who experience confusion about their gender identities. She also discusses the latest therapeutic advancements available to gender-diverse children.

Meyer, Elizabeth J. ***Gender and Sexual Diversity in Schools***.

Issues related to gender and sexual diversity in schools can generate a lot of controversy, with many educators and youth advocates under-prepared to address these topics in their school communities. This text offers an easy-to-read introduction to the subject, providing readers with definitions and research evidence, as well as the historical context for understanding the roots of bias in schools related to sex, gender, and sexuality. Additionally, the book offers tangible resources and advice on how to create more equitable learning environments. The suggestions offered by this book are based on recent research evidence and legal decisions to help educators handle the various situations professionally and from an ethical and legally defensible perspective.

It's OK to Be Neither • Teaching That Supports Gender-Variant Children Melissa Bollow Tempel, *ReThinking Schools*, Volume 26 - Issue 1, Fall 2011.

The everyday experiences of a 1st grader push a teacher to confront gender issues in the classroom. http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/26_01/26_01_tempel.shtml

Bibliography of Children's Book about Gender Diversity

Anderson, Hans Christian. ***The Ugly Duckling***. Adapted and Illustrated by Sebastien Braun. Boxer Books, 2010.

Even the ugly duckling's mother knew there was something different about him. Ages 2 – 5.

Brubaker Bradley, Kimberly. ***Ballerino Nate***. Dial 2006.

Nate has the heart of a dancer, and he is determined to learn ballet. Even his older brother, Ben, can't change his mind with his claims that “boys don't dance.” Or can he? When Ben tells Nate that he'll have to wear pink shoes and a dress, Nate becomes awfully worried. And when he's the only boy in his ballet class, he begins to think that Ben is right: Maybe boys don't dance. Ages 4 and up.

Burningham, John. ***Avocado Baby***. New York: HarperCollins, 1982.

A genderless baby grows very strong eating avocados. Preschool-K.

Cole, Babette. ***Princess Smartypants***. G.P. Putnam, 2005.

Princess Smartypants prefers to stay a "Ms." and easily dispatches all but one of her annoying suitors. Ridding herself of the final one is a bit more of a challenge. Ages 4-7.

DePaola, Tomie. ***26 Fairmont Avenue (series)***. G.P. Putnam.

DePaola recounts his childhood exploits, including dressing up as Snow White for Halloween, using his mother's lipstick to dress up as his favorite actress, Mae West, and so forth. Ages 5-8.

DePaola, Tomie. ***Oliver Button is a Sissy***. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.

Oliver prefers to read, paint, and wants to take tap dancing lessons, and is jeered at by classmates. His father reluctantly allows the dance classes because they are a form of exercise, and Oliver goes on to wow his classmates at the school talent show, even though he doesn't win. Ages 4-8.

Ewert, Marcus. ***10,000 Dresses***. Seven Stories Press 2008.

Every night, Bailey dreams about magical dresses: dresses made of crystals and rainbows, dresses made of flowers, dresses made of windows. . . . Unfortunately, when Bailey's awake, no one wants to hear about these beautiful dreams. Then Bailey meets Laurel, an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's imagination and courage, and Bailey's dreams come true! Ages 5 and up.

Fierstein, Harvey. ***The Sissy Duckling***. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002.

Elmer the duckling faces the derision of his schoolmates and out and out rejection by his father, but he has a mother who sticks up for him no matter what. And when he saves his father's life, Papa declares, "If Elmer is a sissy, then I wish I were a sissy too!" in a resounding moment of triumph for sissies everywhere. Ages 4-8.

Fitzgerald Howard, Elizabeth. ***Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys***. Aladdin 2005.

The youngest and the only girl in a family with five boys, Virgie works hard to convince everyone she is old enough, strong enough, and smart enough to attend the school set up by the Quakers for recently freed blacks in Jonesborough, TN. By the end of summer, she has convinced her family that she can make the seven-mile walk to board at school each week and willingly handle the job of "learning to be free." Ages 5 and up.

Funke, Cornelia. ***The Princess Knight***. New York: Chicken House/Scholastic, 2004, 2003.

Despite the taunting of her brothers, Princess Violetta becomes a talented knight, and when her father proposes to give her hand in marriage to the knight who wins a tournament, Violetta uses her brains as well as her brawn to outwit him. Ages 4-7.

