

PARENTING TWO SPIRIT & INDIGIQUEER YOUTH



TWO SPIRIT SUPPORT BOAT



FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS

Note: Throughout this FAQ, we use the acronym 2SLGBTQ+ to refer to people who are Two Spirit, Indigiqueer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or have other (gender)queer identities.

My child has come out to me as 2SLGBTQ+. What do I do now?



1. Celebrate! Your child trusts you enough to talk to you about their identity and is finding their place. Indigenous nations have long histories of Two Spirit and queer identities, and young people today who are supported in their identities as Two Spirit or Indigenous LGBTQ+ people thrive.



“None of my identities really clash with each other in my mind because my thinking is there have been many Indigenous people who are like me.”

-

A 21 y.o. 2 Spirit Trans Man

2. Approach your child’s admission with a spirit of curiosity. Ask open-ended questions without judgment.



“Can you tell me more about that?”

“What does that mean to you?”

3. Acknowledge and name emotions that you feel to yourself.

**What are your emotions telling you about what you need and value?
If you feel grief, acknowledge the source of that grief. You may have had expectations about your child’s future that your child didn’t share.**



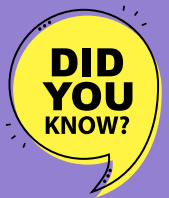
4. Avoid stating the impact of your child’s 2SLGBTQ+ identity on you to your child. Find another person with whom to process those emotions. Remember that your child is most directly impacted by what you are learning.



I'm worried my child will be bullied or will be less happy and healthy because they are 2SLGBTQ+.

1. Of course, as parents, we want to protect our children. The best protection you can offer your 2SLGBTQ+ child is your full love, support, and affirmation.

Transgender youth who have socially transitioned (are living affirmed in their gender at school, at home, and in other public spaces) have levels of anxiety and depression similar to their cisgender peers.



Using the right pronouns for your child can reduce their risk of suicide by **56%**

2. Make sure you balance your concern for your child's safety with your child's right to express themselves freely. Your concern for your child's safety might be going too far if you:



- Make comments or set rules about appropriate hair length.
- Make comments or set rules about how your child dresses.
- Refuse to allow your child to see certain friends or romantic partners, because they are queer.

What do I do if I misgender my child?



We are all learning. Using the right pronouns takes time and practice. If you misgender your child, or someone else, apologize and move on.

I think my child might be queer, but they haven't come out to me. What do I do?



1. Give them time. They'll tell you when they're ready.
2. Be an accomplice for your local 2SLGBTQ+ community. Speak positively about other 2SLGBTQ+ people in your life or community.
3. If you decide to ask your child about their identity, **ask** without judgment.



“Are you dating someone?” **NOT** “Do you have a girl/boyfriend?”
Respect your child's right not to answer questions about their dating life or their identity. Be patient. Give them time.

I want to be the best advocate I can for my child. What resources can help me?



1. Balance educating yourself with resources about LGBTQ+ terms with the reality that many of these resources are western centric and that language in the LGBTQ+ community is up to the individual. Ask your child what the words they use for their identity mean to them.
2. Be an accomplice. If you hear other parents or community members talking about 2SLGBTQ+ identities in ways that may not be healthy, start a conversation with them.



“I feel more supported by people who use their voice to say something protective or advocate for 2SLGBTQ+ community.”

-Two Spirit testimonial

My 2SLGBTQ+ child and I barely talk/don't communicate well. How can I change that?



1. Use “I” statements in conversations with your 2SLGBTQ+ child to ensure you are owning your thoughts and feelings. Speak directly to the qualities of relationship you want to create:



“I want to support you in this.”

“I want us to have healthy communication.”

2. Examine areas where you might be using language or making assumptions about gender, sexuality, or your child's vision or their future.

Do you...?

- make comments/have ideas about appropriate hair length?
- make comments about style of dress?
- ask about boyfriend/girlfriend?
- allow your ideal vision of your child's future impact your relationship?



3. Have healthy expectations. Don't expect to be rewarded by your child for learning something new or using the correct pronouns. Your child is noticing and does care. Your work matters even if it is not acknowledged immediately

4. Have self-compassion.



Your child, whether they are queer or not, is never going to agree with you or get along with you all the time.

My child is asking about transition. What do I do?



1. Further engage your child in these conversations with non-judgmental, open-ended questions:



How do you see yourself as an Indigenous adult?

How would you describe yourself as an adult?

What role do you want to play in your community?

Note: Younger kids may have an easier time drawing or using toys to illustrate their responses.

2. Open the conversation with your child's doctor.

Ask whether your child's primary care doctor is able to prescribe puberty blockers or gender-affirming hormones. If not, where could they refer you for that care? If so, what is required from you to access that care?



TIPS FOR THINKING ABOUT MEDICAL TRANSITION



- Transition is not linear and timelines vary widely. Support your child without pushing them. Use discernment and self-reflection to ensure you don't hurry your child or slow them down. Let your child and their doctor determine timelines.
- Intervention at a young age frequently depends on information about your child's developmental stage. As a parent, you don't need to be involved in the conversation at that level. Leave it to your child and their doctor.