



Becoming an Affirming Caregiver for LGBTQ+ Youth

Like all young people, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ+) children and youth in foster care need nurturing families and caregivers to help them navigate their teenage years and grow into healthy adults. To help create a home where LGBTQ+ youth feel safe, it is important to support and accept the young people in your care without bias. Research shows that family and caregivers who create accepting and supportive environments can enhance the health, mental health, self-esteem and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth.

What does "affirming" mean?

- Understanding *everyone* has a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and a person's SOGI and sense of self may change over time.
- Believing all people are **worthy of love** and respect, inclusive of their SOGI.
- **Warmly welcoming** and encouraging youth to be their true selves without judgement.
- Actively working to meet the **unique needs** of LGBTQ+ youth.

What does affirming care look like?

- Letting youth know you will **always** be supportive, even as you are still learning.
- Keeping a youth's SOGI **private** unless the youth gives permission to share.
- **Advocating** for youth's safe inclusion in the home, school and community.
- Using correct **names and pronouns** and correcting others who do not.
- Supporting a youth to **dress** in the way they feel most comfortable, according to their gender identity.
- Supporting a child's **friendships** with others who are also LGBTQ+.
- **Sharing** with the social worker if you feel services are not affirming the child's SOGI.

- Attending **support groups** or advocacy groups to better understand how to provide support and get accurate information.

How can I learn to provide affirming care?

- Complete the new online training: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth – Considerations for Caregivers, available at: bit.ly/UCLACWT.
- Watch the animated short: Support for LGBTQ+ Youth Starts at Home: An #AsYouAre Project, available at: bit.ly/AsYouAreShort.

Are there resources available?

Yes! We have many local community and County partners to support our youth and caregivers. To see available resources, visit: dcfs.lacounty.gov/youth/lgbtq-youth/.

Have additional questions? Contact us!

- Jamie Estrada, DCFS LGBTQ+ Program: estraja@dcfs.lacounty.gov
- Jessica Brown, DCFS Office of Equity: brownj@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Encouraging someone to be entirely themselves is the loudest way to love them.
-Kalen Dion, Author and Visual Artist



Local and National Support and Resources

Visit our DCFS Youth Page for even more resources and information:
dcfs.lacounty.gov/youth

LA LGBT Center

LA based child and family focused, culturally responsive support committed to increasing safety, well-being and permanency for LGBTQ+ children and youth. A wide array of community and clinical resources focus on self-esteem, relationships and wellness.
lgbtcenter.org

Long Beach LGBT Center

Located in Long Beach, services include mentorship, mental health care, support groups and student advocacy.
centerlb.org

Penny Lane Centers

Serving our families in the Antelope Valley and throughout LA, services include youth support groups, education and support for transition aged youth (TAY).
pennylane.org

The Help Group's Kaleidoscope Program

San Fernando Valley and LA based services for LGBTQ+ youth, young adults and their families, developing on self-acceptance, mental health stability, strong social connections and resiliency.
kaleidoscopelgbtq.org

The Family Acceptance Project

Helps ethnically, socially, and religiously diverse families increase support for their LGBTQ+ children
lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org

Trevor Project

24/7 Crisis services, education, and advocacy for LGBTQ+ young people.
thetrevorproject.org

PFLAG

Nationwide organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them. The LA Chapter offers support groups.
www.pflag.org

Human Rights Campaign

Offers numerous resources to LGBTQ+ people and their allies:

- LGBTQ Youth: resources to support LGBTQ+ youth in your care
- Parenting: resources for issues facing families with parents or children who identify as LGBTQ+
hrc.org/resources

The Wall Las Memorias

LA based program focused on community organizing and outreach. Groups for LGBTQ+ youth and their caregivers focus on wellness and mental health.
Thewallasmemorias.org

RaiseAChild

Local and national services, including resource parent advocates, support networks and training for resource families and youth.
RaiseAchild.org

Child Welfare Information Gateway

Provides practical advice, guidance, and resources for caregivers
Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth: A Guide for Foster Parents