



PFLAG

NATIONAL CONVENTION 2007

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Family voices
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Washington, DC October 11-14, 2007 www.pflag.org

PFLAG National Convention 2007

Addendum

Family voices

Moving equality forward...

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Workshop Notes

Navigating Schools K-12 with a Transgender Child



Workshop - Navigating Schools K-12 with a Transgender Child



- **Workshop Goal – To provide information on what it is like with a K-12 Transgender Child and navigating them in the schools**
- There are many terms and many confusions about trans vocabulary (i.e. sexual orientation, gender identification, gender spectrum, transgender, transsexual)
- Facts and Statistics (see GLSEN for stats given on trans child)
 - Harassment/bully - Depression - Isolation - Discrimination
 - Self mutilation - Suicide - Poor school performance/truancy
- **Obstacles trans youth and parents of trans youth face**
 - **Family dynamics change...dreams** of parents change...child does not want to associate with things of their born sex, coming out to family. Parents and family also have to transition. They go through the grieving process – they have to accept the death of the child in one sex. Trans child do not want to see pictures and reminders of their previous gender. Family needs to address how to balance needs of all siblings.
 - **Friends** – child loses all friends, when switching from one gender identification to another, need to get staff and administration on board to support the changes. Need to educate the school staff about gender non-conformance. It is also important to educate the students.
 - **Personal care** changes – many get very short hair cuts. May want to shave even if no facial hair. Wants to use cologne/perfume, clothes, deodorant of the new gender. May need binder for FTM.
 - **Medical intervention decisions** – need to be done with professional. Needs to be done in conjunction with the parents and child's wishes. Medications – T for testosterone, hormone blockers (prevent secondary sexual characteristics), estrogen replacement therapy for FTM, surgery (breast removal is common because breasts for FTM is disturbing for them)
 - **Health care** - professionals have limited knowledge – hard to find someone who has knowledge of trans children

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- **Challenges trans youth and parents of trans youth face in the schools**
 - **Public settings and facilities** – Bathrooms and which to use is an issue. May need to use the bathroom in the nurses office or a handicap bathroom. This arrangement can single out the child as having to use separate facilities. Changing schools may allow the child to use facilities in their new gender.
 - **School bullying and harassment** – big problem. School intervention/prevention Transgender child have the most difficult time. Every school is different and the react differently how they deal with transgender student
 - **Civil rights** – there are laws can protect the child (i.e. ADA, 1st amendment)
 - **Administrative Changes** – trans child want things to move very fast
 - Legal name and gender change
 - School records
 - Social security – may be difficult
 - School year book – need to get school to change the name on all records
 - School pictures
 - **School Options**
 - Transition at current school
 - New school: private or public – may be difficult because parents need to convince the district that there is a need to transition. School may deny a trans child's attendance and legal action may be needed. When switching schools some trans children and parents go in stealth or and some go in open
 - Home school /Homebound instruction – bullying may cause the need to home school until a new school may be found

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- **Schools and trans youth**
 - **What changes need to be made at school?**
 - Appearance: clothing, hair
 - Name/pronoun changes
 - Use school facilities
 - School records
 - Legal name change
 - Disclosure: who/how to tell
 - Support
 - **Supportive school staff make a difference**
 - See GLSEN stats about how support staff can help
 - **School policies**
 - Develop and implement policies that prohibit discrimination, harassment and violence on the basis of gender identity and expression
 - Even though the school may have policy on trans child the staff and teachers may not know what it means or how to deal with it
 - Do not separate students by gender for any reason (i.e. separating boys and girls in the class room for exercising)
 - Establish clear reporting guidelines for students who have been harassed or bullied in any way by staff or students
 - An inclusive curriculum promotes a more positive learning environments for LGBT students yet 81.7% of students report never having been taught about LGBT people

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- **Achievable positive outcomes for transitioning youth**
 - Become authentic to self identity
 - Happier
 - Become stronger/more resilient
 - Acceptance
 - Self pride
 - 2 spirited (have both male and female in them)
- Available Options
 - Schools that have a comprehensive school policy of protections allows trans students to feel safer and perform better
 - Provide a safe and supportive school environment that supports non-stereotypical gender expression, acceptance, and tolerance for those that are different
 - GSA's can be make trans children feel more like they belong, feel safe, and miss less school
 - Provide workshops and trainings that are experiential so the participants learn what it is like to face adversity being transgendered.

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- Recommendations and Best Practices for Schools
 - Create a safe and inclusive school environment
 - Hold ongoing professional staff and student development trainings regarding transphobia and effective ways to support youth
 - Designate a safe ally who is accessible for students to go to in school
 - Consistently enforce rules – by all leaders in the school
 - Implement awareness and sensitivity training
 - Have a team the can support – school nurse, counselor, teachers, principles
 - Never hold conflict resolution between a bully and the victim
 - Always respect student responsibility
 - Provide facilities student feels comfortable to use – bathroom/locker room
 - Have student identify their gender preferred pronoun and name use – support the use of these
 - Increase visibility and support of positive role models, including district staff
 - Promote self-esteem, academic achievement, understanding and respect for diversity
- Be Proactive
 - Hold school wide events in recognition of transgender persons
 - October is GLBT History Month
 - Include transgender people throughout history that have made positive contributions within....
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- **Educational Resources on Transgender Related topics**
 - Websites
 - Library
 - Parents
 - Movies
 - Staff
 - Community
 - Books
 - Students
 - Speakers
- **Other Materials available from this workshop upon request**
 - *Article: “Making Schools Safe for LGBT Students: A Resource Guide*
 - *Tips and Strategies for Meeting the Needs of Transgender Youth”*
 - *Transgender Resources list (by Gender Spectrums – company with above training programs)*