



Colorful star

The Right Stuff

Resources to Help Realize the Promise of Each Vermont Child



Topic: Exploring Gender Development

Issue No. 29 March 2019

Many aspects of development are clearly delineated in the **Vermont Early Learning Standards**. Other aspects of development are more subtle and unique to each child and family.

Recently faculty members, early childhood leaders, and early childhood teachers have been asking for resources on gender development and changes in gender identity. They have asked for resources with which to support teachers for whom issues of evolving child and/or family gender may be new or unfamiliar. They have also been seeking resources for college students and early childhood professionals on research and practices for supporting young children around issues of gender identity and expression.

This issue of **The Right Stuff** features resources that range from welcoming each child and providing inclusive environments to guidance related to developing gender identity, supporting transgender children, and preventing gender bias. There's also an annotated bibliography of children's books about gender diversity.

Gender Identity Development in Children

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Gender-Identity-and-Gender-Confusion-In-Children.aspx> (English)

<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/ages-stages/gradeschool/paginas/gender-identity-and-gender-confusion-in-children.aspx> (Spanish)

There are many ways parents can promote healthy gender development in children. It helps to understand gender identity and how it forms, as explained on this website.

Gender Identity and Expression in the Early Childhood Classroom: Influences on Development Within Sociocultural Contexts

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/jul2016/gender-identity>

Author/teacher Jamie Solomon's article shares highlights from projects that addressed three research questions: 1) How can I offer a curriculum that provides children with more opportunities for acting outside of traditional gender roles? 2) How can I encourage and support children who wish to behave outside of traditional gender roles? And 3) How can I foster increasingly flexible thinking about gender among 4- and 5-year-old children?

Why Does Gender Matter? Counteracting Stereotypes with Young Children

https://www.southernearlychildhood.org/upload/pdf/Why_Does_Gender_Matter_Counteracting_Stereotypes_With_Young_Children_Olaiya_E_Aina_and_Petronella_A_Cameron.pdf

This article explores how young children's experiences with gender biases affect their development and opportunities for leading successful lives and what can teachers do to counteract these stereotypes.

Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children

http://assets.hrc.org/files/documents/SupportingCaringforTransChildren.pdf?_ga=2.262682959.291440414.1500155397-2083149848.1500155397

This guide is designed for anyone who knows a transgender or gender-expansive child, plans to write about children who transition, or simply wants to learn more. It reviews what medical and education experts know about transgender children, explores some myths about gender transition in childhood, and offers suggestions for adults with a transgender child.

Do No Harm: Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Families in Early Childhood Settings

<http://www.returntooursenses.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Do-No-Harm-Lee-Klinger-Lesser.pdf>

This article offers practical strategies for supporting young children whose family members are LGBT.

From the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Healthy Children website

The AAP website has a number of resources on gender development and identity including the following.

- Gender Identity Development in Children <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Gender-Identity-and-Gender-Confusion-In-Children.aspx>
- Gender-Diverse & Transgender Children <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Gender-Diverse-Transgender-Children.aspx>
- **Parenting a Gender-Diverse Child: Hard Questions Answered** <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Parenting-a-Gender-Diverse-Child-Hard-Questions-Answered.aspx> (available in Spanish)

Gender Spectrum <https://www.genderspectrum.org/resources/>

The resources section of this website offers information and insights, how-to guides, research, training materials, and other tools to create gender inclusive environments in homes, offices, and communities.

Healthy Gender Development and Young Children from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/healthy-gender-development-young-children>

This is a very readable and informative resource.

How Can I Prevent Gender Bias? <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/How-Can-I-Prevent-Gender-Bias.pdf>

This resource from the Anti-Defamation League highlights a variety of measures adults can take to create fair and gender equitable environments for young children.

Why Does Gender Matter? Counteracting Stereotypes with Young Children

https://www.southernearlychildhood.org/upload/pdf/Why_Does_Gender_Matter_Counteracting_Stereotypes_With_Young_Children_Olailya_E_Aina_and_Petronella_A_Cameron.pdf

This article explores how young children's experiences with gender biases affect their development and opportunities for leading successful lives and what can teachers do to counteract these stereotypes.

Annotated Bibliography of Children's Books about Gender Diversity

<http://outsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Annotated-Booklist-Childrens.pdf>

Visit this website to find children's books that are appropriate for discussing issues of gender with children of any age. One to consider is **What Makes A Baby**, a children's book that explains how babies are made by discussing the actual biological process, without gendering that biological process, assuming that a child's parents were directly involved in that biological process. The author keeps it friendly for adopted children, parents who used IVF or surrogacy, etc. and without getting inappropriately sexual for a young child/classroom context. There's also a **free reader's guide**, which gives further information on how we can navigate these conversations with or without the book in hand.

The Right Stuff is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features resources for supporting the learning and development of young children who are culturally, linguistically, and individually diverse, birth to Grade 3, and their families. All resources are readily available and free. **Highlighted resources are available in English and Spanish.** **The Right Stuff** may be freely shared or reproduced. Past issues are available at <http://fpg.unc.edu/presentations/right-stuff>

The Right Stuff is compiled by Camille Catlett and supported by the Vermont Agency of Education. To receive your copy each month, send an email **with no message** to subscribe-the_right_stuff_listserv@listserv.unc.edu