



TRISH ALLISON

DEI

Parent

Guidebooks

*How to Explain
Transgenderism to Kids
Using Simple Words*

How to Explain Transgenderism to Kids Using Simple Words

DEI for Parents

Trish Allison

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HOW TO EXPLAIN TRANSGENDERISM TO KIDS
USING SIMPLE WORDS

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Written by Trish Allison.

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Introduction

First, this guidebook is *not* about helping your child understand their own gender identity. Rather, it's about helping you proactively and intermittently teach them that transgender people deserve the same kindness and respect as everyone else.

We're thankfully starting to see, however slowly, a shift toward an increasingly-diverse world. Many adults are shedding their biases and realizing that transgenderism is a natural part of life. But we won't be able to enjoy further, sustainable movement in the right direction until we can provide accurate information to the upcoming generation.

As a parent, you don't have to become an expert on the transgender subject. But it *is* important to teach your kid(s) that everyone has the right to dress, act, and identify in ways that make them feel good and healthy.

Your job is to subtly integrate respect for transgender people into your conversations and activities with your children as they grow. This guidebook provides some practical ways you can do that.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you're reading:

- Most important, none of the steps are intended to be completed on a single, dictatorial occasion. The intent is to communicate the values described here on a casual, consistent basis over a period of time.
- Tips are written for parents of elementary-school children but there's a wide spectrum of maturity at every age. Some six-year-olds are mature way beyond their years and some ten-year-olds are learning at a different pace than their peers. That said, you know your child best regarding what is and isn't appropriate.

- The chapters are organized linearly, meaning it's best to read chapter 1 first and chapter 5 last. That said, if you have an immediate concern, feel free to read whichever chapter is the most pertinent at the time.
- Many of the tips assume that you and your child already share a fairly solid foundation of mutual communication. The tips are doable without this foundation, but they'll be much harder to implement successfully without it.
- It's so important to praise kids when they do something that's aligned with whatever you taught them. Be specific with your praise and look them in the eyes when you say it. Your approval means more than you think.
- It's true that children are heavily influenced by teachers and peers, but ultimately, the values they carry with them into adulthood are learned at home.

Finally, while there's no one-size-fits-all approach for teaching kids understanding and respect for transgenderism, this guidebook provides suggestions for scenarios that you can tailor to fit your own situation. The ultimate goal is to help you raise compassionate, non-biased, successful humans.

Chapter 1: Learn What Your Child Already Knows About Transgenderism

This chapter appears first because it's important for you to find out what your child already knows about transgenderism *before* you start guiding them. If you start saying things they already know, they're likely to tune out.

Maybe s/he's already learned about transgenderism, but the facts aren't accurate. Or maybe s/he knows next-to-nothing about the subject and you're starting with a blank slate. Either way, you'll never know until you get them talking and really listen to their opinion.

Even if your child is clearly uncomfortable talking about transgenderism, it's important to broach the subject and try to help them feel more comfortable talking about it. To successfully guide your child through the maze of shifting awakenings about transgender people, it's imperative to help them feel comfortable so you can learn what s/he already knows.

Step 1. Get your child to share their thoughts

The best way to get most children to open up is to say the minimum. If you use short phrases that reassure and prompt, you're more likely to get a response. The goal here is to get your child feeling comfortable enough to express how they feel.

The other crucial element is timing. Trying to start a conversation when your child is playing a game (digital or otherwise), reading, or watching TV almost never works. They'll probably find your presence intrusive before you even start talking. Plus you won't have their full attention.

If it's not the right time, wait. As many parents know, timing is everything, especially when you're trying to understand your child's true feelings.

If it *is* a good time, here are some ideas for sparking a conversation about transgenderism:

Current Events. News about transgenderism seems to be appearing more and more. Hopefully mentioning one of the subjects below will prompt a reaction:

- Do they know that parts of society are starting to treat transgender people with more dignity than ever before?
- Do they know that positive portrayals of transgender people are starting to appear on popular TV shows and movies?