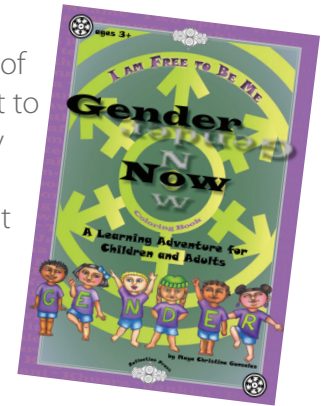
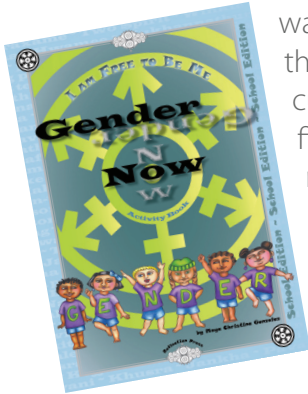
Geslin, Campbell. ***Elena's Serenade***. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Elena disguises herself as a boy and learns to be a glassblower like her father, finally earning his respect for her artistry. Age 3-7.

Gonzalez, Maya. ***The Gender Now Coloring Book & Gender Now Activity Book: School Edition***. San Francisco: Reflection Press, 2010 & 2011.

Did you know that clown fish can change their bodies from boy to girl? Or that in some countries they know there's not just boys and girls? The Bugis of Indonesia have 5 genders! We're the kids of the GENDER team and we want to share what we know about gender. Learn that there are many ways to feel on the inside no matter what body you have on the outside through stories from nature, history, and different cultures. Are you ready to color, learn, and play? Inside you'll find stories, pictures, games and more to encourage and remind you that you are free to be! School Edition also available. Age 3+.

More info: www.reflectionpress.com/gendernow



IMAGES AND ACTIVITIES FROM THE GENDER NOW COLORING BOOK AND SCHOOL EDITION ACTIVITY BOOK ARE USED THROUGHOUT THE GENDER INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS CURRICULUM.

Gruska, Denise. ***The Only Boy in Ballet Class***. Gibbs Smith, 2007.

People don't understand how wonderful dancing makes Tucker feel, and he is teased and taunted, until his dance skills lead to a stunning move on the football field. Age 5-8.

Hilton, Perez. ***The Boy with Pink Hair***. Celebra Children's Books 2011.

He was born that way-The Boy with Pink Hair. He had a cotton candy colored mop that no one had ever seen before . . . Life is not easy being pink. Adults stare at you, little children giggle behind your back and some kids are just mean. But when you have a best friend who appreciates your uniqueness and parents who are loving and supportive, you can do just about anything. Ages 3 and up.

Hoffman, Mary. ***Amazing Grace***. Dial; 1991.

Grace loves stories, whether they're from books, movies, or the kind her grandmother tells. So when she gets a chance to play a part in Peter Pan, she knows exactly who she wants to be. Ages 4 and up.

Howe, James. ***Pinky and Rex and the Bully***. Atheneum Books, 1999.

Pinky is a boy who likes pink, and whose best friend is a girl. When the neighborhood bully challenges him about these things, Pinky begins to doubt himself, but is able to be true to himself and stand up to the bully with some advice from a friendly neighbor. Age 4-8.

Isaacs, Anne. ***Swamp Angel***. New York: Dutton, 1994.

Angelica Longrider, aka Swamp Angel, is as big a hero as Paul Bunyan, wrassling bears and tornados. Preschool – K.

Isadora, Rachel. ***Max***. MacMillan, 1984.

Max warms up for his weekly baseball game by attending his sister's ballet class. Age 4-8.

Jackson, Ellen. ***Cinder Edna***. HarperCollins 1998.

The famous Cinderella and her neighbor Cinder Edna each worked sunup to sundown for their wicked stepmother and stepsisters. But while Cinderella had the good fortune to be rescued by her fairy godmother, Edna was strong, self-reliant, spunky--and she lived happier ever after! Ages 3 and up.

Jimenez, Karleen Pendelton. ***Are You a Boy or a Girl?*** Distributed by Two Lives Publishing.

Black and white photo illustrations accompany the story of a girl who follows her own interests, despite the comments of others. Age 4-8.

Kilodavis, Cheryl. ***My Princess Boy***. KD Talent LLC; 2010.

