



GENDER, FAMILIES & LOVE: THE BASICS

These concepts are helpful in order to support and affirm young children as they explore their identities, as well as the diversity of the people and families around them.

BODY PARTS

What's in there



BODY PARTS AND PHYSIOLOGY

Genitals don't necessarily determine gender identity and sexual orientation (e.g. someone born with a vulva may not identify as a girl, want dresses and dolls, and grow up to love men). Anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes interact in complex ways with cultural norms and personal experience to influence who someone is and who they love.

INTERSEX

"Intersex" is an umbrella term for people whose body parts do not fit into the male/female binary. About 2% of humans are born intersex, the same percentage born left-handed or with red hair. Intersex individuals may identify as female, male, nonbinary, or another gender.

When I was born, they guessed I was a girl, and I am a girl.



CISGENDER

When I was born, they guessed I was a girl, but I'm a boy.



TRANSGENDER

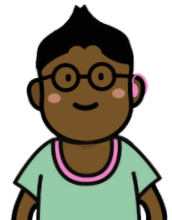
GENDER IDENTITY

Gender identity is the gender you feel yourself to be. If you're **cisgender**, your gender matches the gender the doctor assigned to you at birth. If you're **transgender**, your gender is different than the gender the doctor assigned to you at birth. If you're **non-binary**, you may not feel male nor female, or you may feel like both.

GENDER EXPRESSION

Gender expression is how people communicate their gender identity to others through what they wear, how they style their hair, and how they act and play (e.g. what toys they choose).

When I was born, they guessed I was a boy, but I'm not a boy or a girl.



NONBINARY

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation means who people grow up to love and to whom they are attracted. It is related to, but separate from gender. An age-appropriate way of talking about sexual orientation with young children is to focus on families and love. What can families look like in a child's home, community, and in their play?

