

TOOLS FOR EVALUATING THE SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression) COMPETENCY AND CAPACITY OF AN ORGANIZATION:

1. RFA & STRTP POPULATION TO BE SERVED

- Ensure that LGBTQ children are mentioned as a population of children to be served.
- The agency should talk about how and what LGBTQ specific services and community-based organizations they will partner with to provide services (groups, peer support, medical services, therapy etc.) to LGBTQ children under their care.

2. RFA AGENCY DESCRIPTION & STRTP VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE, GOALS AND PHILOSOPHIES & STATEMENT ON ABILITY TO SUPPORT

- How are LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming children and youth represented in this section?
- How will the agency serve LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and what type of specific services will be available for the children, their families and LGBTQ families?
- Does the agency have values that reflect and affirm all children by using their preferred/chosen names, asserted gender pronouns and respect their gender expressions?
- Does the agency speak of their environment displaying inclusivity and affirmation through observable signs such as posters, pictures, stickers etc.?
- What type of services and support will be offered to families who are not affirming of their LGBTQ children (support, education, therapy, advocate, parent partner etc.)?

3. PERMANENCY

- How will LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth and children be supported through developing and visiting with adults who are affirming of their SOGIE regardless of whether they are biologically connected or not?
- How will staff ensure that LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth and children are not exposed to rejection with people they visit? And if adults in the children's lives are rejecting, how will the agency work and educate those adults about SOGIE and LGBTQ children's well-being?
- How does the agency's look for a safe permanency option for the children in relation to their SOGIE (How the agency will ensure that the future foster family will be affirming?)
- What support will the agency put in place to work with families who do not affirm their child's SOGIE?

4. STRTP STAFF PLAN / RFA PLAN FOR SUPERVISION, TRAINING & EVALUATION OF STAFF

- The agency must explain how the hiring process will ensure that every staff who is hired will be affirming of LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children as well as LGBT families? (i.e. what questions will HR ask prospective staff to identify if a staff is affirming?).
- How will hiring managers be trained to ask questions to identify whether a prospective staff is LGBTQ affirming? (i.e. do they ask behavioral questions like, “What will you do when a transgender youth asks for your help with a name change?”).
- What policies do they have to ensure that all employees are using the language, terms and pronouns children identify with?
- Do supervisors and managers receive coaching on how to address LGBT discrimination in the workplace?

5. TRAINING FOR STAFF AND RESOURCE PARENTS should include:

- LGBTQ/SOGIE competency.
- Intersectionality .
- Child and adolescent development, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.
- Existing and current laws and procedures regarding the safety of LGBTQ foster youth at school and the ensuring of a harassment and violence free school environment.
- Understanding how to use best practices for providing care and supervision to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming children.
- Annual training on updates on any new or existing laws and regulations that impact LGBTQ children and youth in foster care

6. VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS

- How does the agency screen their volunteers and contractors to ensure that they are affirming of LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children as well as LGBTQ families (i.e. what questions will be asked of prospective volunteers to identify if they are affirming?)?

7. ADMISSIONS

- Does the agency have a nondiscrimination statement of admission that includes sexual orientation, gender identity AND expression and how they intend to implement it.
- Look to see if SOGIE questions are asked of all children who enter the program:
 - **Preferred name**
 - **Asserted Pronoun**
 - **Gender Identity (male, female, transgender male, transgender female, other)**
 - **Sexual Orientation**

All children/youth being admitted should be asked the same questions and the admission staff must be trained to ask these questions.

- How does the agency collect information/data on SOGIE and how is it kept confidential?
- The agency should talk about how it will accommodate gender non-conforming children and youth by affirming them and placing them according to their gender identity and not the sex listed on their birth certificate or paperwork.
- Programs must take into consideration children's SOGIE when transferring them and ensuring that they are moving into a safe environment that is affirming.

8. Needs and Service Plans

- Does the agency always consider confidentiality and privacy and asks a child/youth if they are comfortable with their SOGIE being "discussed" in their NSPs and explain who will be able to see the information?
- Does the agency describe how the NSP will reflect the child's SOGIE in regards to:
 - Education: How will the child or youth be advocated for in school if they are discriminated against?
 - Visitation: How will the plan reflect visitation with adults who are affirming of the children?
 - Medical: how will LGBT children and youth's medical needs be supported (i.e. transportation to facilities who can appropriately meet their needs, seeing LGBT competent medical professionals, for transgender children: access to medically competent physicians who can support them through their transition)?
 - Activities: How will LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and youth be supported through attending LGBT activities in the community?
 - Mental Health: How will the mental health needs of LGBTQ children and gender non-conforming children and youth be met?

9. AGENCY PARTICIPATIONS IN CHILD & FAMILY TEAM (CFT)

- How the agency works with the Child & Family Team around the child's SOGIE, including providing support to families who do not affirm their LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and who need support moving from rejection to acceptance?
- How will the agency advocate and affirm a child's SOGIE in CFT meetings?

10. RFA CULTURAL RELEVANT SERVICES & CULTURAL HUMILITY

- Does the agency have a specific plans to address SOGIE throughout the agency, including its environment? In addition, ensure that the program statement includes how the agency will deal with bias, intersectionality, support for families who do not affirm children, deal with staff who are not observing the agency's anti-discrimination statement.
- What measures the resource family agency has taken to ensure that the program is compliant with regards to bedroom sharing policies and gender identity and expression?
- How will the foster family agency's staff support families who have LGBTQ children (i.e. knowledge of rejection, acceptance, etc. and the ability to educate and support families through that process)?