My Princess Boy tells the tale of 4-year-old boy who happily expresses his authentic self by happily dressing up in dresses, and enjoying traditional girl things such as jewelry and anything pink or sparkly. My Princess Boy opens a dialogue about embracing uniqueness, and teaches you and others how to accept young boys who might cross traditional gender. Ages 4 and up

Leaf, Munro. ***The Story of Ferdinand***. Viking Press, 1936.

Our favorite young bull prefers to sit and smell the flowers, to the concern of his mother. Age 4-8.

Martin, Bill & Archambault, John. ***White Dynamite and Curly Kidd***. Henry Holt and Co. 1989.

As Curly prepares to ride the "meanest bull in the whole United States," he explains to his proud but worried child how he overcomes his fear: he thinks about places he'd like to see. Lucky Kidd calls encouragement to dad. The story, told in dialogue, begs to be read aloud, and challenges our assumptions about gender expressions with what may be a surprise ending. Ages 4 and up.

Moss, Marissa. ***Mighty Jackie: The Strikeout Queen***. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.

Non-fiction account of teenaged Jackie Mitchell who pitched against baseball greats Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth. Age 4-8.

Munsch, Robert. ***The Paperbag Princess***. Annick Press 1992.

The Princess Elizabeth is slated to marry Prince Ronald when a dragon attacks the castle and kidnaps Ronald. In resourceful and humorous fashion, Elizabeth finds the dragon, outsmarts him, and rescues Ronald --- who is less than pleased at her un-princess-like appearance. Ages 4 and up.

Neubecker, Robert. ***The Courage of the Blue Boy***. Tricycle Press 2006.

Blue boy and Polly, his calf, live in a land where everything, including them, is blue. They dream of seeing other places of different colors. They soon arrive in a wondrous multi-colored city. It fills them with joy until they notice once more that only they are blue. Gathering his courage, Blue decides to add his own hues to the city so it will represent all colors but enable him to remain true to self. Ages 5 – 8.

Newman, Leslea. ***A Fire Engine for Ruthie***. New York: Clarion Books, 2004.

Nana has dolls and dress-up clothes for Ruthie to play with, but Ruthie would rather have a fire engine. Age 2-5.

Newman, Lesléa. ***The Boy Who Cried Fabulous***. Tricycle Press 2007.

The only thing Roger likes better than exploring the world around him is describing it. And Roger describes most things as fabulous! But his parents have a different view. They want Roger to see things the way they do, so they ban “fabulous” from his vocabulary. Ages 4 and up.

Parr, Todd. ***It’s Okay to Be Different***. Little, Brown, 2001.

While not specifically addressing gender issues, the book enumerates many ways in which it’s okay to be different. Age 3-7.

Perkins, Mitali. ***Rickshaw Girl***. Charlesbridge Publishing 2008.

Ten-year-old Naima longs to earn money to help her poor Bangladeshi family, but her talent in painting traditional patterns, or alpanas, is no use. Disguised as a boy to drive her father’s rickshaw, she wrecks the vehicle threatening the family’s sole livelihood. Her solution is to steal away, disguised as a boy, to a repair shop and offer her services painting decorations on the rickshaws. She is surprised to find that the owner is a woman. Ages 7 and up.

Plourde, Lynn. ***School Picture Day***. New York: Dutton Children’s Books, 2002.

Josephina’s talent in taking things apart to see how they work comes in handy on school picture day when the photographer’s camera goes on the blink. Age 4-7.

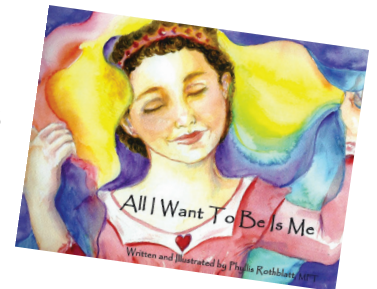
Rickards, Lynne Pink. ***The Chicken House***. 2009.

What’s a penguin to think when he wakes up pink? Poor Patrick hates the idea of being different from all his friends, and sets off to Africa in search of pink flamingos who might accept a pink penguin. He soon discovers that color isn’t everything. Ages 4 and up.

Rothblatt, Phyllis. ***All I Want to Be is Me***. Create Space 2011.

