



Guidance for Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure staff understand that biological sex is assigned at birth based on body parts and chromosomes; gender identity is one's inner most concept of self as male or female, a blend or neither; gender expression is an external appearance of one's gender identity through clothes or behavior, for example; and sexual orientation is who you are attracted to emotionally, sexually or physically.
- Youth benefit from program staff who are skilled to work with all young people, who are supported by training, and who can be recognized for actively promoting an LGBTQ inclusive environment.

PRACTICES

- DYCD expects services to foster positive youth development, promote appreciation for diversity, model and teach respectful attitudes, and ensure welcoming environments, regardless of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Gender-affirming interactions with youth include using a youth's preferred name and gender pronouns, including for gender non-conforming youth, whose gender expression may differ from traditional stereotypes.
- Creating an LGBTQ-inclusive environment improves experiences for all young people. Any adult can be an ally for youth, and be a role model for others.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- At DYCD-funded programs, bias, discrimination, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated, and policies and procedures should outline how staff will intervene, including ensuring that reactions to reports of harassment do not further stigmatize students who were targeted for real or perceived LGBTQ identities.
- All youth are in varying stages of development, and should be supported to share gender identity and sexual orientation information on their own terms. This personal information should not be shared with anyone without the student's permission—even the student's family.

PROGRAM DESIGN

- As with all young people, LGBTQ youth need an environment that reflects their experiences, and supports their identity – including supportive peers, positive LGBTQ role models, and exposure to LGBTQ culture and history.
- When providing LGBTQ youth with referrals, offer resources that are LGBTQ safe and affirming.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Youth need access to restrooms and facilities that are accessible and affirming to their gender identity, and staff will ensure that transgender and gender-non-conforming youth can safely use restrooms/locker rooms of their choosing.