

**Guide to welcoming and affirming transgender and gender expansive children in  
Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP)**

Introduction

Children in out-of-home care have the right to be placed according to their gender identity, regardless of the gender or sex listed in their court or child welfare records (SB 731). They also have the right to access gender affirming medical and mental health care (AB2119).

This guide aims to provide caregivers helpful strategies in ensuring the well-being and safety of transgender and gender expansive (sometimes referred to as gender non-conforming) children in out of home care.

Agency	Do's	Don'ts
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train all employees to understand SOGIE and the well-being, safety and permanency of transgender and gender expansive children and how to meet their particular needs.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive resource list for transgender specific services, groups, activities, peer support, health care etc.</li> </ul>	Don't assume that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your agency's general protocol is already affirming.</li> <li>• Staff and clinicians already know how to affirm transgender and gender expansive children.</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent transgender and gender expansive children and people in pictures and posters</li> <li>• Have printed materials around your facility that represent LGBTQ+ people and children in pictures, posters, brochures etc.</li> </ul>	Don't assume that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your agency is already affirming if you have not done the work to prepare the agency.</li> <li>• Your general printed material is already affirming.</li> </ul>
Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train admission staff to ask children about their gender identity</li> <li>• Ask all children the same questions upon admission</li> <li>• Introduce yourself with your own pronouns</li> <li>• Explain your anti-discrimination policies</li> <li>• Explain confidentiality and children's rights related to SOGIE.</li> <li>• Address children using their asserted name and pronoun and, with their consent, introduce them accordingly to others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not assume a child's gender identity</li> <li>• Do not "force" a child to divulge their gender identity to you or anyone else.</li> <li>• Do not misgender a child while introducing them to others.</li> </ul>

Agency	Do's	Don'ts
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train all staff to understand confidentiality in relation to SOGIE</li> <li>• Let children know that their SOGIE, like all other information, is confidential and let them know who will have access to their admission paperwork/file etc.</li> <li>• Create a plan with children to determine who will have access to their SOGIE information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not break the children's confidentiality about their SOGIE, not everyone needs to know a child's SOGIE (except in the case of an emergency or mandated report)</li> <li>• Do not tell roommates about another child's SOGIE</li> </ul>
Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient all children to your facility in the same way</li> <li>• Let <b>all</b> children know where bathrooms are located (female, male, gender neutral)</li> <li>• Make sure all children know they have a choice in choosing a restroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not indicate bathrooms only to transgender or gender expansive children.</li> <li>• Do not tell children what bathroom they must use.</li> </ul>
Bedrooms	<p>Tell children that they have the right to be placed according to their gender identity. Explain the available placement options and ask them where they would feel most comfortable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce children using their asserted name and pronoun</li> <li>• Ask children if they want help if they choose to disclose their SOGIE to their roommate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do NOT mis gender children when introducing them.</li> <li>• Do not divulge children's SOGIE without their permission.</li> <li>• Roommates do not have the right to other children's SOGIE information.</li> </ul>
Health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that transgender children have access to gender affirming health care; ensure that children are transported to this specialized health care as needed.</li> <li>• Ask transgender and gender expansive youth if they would like an advocate to accompany them when going to medical appointments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not assume that all health care providers have experience or expertise treating transgender or gender expansive children.</li> </ul>
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the children with a clinician who has been specifically trained and has expertise delivering gender affirming mental health care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not assume all clinicians have experience or expertise working with transgender or gender expansive children.</li> </ul>
Grooming/ Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask children what grooming products and clothes they want.</li> <li>• Provide children with clothing and grooming products that affirm their gender identity.</li> <li>• Provide clothes that are gender neutral.</li> <li>• Allow children/youth to choose any scented products they want regardless of gender.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not assume what clothing or grooming products transgender and gender expansive children want.</li> <li>• Do not enforce unnecessarily rigid rules about how children dress and express their gender.</li> </ul>

Agency	Do's	Don'ts
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for the safety of transgender and gender expansive children in their school.</li> <li>• Support transgender children in attending school in their identified gender and advocate for their right to participate in sex-segregated facilities, programs and activities consistent with their gender identity.</li> <li>• Address safety issues immediately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not assume school is safe. Assess and meet the needs of transgender and gender expansive children at school.</li> <li>• Do not assume children can advocate on their own behalf.</li> <li>• Do not prohibit children from attending school in their identified gender because of safety issues.</li> </ul>
Visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask transgender and gender expansive children if they feel safe with the people they spend time with.</li> <li>• Ask children if there are people in their lives, they would like to be in contact with who are supportive and affirming of who they are.</li> <li>• Ask youth if they need help talking about their SOGIE with members of their family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not assume all adults that visit with transgender or gender expansive children are affirming.</li> <li>• Do not allow family members to be abusive or inappropriate just because they are family members.</li> </ul>
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for transgender and gender expansive children in their community and at school.</li> <li>• Ask youth if they want someone in their child and family team to support them specifically in relation to their gender identity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not assume children can advocate for themselves in relation to their gender identity.</li> <li>• Do not divulge children's gender identity without their permission.</li> </ul>