“All I Want To Be Is Me” is a beautifully illustrated children’s book reflecting the diverse ways that young children experience and express their gender. The book gives voice to the feelings of children who don’t fit into narrow gender stereotypes, and who just want to be free to be themselves. This book is a celebration of all children being who they are, and is a positive reflection of children, wherever they experience themselves on the gender spectrum. Visit www.alliwanttobeisme.com

to learn more about how this book can be used by parents and teachers, and to hear the original song, “All I Want To Be Is Me”, that goes along with the book. Ages 4 and up.



U’ren, Andrea. ***Pugdog***. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001.

Pugdog’s rather silly owner thinks she’s a he, and when he finds out otherwise, he dolls Pugdog up in his idea of femininity. Pugdog hates this, preferring to roll in the mud and play rough. Then they meet a dolled-up poodle who turns out to be male. Age 3-5.

Zolotow, Charlotte. ***William’s Doll***. Harper & Row, 1972.

To the dismay of his parents, and jeering of his brother, young William wants a doll. His grandmother convinces his father that it’s an acceptable toy for a boy because it will help teach him how to be a father, thus resolving the issue in an acceptably heterosexual way. Age 3-7.

Xush kelibsiz

欢迎

Velkommen

ようこそ

Bienvenido

Được tiếp đãi ân cần

All Genders

Welcome!

سامل ا و أهل

ONGI ETORRI

Benonwwe

Ngiyakwemukela

Welkom

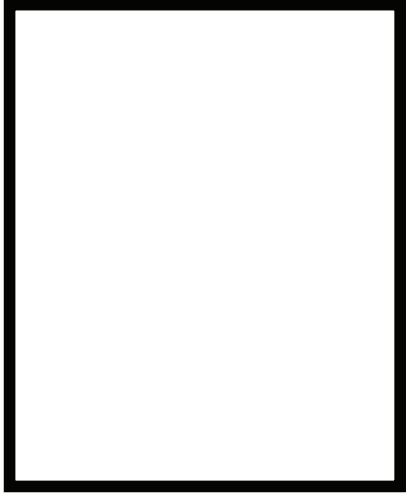
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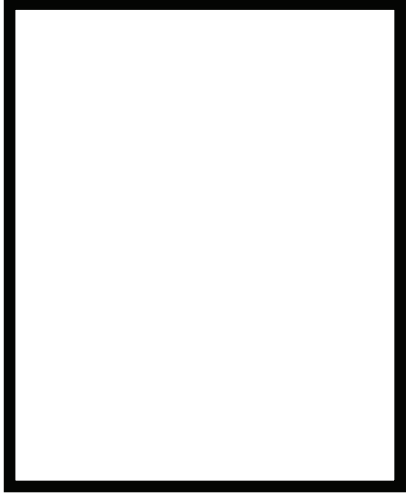
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GENDER
Spectrum 