If your child perks up when you mention either of the subjects above, offer to explore further together. A simple Google search should enable you both to learn more. If they're not interested in learning more, leave it alone for now and bring up the subject again at a later time.

Books. If your child is too young to be interested in current events, reading a book together about transgenderism is a great way to start a conversation because it's not a face-to-face activity. There's a better chance your child will divulge what they already know when they don't have to make eye contact.

Keep it casual. Keep your discovery tactics as nonchalant as possible. Kids are much more likely to contribute their feelings when they feel like the conversation is random.

“Conversation helps children express their thoughts, get what they need, resolve conflicts, ask for help, and learn from adults and from one another.”¹

Try to initiate informal conversations anywhere that seems appropriate to you—you know your child best.

Continue subtly encouraging your child to contribute ideas so they feel like they're an important part of transgender-respect progress (which their generation absolutely is!).

Ask questions. Any changes at school around bathroom use? Any transgender students? Teachers? Administrators? Anything else?

If your child doesn't respond to anything, save it for later. It might be that s/he's never even thought about transgenderism before. Give them time to think about it.

Try to remember that the whole point of this step is to get your child to talk so you can get an accurate understanding of how they truly consider the subject.

Step 2. Listen carefully

Once your child starts talking, listen attentively and silently. The only words you need to utter, if any, are to let them know you're eager to learn more. Be ready to listen without judgement.

Even if what they're saying is completely against everything you believe about the importance of treating transgender people with respect, try to remind yourself that this is their time to talk and your time to listen and learn. They need to know that you're really listening to their words.

Kids can tell if you're paying attention to them. Today's Parent explains:

“When you're really connected, your body is leaning in and your phone is down. You'll find that if you do a really good job in those moments, they will come to you for the hard stuff.”²

Here are some ideas for making sure they know you're listening.

Say the minimum. While they're talking, if you feel like you're going to burst if you don't say something, feel free to nod your head and say “hmmm.”

Otherwise, here are some phrases you could use to let them know you're interested in what they're saying and you want to learn more:

- “Tell me more.”
- “Wow, you have quite a story to share.”
- “Please keep talking. I'm really interested.”

- *“It sounds like you have a lot on your mind, so I’m glad you’re sharing.”*
- *“I love that you’re so open and honest with your feelings.”*
- *“It means a lot to me that you feel comfortable talking to me.”*
- *“You’re doing a great job of describing what happened.”*
- *“Could you repeat that? I want to be sure I understand what you’re going through.”*

Silence. Even when it feels uncomfortable, if you can stay quiet during moments of silence while s/he’s gathering their thoughts, you might be surprised by what s/he says next and what you learn.

Because we usually think three to four times faster than we talk, we often get impatient with a speaker’s slow progress, especially with children, and our minds wander.

Try using the extra time by silently considering your child’s point. Then, when they’re finished, you can restate the points and ask if you’ve correctly understood the message.

Questions like *‘Is this what you mean?’* or *‘Do I understand you correctly?’* are not only supportive because they show you were listening, but also reduce the chance of a misunderstanding later on.

Listening with the intent to understand is not easy, but it can be done. Most of us are half listening or listening with the intent to respond instead of listening to understand where the other person is coming from. It’s really common.

Be subtle. Remember, it’s important to keep your discovery tactics and opinions to yourself. Otherwise, you run the risk of making them feel like you’re making moral judgements about what they’re telling you. The very last thing you want to do is create a barrier for any future meaningful back and forth discussions.

Unexpected opportunities. Sometimes opportunities arise unexpectedly that are perfect for learning your child's true opinion. For example, maybe on TV, there's a show that includes a transgender person. Your brother, 'Uncle Don' to your kids, says something derogatory about how transgender people are freaks. Follow up with your child later ask them *"What did you think about Uncle Don's statement about transgender people when we were watching TV?"*

Starting a conversation about 'Uncle Don's opinion' can create an open space for discussion. A scenario like this could potentially give you enormous insight into how your child really feels.