11. CORE SERVICES

- Does the agency's core services include support for LGBTQ children and their families (i.e. LGBTQ competent staff and services including mental health services, staff who are educated about the rejection-acceptance continuum and who can support and educate families, support groups, LGBTQ specific adoption education, inclusion in all events, recognition of LGBTQ families through the agency's website, environment (pictures and posters), LGBTQ competent mental health)?
- Does the agency's core services include support for LGBT families (i.e. support groups, LGBT specific adoption education, inclusion in all events, recognition of LGBT families through the agency's website, environment (pictures and posters), LGBT competent mental health)?
- How does the agency describe how children's SOGIE will be considered in all aspect of services?

12. RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, TRAINING, SUPERVISION & SUPPORT OF RESOURCES FAMILIES

Look for how the agency will:

- Recruit and hire affirming families and staff?
- Provide separate and specific LGBT Competency Training?
- Address SOGIE issues in home studies (i.e. what questions will be asked of prospective resource parents about having a LGBTQ or gender non-conforming children?)?
- Support families whose child or youth is LGBTQ or gender non-conforming?
- Support resource families through the rejection-acceptance process?
- Support LGBT families?

13. TREATMENT SERVICES RFA

How does the agency:

- Address the specific needs of LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and youth?
- Mandate that treatment staff receive specific training about working with LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children?
- Describe what specific SOGIE competent services are provided? (i.e. mental health, support group, trauma informed, resources, and support for non-affirming families)?
- Describes what support will families get about SOGIE?
- Explain what supports services will be put in place for families who do not affirm their children?

14. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO CERTIFIED PARENTS & FAMILIES

- How does the agency assess whether potential resource parents will be affirming of LGBTQ children (i.e. through recruitment, the home study process, and training)?
- Does the agency speak of on how they address resource parents who are not accepting of LGBTQ children (i.e. what support and education will be put in place to educate the parents through the rejection-acceptance continuum process, what LGBT specific training will you be offering)?

- Is the agency affirming of LGBT resources parents (i.e. through recruitment methods, agency's website, agency's environment (pictures, posters, flyers), LGBT parent support groups, LGBT families adoption support, LGBT specific activities)?
- Do they offers specific LGBT training to potential resource parents and continuing education for certified parents (i.e. how many required hours, curriculum, who will be the trainer(s))?
- What LGBTQ specific support will be provided to relative caregivers? (i.e. will it be different than to resource families?)

15. RESOURCE PARENTS APPROVAL & ASSESSMENT

- How does the agency explore risk factors for family rejection and the family's capacity to accept and embrace a child regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity and/or expression?
- Do they assess how will family discuss SOGIE with their child, and/or respond to a child who displays non-conforming gender expression?

16. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- How does the agency talk about upholding the rights of LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children?
- Does the agency include activities for LGBTQ children and what these activities are (i.e. LGBT specific activities in the community, LGBT social groups, LGBT support groups, attending proms, access to LGBT community resources etc.)?
- Are LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth and children supported through developing and visiting with adults who are affirming of their SOGIE regardless of whether they are biologically connected or not?
- Does staff ensure that LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth and children are not exposed to rejection with people they visit? And if adults in the children's lives are rejecting, how will the agency work and educate those adults about SOGIE and LGBTQ children's well-being?
- How does the agency ensure that LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and youth are transported to activities that affirm their SOGIE (support groups, community events, parades, LGBT center etc.)?
- How transgender youth will be transported to services that meets their specific medical needs?

17. HOUSE RULES

- Environment: How will the house environment represent LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and youth's SOGIE to ensure that the children feel safe and affirmed (i.e. LGBTQ affirming posters, pictures etc.)?
- Visitations: How will LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children be allowed to spend time with people who are affirming of their SOGIE, as well as spend time with friends who are LGBTQ and/or gender non-conforming?
- Activities: How will LGBTQ and gender non-conforming children and youth be affirmed (i.e. being allowed to attend LGBT activities, events, proms, parades etc.)?

- **Funds:** Describe how children and youth will be allowed to spend their money in accordance with their SOGIE (i.e. allowed to purchase clothes, shoes, grooming products, decorate their living space in a manner that match their gender identity and/or expression)?
- **Dating:** Does the agency mentions ensuring that peer to peer affection is handled the same way regardless of a child or youth's SOGIE?
- **Discipline:** How they will ensure that a child's SOGIE is affirmed and not discriminated against?
- **Runaway:** Do they take into consideration a child's SOGIE to explain them running away (i.e.: are they being mistreated, discriminated against, bullied in placement?)?

18. PRIVACY

- Does the agency understand that they must always consult with the child or youth about what information they wish to disclose and to whom?
- Does the agency understand children's privacy regarding SOGIE and the fact that they do not disclose sexual orientation or gender identity to anyone, including potential roommates?

19. BEDROOMS

- How does the agency ensure that children share a bedroom consistent with their gender identity regardless of the gender or sex listed on the court or child welfare documents?
Look for how the agency:
 - Accommodates this mandate
 - Trains staff and resource parents to understand this mandate
 - Deals with staff who have issues with this
 - Deals with youth who have problems with this

20. CLOTHING AND INCIDENTALS

Children must be provided with and allowed to acquire, possess, and use adequate personal items, which include their own:

- Clothes, provided the clothes are age-appropriate, do not violate school standards when worn during school activities, and are in accordance with the gender identity and expression of the child.
- Toiletries and personal hygiene products, including enclosed razors used for shaving, as age and developmentally appropriate and are in accordance with the gender identity and expression of the child.

21. MEDICAL

Look for how the agency:

- Ensures that transgender children's medical needs will be met (i.e. access to physicians who can support youth transitioning).
- Ensures that the youth gets to a medical professional who can create a case plan.
- How employees are trained to understand SOGIE regarding potential medical needs.



- Has medical personnel who are specifically trained to refer transgender youth to services which address their medical needs.