Прывітанне

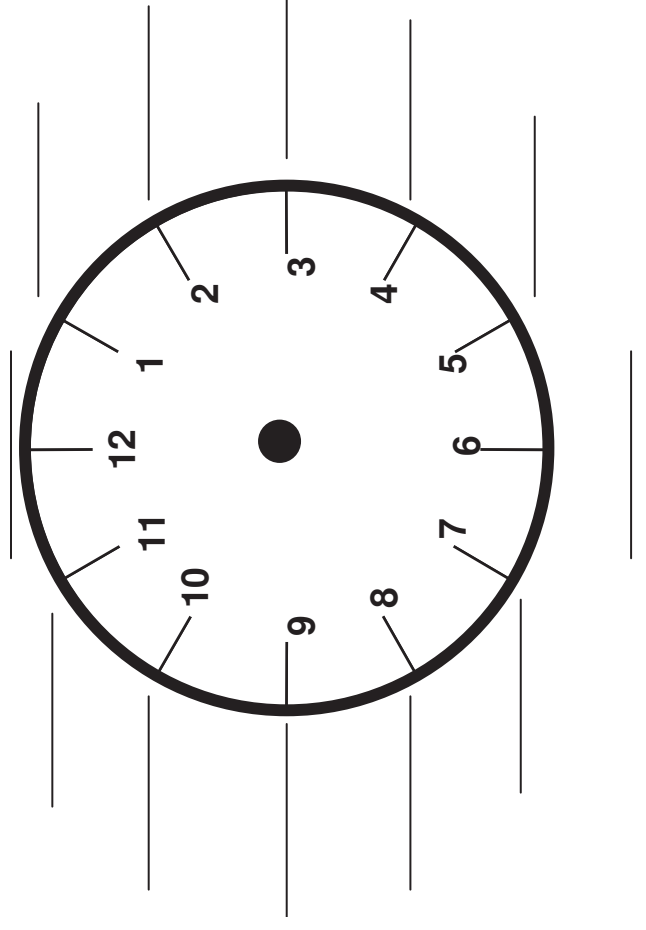
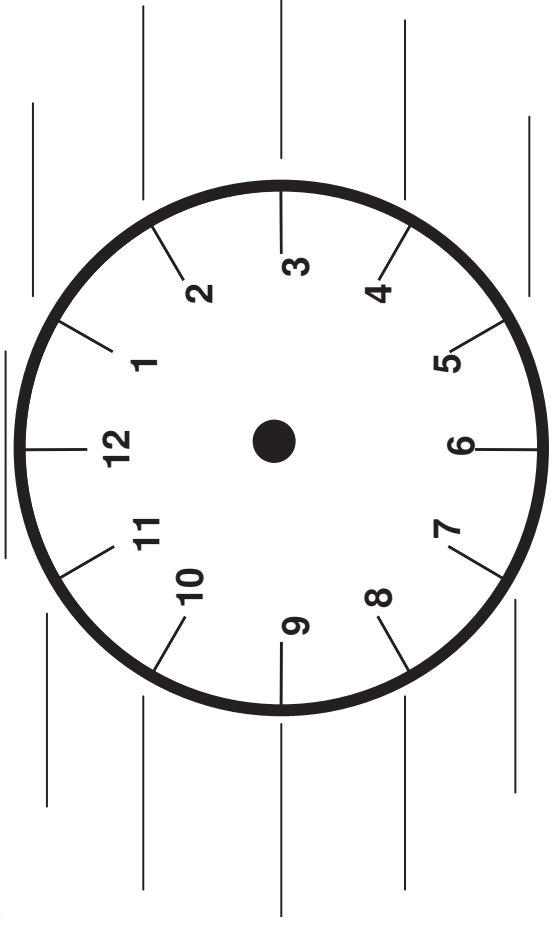
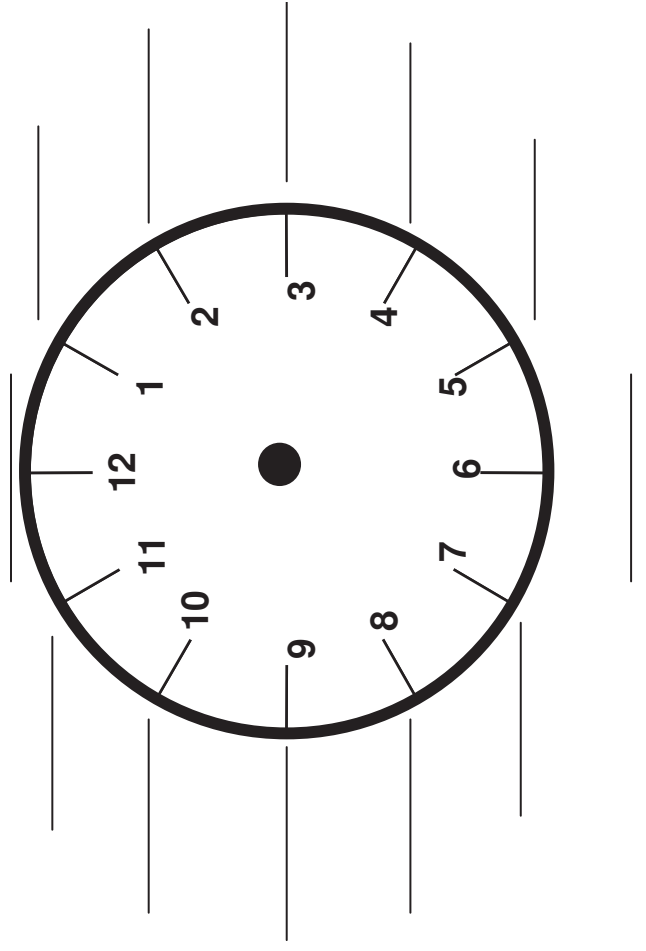
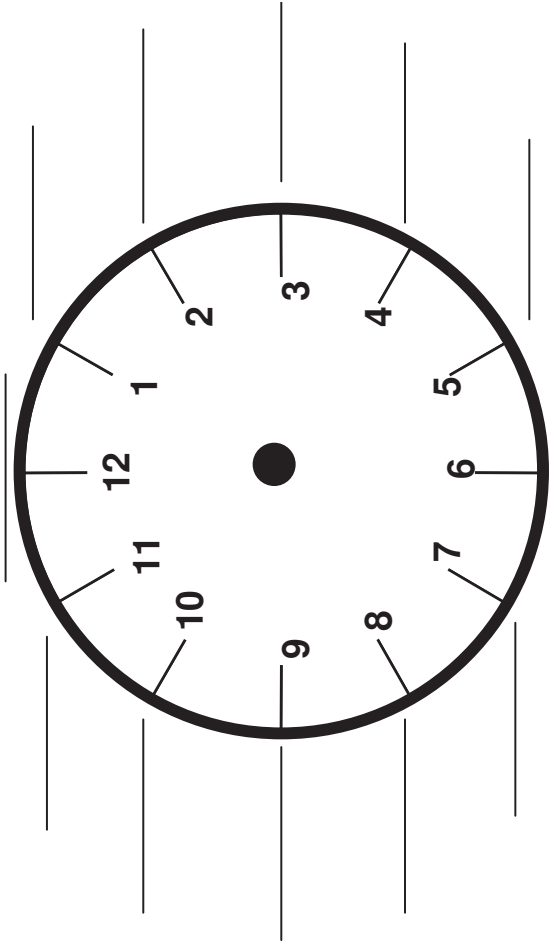