Again, learning your child's true opinion requires active listening. The Center for Parenting Education tells us:

*"By listening to them, you are communicating that they are worthy of your attention."*²

One day your child will hopefully follow your lead and really listen to whomever s/he's with.

More Resources

- [Foolproof strategies for getting kids to talk](#)
- [Age-by-age guide to getting your kid to talk to you](#)
- [Transgender news politics and commentary](#)
- [Center for Parenting Education - The Skill of Listening](#)

Chapter 2: Explain the Basics of Transgenderism

This chapter assumes that you deduced from your information-gathering activities in the previous chapter that your child knows next-to-nothing about transgenderism and you're starting with a blank slate. If that's *not* the case and your child already knows the basics, feel free to skip step 1 below.

If it *is* the case, the most important thing to remember in this chapter is to keep everything simple. While kids are young, there's no need yet to get into complicated subjects like transgender vs. transsexual or transgender participation in professional sports. Instead, limit your discussion to the basics—a definition of transgenderism and the transition process. Keep it simple.

If your child comes to you after you've explained the basics with questions about complicated subjects, of course answer them directly and honestly. But for now, keep your *initial* discussion simple. It's important for them to feel confident so that they fully believe in their ability to participate in any further discussion.

Step 1. Explain what a transgender person is

The best way to explain transgenderism to kids is to keep it simple. All they need to know is that your brain is telling you one thing but your body parts don't match what your brain is telling you. It's not a flaw; it's just a cell-growth mix-up that can happen at birth.

Here's a simple definition: 'Transgender people's inner thoughts don't match their outside parts.' For example, maybe someone consistently thinks to themselves '*Wow that dress is really pretty. I wish I could wear it.*' But that person has a penis so everyone assumes they're a boy and shouldn't wear dresses.

The most important thing for your child to learn about transgender people is that they're exactly the same as everyone else, except for this one part of how their gender works. You can remind them that *everyone* is born with traits that make them different from other people—not just transgender people.

Here are some words you could consider sharing to make your point:

“We’re all different from each other. We should always accept people for how they are and make sure they feel safe and included. It’s never okay to make people feel sad or left out just because the way their gender works is different from ours.”

Offer as many words of encouragement as you can here. It's best to begin your child's understanding of transgenderism with a sense of confidence. Again, the odds of them wanting to learn more will be much greater if they feel confident enough to participate in a mutual conversation.

A new study indicates that back-and-forth conversations with kids is not only beneficial to their confidence but also to their brain development.

“...conversational turns are associated with more coherent white-matter connectivity and indicates that promoting such conversational turns may enhance structural brain development and the language abilities supported by that brain development in children from all backgrounds. [4](#)

Words matter. As you're reviewing the basics *with* your child, keep in mind that they need *verbal* confirmation that it's okay to ask you questions anytime. Make sure they know you can talk about it *together*. Reiterate your message as many times as needed.

Step 2. Talk about the basics of the transgender transition process

Just like in the previous step, keep it simple. You don't want your child to feel like you're talking down to them.

Here are some simple words you could consider using to define the transgender transition process:

“Transitioning is the process of changing the way you look on the outside so it matches the way you feel on the inside. It can involve medical treatment and hormones, or it can involve changing your name and preferred pronouns, or both. There are lots of different options, but the ultimate choice is always up to the individual.”

If you can relate your definition to someone you know personally, it will help your child process what you're saying. For example, if you know someone who is transgender, talk about their situation. Have they already had reassignment hormonal therapy? Did they have any surgery? What has it been like for them to embrace their gender identity?

If you don't know a transgender person, do an online search. Try to find someone you think your child might be familiar with. It's important that s/he is able to connect transgenderism with a real person. Having a visual representation will help them understand the basics of transitioning.

Your child will inevitably have follow-up questions/concerns. It's crucial for them to feel like they have a safe, informed, reliable adult they can confide in about anything, anytime. Your response is “...an indication of whether s/he can count on you to talk when s/he needs you.”⁵

Also, be consistent with your answers. This will allow them to better understand the issues and build empathy and compassion. The goal!