Male



Female

Think outside the boxes.



Appointment Clocks

Used to quickly put students in pairs or small groups

- Make a copy of the clock for each student. The name of another student goes at each hour mark around the clock so that asking students to find their “1 o’clock” partner puts the students in pairs (or groups of 3-4).
- Purposefully fill in some of the student names so that you know, for example, that 2 o’clock partners are mixed ability, 4 o’clock partners have similar interests, or that 7 o’clock partners were chosen by the students.
- Materials/Resources: Appointment clock templates (*on preceding page 82*)

Policy and Research

GLSEN Model District Policy on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students:

http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ATTACHMENTS/file/000/001/1978-1.pdf

California Safe Schools Research Brief 12: Gender Non-conformity and School

Safety: Documenting the problem and steps schools can take.

http://www.casafeschools.org/CSSC_Research_Brief_12.pdf

Dear Colleague Letter:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>

Letter from United States Department of Education clarifying protections for transgender and gender nonconforming students under Title IX

Dear Colleague Letter FAQ:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-201010.pdf>

Harsh Realities: The Experiences of Transgender Youth in Our Nation’s Schools

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/2388.html>

Gender-Nonconforming Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth: School

Victimization and Young Adult Psychosocial Adjustment:

http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_School%20Victimization%20of%20Gender-nonconforming%20LGBT%20Youth.pdf

How to Improve the Experience of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students:

http://www.genderspectrum.org/images/stories/Lydia_Sausa_Best_Practices_for_Middle_Schools_and_High_Schools.pdf

Organizations

Family Acceptance Project: <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network:

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html>

Gay-Straight Alliance Network: <http://gsanetwork.org/>

Gender Diversity Education, Training and Support: <http://www.genderdiversity.org/>

National Center for Lesbian Rights: <http://www.nclrights.org/site/PageServer>

National Center for Transgender Equality: <http://transequality.org/>

National Safe Schools Roundtable: <http://www.safeschoolsroundtable.org/>

TransActive Education & Advocacy: <http://www.transactiveonline.org/index.php>

Transgender Law Center: <http://transgenderlawcenter.org/cms/>

TransKids Purple Rainbow Rainbow: <http://www.transkidspurplerainbow.org/>

Trans Youth Equality Foundation: <http://www.transyouthequality.org/>

Trans Youth Family Allies: <http://imatyfa.org/>

Trans Youth Support Network: <http://www.transyouthsupportnetwork.org/>

United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights:
<http://wdcrobcop01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm>

References/Studies

Austin, G., Hanson, T., Bono, G., & Cheng, Z. (2007). *The Achievement gap, school well-being, and learning supports.* CHKS Factsheet #8. Los Alamitos, CA: WestEd. – “school well-being,” as measured by school environmental supports, safety, and attachment, was associated with higher school performance as measured by a school’s Academic Performance Index.