More Resources

- [The Science of Being Transgender](#) (video)
- [How to teach your kid what transgender means](#)

- [Transition Roadmap](#)

Chapter 3: Define Transgender Stereotypes Together

Stereotypes are a huge roadblock to understanding transgender people. As a parent, you can minimize this impediment by raising a child who understands the negative effects of stereotypes.

The first goal of this chapter is to help your child understand what stereotypes are, how they're used in everyday life, and how damaging they can be.

The second goal of the chapter is to help your child understand that harmful stereotypes can be overcome by focusing on traits that *defy* transgender stereotypes.

The more your child is exposed to profiles of successful transgender people, the more likely it is that s/he will grow into adulthood confident that transgender people deserve the same kindness and respect as everyone else.

Try to keep in mind that these suggestions are meant to spark ideas (sporadically) and guide a two-way conversation, not a lecture.

Step 1. Define stereotypes

You can start explaining transgender stereotypes by first making sure your child knows what stereotypes are. Instead of putting them on the spot and quizzing them about the definition of a stereotype, you could offer your own definition:

“Stereotyping is assuming that everyone is alike. It’s looking at a whole group of people and assuming that they all share the same qualities.”

Try to limit your conversation to a definition of ‘stereotypes.’ At this point, talking about the ‘big-picture’ issue of transgender hate crimes could be distracting and counterproductive.

Instead, first make sure your child fully understands what stereotypes are before moving on to more complicated subjects.

Step 2. Explain why stereotypes are harmful

Explain to your child that stereotypes in general can hurt people's feelings, create feelings of worthlessness, and limit their chances to succeed.

The harmful effects of stereotyping can be an abstract concept for children to absorb. But it's an important one because it can be so pervasive and long-lasting.

“Even after a person leaves a situation where they faced negative stereotypes, the effects of coping with that situation remain.”⁶

Remember that this step isn't necessarily about *transgender* stereotypes. You're just trying to explain the harmful effects of stereotypes in general. If possible, offer a scenario that pertains to you.

For example, suppose you were passed by for a promotion even though you were clearly the most qualified for the job. Explain that the hiring manager just assumed you weren't qualified because of your race or gender. Talk about how it made you (temporarily!) feel like there was no point in trying.

If you have a similar story you can share, this is a really good way to help your child understand how damaging stereotypes can be. Kids love to hear personal stories about their parents.

Or maybe you *witnessed* the effects of someone being stereotyped. Whether you saw it, heard it, experienced it, dreamed it, whatever—it won't matter to your child. It's just the *concept* of stereotype damage that you're trying to teach.

Hopefully, s/he'll chime in here and offer their own example of a stereotype that's hurtful. If/when s/he does, be sure to listen attentively and praise them for understanding such a complicated concept so well.

Before moving on to the next step, make sure your child has a solid understanding of how stereotypes can be damaging.

Step 3. Talk about transgender stereotypes

Now that you've discussed stereotypes *in general* and how damaging they can be, pivot the conversation to *transgender* stereotypes.

Talking about transgender stereotypes is a good way to get your child engaged in the discussion if s/he isn't already. It's important for them to participate so that, at a young age, they start feeling confidence and ownership for respecting transgender people.

Start the process by Googling phrases like 'common transgender stereotypes.' Click on the search result that you think will both engage your child and also fall within their current stage of development. Talk about what you find.

Keep the conversation going. Look up another stereotype and talk about it. Do you know anyone personally who is persecuted because of their gender identity?

Without providing gory details, mention that for centuries, transgender people have been stereotyped as freaks and treated with emotional and social isolation and even violence.

Step 4. Provide examples that DEFY transgender stereotypes

It's time to inject some hope into the subject. The possibility of developing ongoing understanding and respect for transgender people should be a *hopeful* subject, not dreary.

Now that your child has a basic understanding of transgender stereotypes and how they can be harmful, expose them to as many examples as you can that *defy* those stereotypes. The goal here is to help your child understand that transgender people are just humans like all of us, and that we all have something that's different about us.

Books are also a wonderful teaching tool here. Whenever you can, provide access to books that offer a positive profile of transgender people.

Don't be too obvious about it though. Let your child see you reading one of the books or place it in a noticeable spot in your home. Let them 'discover' it on their own.

Thankfully, more and more examples that defy transgender stereotypes are increasingly appearing (and being recognized) all around us.

[Common Sense Media](#) is a great place to find books, movies, TV shows, video games, and apps that are age appropriate and defy stereotypes about transgender people. Their search engine is really good for finding what you need, no matter where you live.

More Resources

- [What is a stereotype? – Intro for young children](#) (video)
- [How to talk to children about stereotypes](#)
- [Shattering transgender stereotypes](#)

Chapter 4: Learn How to Answer Common Questions from Kids About Transgender People

It's inevitable that your child will ask questions. The more accepting our society becomes toward transgender people, the more questions will come up. It's actually a good thing.

Children learn about the world around them by asking questions. The most important part of the process is making sure they get answers from trustworthy, informed adults and not from myths and stereotypes.

Be prepared to field questions at potentially embarrassing moments. As we all know, kids are unpredictable, and often ask embarrassing questions in public.

“If your child asks you an embarrassing question when you’re out in public, answer as honestly as you can, sticking to facts and avoiding imposing your judgments. Again, you will want to speak softly, suggesting that it’s best to ask questions that might make someone uncomfortable when that person isn’t nearby.” [7](#)

If they say something stereotypical about a transgender person like “Why is that man wearing a dress?” you’ll probably be a lot happier with your answer if you think it through first. (And a whole lot less likely to pretend you didn’t hear the question.)

Step 1. Give direct and simple answers

Evading questions about important subjects gives your child the impression that there’s something inherently evil about the subject and it shouldn’t be talked about. The major risk here is that your child will create their own answer with potentially erroneous information.

Instead, “offer a simple, straightforward answer.”[8](#) This will send a crucial message to your child that transgender topics

are not shameful. Try to look as comfortable as possible during this exchange—as if you’re discussing the grocery list.

Even if you’re not comfortable, fake it. If you’re anxious, your child will read into it and assume there’s something wrong with talking about transgenderism.

Aim for an open, educational tone. Your attitude shapes theirs. If you don’t know the answer to the question, be honest and admit that you don’t know. Google it together.

Just as important as ‘not dodging questions’ is providing answers that are simple. Kids learn by processing the information we give them. The simpler the answer to their question, the easier it is for them to process the information. They don’t need any information beyond what they’re specifically asking.

So when/if your child asks *“Why is that man wearing a dress?”* You don’t need to offer any explanation beyond *“He probably likes it.”*

The next step provides answers to some of those unpredictable questions.

Step 2. Sample questions and answers

While the questions/comments and suggested simple answers below are by no means exhaustive, they’ll hopefully provide a good starting point for responding to the inevitable awkward questions and statements that most kids come up with.

Try to remember to keep your answers simple.

“What does transgender mean?”

“A transgender person feels one way in their brain but that feeling doesn’t match their outside parts.”

“Is transgenderism a mental illness?”

“No. It’s not considered a mental illness.”

“What’s transphobia?”

“Transphobia is fear and hatred of transgender people.”

“What is cisgender?”

“Cisgender means that your outside parts match the gender you identify with inside yourself.”

“Do all transgender people have surgery?”

“No. There are many reasons, but the most common one is cost.”

“Are transgender people protected by the law?”

“Yes finally. President Biden was the first U.S. president to declare federal law against transgender discrimination.”

“Can men have babies?”

“A person who was born female and is living as a male can have a baby if their female organs are still fully productive.”

“Have transgender people always existed?”

“Yes transgender people have always existed. But whether or not they’re recognized varies from culture to culture.”