Cohen, Jonathan. (2006) *Social, Emotional, Ethical, and Academic Education: Creating a Climate for Learning, Participation in Democracy, and Well-Being.* Harvard Educational Review Vol. 76 no. 2

Durlak, Joseph A., Dymnicki, Allison B., Taylor, Rebecca D., Weissberg, Roger P., Schellinger, Kriston B. *The Impact of Enhancing Students’ Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions, Child Development, January/February 2011, Volume 82, Number 1, Pages 405–432* – The most up-to-date analysis of instructional interventions, a compilation of three meta-analytic reviews covering 213 studies involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students on the impact of social and emotional learning (SEL) programs that seek to promote various social and emotional skills, show that “SEL programs: improve students’ social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, connection to school, positive social behavior, and academic performance; reduce students’ conduct problems and emotional distress. improve students’ achievement test scores by 11 to 17 percentile points, indicating that they offer students a practical educational benefit.”

Espelage, D. (2009) [CDC grant—in progress]. Grant number: CE001268. *Project Title: Middle school bullying and sexual violence: Measurement issues & etiological models.* Project Period: 09/01/2007 - 08/31/2010. Last accessed June 23, 2009 at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/profiles/violence/abstracts.htm>

GLSEN, States with Safe Schools Laws, 2012

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2344.html?state=media>

Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., and Diaz, E. M. (2009). *Harsh Realities: The Experiences of Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools.* New York: GLSEN.

Kimmel, Michael s., and Mahler, Matthew. *Adolescent Masculinity, Homophobia, and Violence Random School Shootings, 1982-2001.*

American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 46 No. 10, June 2003 1439-1458 DOI:

10.1177/0002764203251484 © 2003 Sage Publications Since 1982, there have been 28 cases of random school shootings in American high schools and middle schools. The authors find...that most of the boys who opened fire were mercilessly and routinely teased and bullied and that their violence was retaliatory against the threats to manhood.

Reis, Beth & Saewyc, Elizabeth (1999). *83,000 Youth Survey. Selected Findings of Eight Population-Based Studies.* Safe Schools Coalition of Washington.

<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/83000youth.pdf>

Russell, S. T., McGuire, J. K., Toomey, R., & Anderson, C. R. (2010). *Gender Non-conformity and School Safety: Documenting the problem and steps schools can take.* (California Safe Schools Coalition Research Brief No. 12). San Francisco, CA: California Safe Schools Coalition.

Scales, P. C., & Leffert, N. (1999). *Developmental assets.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. In a review of studies on the impact of support in school, the Search Institute found that a caring school climate is associated with: Higher grades, engagement, attendance, expectations and aspirations, a sense of scholastic competence, fewer school suspensions, and on-time progression through grades (19 studies); Higher self-esteem and self-concept (5 studies); Less anxiety, depression and loneliness (3 studies); Less substance abuse (4 studies).

Scales, Peter C., Benson, Peter L., Roehlkepartain, Eugene C., Sesma Jr., Arturo, van Dulmen, Manfred. (2005). *The role of developmental assets in predicting academic achievement: A longitudinal study.* The Association for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Swearer, S., Espelage, D., Vaillancourt, T., Hymel, S. (2010). *"What Can Be Done about School Bullying" in Perspectives on School Safety and Violence Prevention.* Educational Researcher January – February – A recent, significant research finding on homophobic teasing found that where school climate is perceived as positive it serves as a buffer against experiences of negative psychological and social concerns among LGBT youth and those questioning their own orientation.

Wooley, S.F. and Rubin, M.A. (2006). *Physical Health, Social-Emotional Skills, and Academic Success are Inseparable.* The Educator's Guide to Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement, edited by Maurice Elias and Harriett Arnold. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. What does it mean for a student to be "healthy" and how does a school contribute?...reform initiatives are unlikely to succeed unless schools address all interacting dimensions of students' lives: the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual."