“How does someone know that they’re transgender?”

“Most often, transgender people have vague feelings of not fitting in for a long time. It’s completely up to the individual whether they act on those feelings by recognizing their own transgenderism.”

Society’s understanding of transgenderism is continually evolving. There might be times when your child is asking you questions and you feel out of your depth because you don’t know the answer.

Turning to Google for the answer is perfectly fine. Just be sure to involve your child. This is a great opportunity to engage your child in the process of learning. You’ll be showing them what it means to be open and curious. Learning about other people is part of wanting to make the world a better place.

Step 3. Follow up

Many questions about transgenderism can and should come up as your child weaves their way through life. Let them know, regularly, that they can come to you anytime.

Try to continue bringing up the subject as the weeks and months unfold after your child asks a question. Teaching respect for transgenderism is not a formal, once-and-done conversation. Encourage your child to keep asking questions.

Remember that the values you teach your child will be much more impactful if your discussions are casual and consistent.

More resources

- [Kids and Embarrassing Questions](#)
- [Answering Your Child's Toughest Questions](#)
- [Presidential Actions: A Proclamation on Transgender Day of Visibility](#)

Chapter 5: Cultivate Respect for Transgender People at Home

In addition to the strategies already discussed in this guidebook, another suggestion, perhaps the most important one for effectively guiding your child toward respect for transgender people, is to create an accepting environment at home.

To create a welcoming attitude and an ableist home, emphasize repeatedly with both your words and actions, that transgender people deserve the same kindness and respect as everyone else.

The steps below will help you cultivate the right environment at home.

Step 1. Set an example

The best way to teach respect for transgender people at home is to model the attitudes, behavior, and values that you want to impart to your child.

As you probably already know, children rarely buy the ‘Do as I say, not as I do’ approach. If you say something is important, but your child doesn’t see you behaving in a way that matches your words, they know it’s not actually that important to you.

On the flip side, if they see you doing something that’s aligned with what you’ve been telling them, your words will be much more effective. Here are some ideas for setting an example so your child can fully embrace your guidance.

Be aware of your own biases. If you behave in ways that demonstrate you’re skeptical about respecting transgender people, even though you say you’re all for it, your child will notice and emulate your behavior.

“Studies show people can be consciously committed to egalitarianism, and deliberately work to behave

without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes. Implicit Association Tests (IATs) can tap those hidden, or automatic, stereotypes and prejudices that circumvent conscious control. Project Implicit—a collaborative research effort between researchers at Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and University of Washington—offers dozens of such tests.”²

Call out discrimination. If someone says or does something against transgender people in your own home and you don’t intervene or say something in the moment, that will signal to your child that you’re okay with that type of language or behavior.

Speak kind words. If someone shares something about their own transgender history with you (and your child is listening), you could say things like, “*Wow, that is so interesting!*” or “*I didn’t know that. I’m really glad you shared with me.*” The goal is to teach your child how to treat *all* people with respect.

Show support for a work colleague or a student at your child’s school. Take a stand if you see someone being teased about their gender identity. Silence and inaction in the face of injustice sends the message that it’s okay to ‘look the other way.’

Instead of ignoring the issue, write an editorial in your local newspaper, call your elected official, talk to a project manager or school principal, anything—just do something to take a stand.

Prove that asking questions is okay. Try to weave questions about gender into occasional everyday conversations. For example, “*Do you like to be called ‘she’ or ‘he’ or ‘they’? Do you know anyone who feels like a ‘they’?*”

Simply asking those questions won’t cause your child to be confused about their own gender. Instead, it will encourage them to be more thoughtful about how they approach gender and will provide more opportunities for you to talk to them about transgender people.

Step 2. Promote respect for transgender people by making smart household choices

Here are some ideas for shaping your home environment to reflect the transgender values you've been touting.

Media. Talking about acceptance is a good first step, but it's not enough. Try to select movies, videos, TV shows, etc. that depict equality for transgender people. Again, [Common Sense Media](#) is a great resource for finding age-appropriate media.

Your media selection doesn't have to consistently include transgender characters, but it's important that it never depicts uncontested discrimination against transgender people. This might sound like an impossible task at first, but if you can start getting your family in the habit of choosing media based on equality and not bigotry, you'll be doing them an enormous favor.

Friends. Friendships with transgender people can be one of the richest, most authentic examples you can set. Sharing a meal, exercising, running errands together, or supporting each other in times of need is one of the best ways to show your child that friendships with transgender people are just like any other friendship. Even better? Having a transgender friend can help your child associate transgenderism with the warm characteristics of friendship: human connection and kindness.

Language. Using the correct gender pronouns is an enormous part of respecting the transgender community. Try to get in the habit of using gender-neutral pronouns. For example, use 'they/them' instead of 'he/she.' Your child will appreciate that you're making a determined effort to live beyond outdated gender labels.

Books. In addition to keeping an open dialogue about transgenderism at home, another important element to raising open-minded children is by making sure that your home library has books with transgender people fully integrated into the storyline. Books about supporting transgender people are fine, but books that depict a transgender person as a mainstream character in the story is much better.

Family mission statement. Things you say to your kids all the time can have an enormous impact on how their opinions form as they grow. Keep saying things like “*everyone is different*” or “*we believe in respecting all humans, including transgender people*”—anything that denotes fairness and acceptance. It might not seem like they hear you at the time, but it will sink in eventually. Keep saying it.

Share stories. Thankfully, as society becomes more accepting of transgender people, heartwarming coming-out stories are already starting to appear. For example, if your child happens to be watching over your shoulder as you scan social media, point out different kinds of families you see on your Facebook or Instagram feed.

Step 3. Make respect for transgender people an ongoing conversation

Teaching respect for transgender people is not a once-and-done conversation. Issues will come up all the time that your child (hopefully) feels comfortable sharing with you.

As any parent knows, getting a concept to sink in with our kids needs to be repeated over and over again. Keep guiding them toward fairness and respect.

Children need constant help understanding why each situation is either fair or unfair.

“They have not yet reached the point of fully recognizing the needs of others.”^{[10](#)}

Children are a work in progress. Conversations about transgender people need to be a work in progress too.

Talking about fairness and respect for transgender people repeatedly might feel tedious to you, but it hopefully doesn’t to your child. They’re progressively applying what you tell them to scenarios in their own life and deciding if it makes sense or not.

Depending on their attention span, who knows when you’ll say or model the right words at the right time. Keep trying.

Plan for a marathon, not a sprint.

Also, keep in mind that there will be times when s/he wants to talk to you that aren't convenient—like when you're working, reading, or talking with someone else. Either make the time then or ask your child to remember their thoughts so they can share with you later.

The good news is that the decisions s/he makes as s/he grows through adolescence and into early adulthood will be informed by your ongoing conversations.

More Resources:

- [Gender-neutral pronouns 101](#)
- [Heartwarming transgender coming out stories](#)
- [14 Children's Books Starring Trans or Gender-Nonconforming Kids](#) (Seattle public library)

If you found this guidebook helpful, PLEASE consider sharing it or writing a brief review (your review can be super short if needed). Reviews are a huge boost for writers to get the word out about their books. Thank you so much! - Trish

Reference Notes

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Watch for more at [Trish Allison's site](#).



About the Author

Raising two children in a 1990s same-sex family (way before modern acceptance), gave Trish a unique perspective on the importance of teaching kids that *everyone* deserves kindness and respect.

She combined her experience as a parent, her career as a technical/procedural writer, countless hours of child psychology research, a degree in English from U.C. Berkeley, and a long-ignored passion to write something meaningful — into a collection of social-justice parenting books.

The timing couldn't be better. As the world finally (slowly) awakens to the dire need to reduce cultural unfairness, helping parents raise a generation of open-minded kids is critical.

Read more at [Trish Allison's site](#).