Gender Creative Early Learners
DEC Conference-October 2019

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they/their/them

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she/her/hers
Objectives:

To provide a safe and open space for discussion—it’s good to be uncomfortable! Questions are welcome throughout.

To understand basic terms and language used to describe transgender and gender creative children.

Take the time for self-reflection around the topic of gender.

Create action steps that apply to your specific work.

To learn how to become an ally in your everyday life.
What do we mean by Gender?

How can this change?

What does it mean when to be expansive, gender creative, transgender or gender fluid?
Is Gender a special education topic?

Gender is not specific to special education—BUT

What happens to young children if they are not understood or listened to? What behavior may you observe in young children who are gender creative? What happens if you don’t even have access to the terminology? How can we ensure inclusivity includes gender expansion and supportive language?
The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
To help us learn the every changing terminology of the LGBTQ+ community let’s play:

Kahoot!

*Thank you to Stephanie Budge, PhD
Gender Expansion Conference
Develop a lens of intersectionality

We have diverse communities

two-spirit transgender midwest hijras transsexual
genderqueer grrl passing femme urban rural
elf social dysphoria third gender drag kings intersex
faerie crossdressers body dysphoria stealth butch
latinx queer boi drag queens papi nancy queer

We are diverse within our communities

religion race politics philosophy education class abilities language age
interests parenthood status partnerships ethnicity goals gender identity nationality
neurotypicality mobility socioeconomic status personal style sexuality
citizenship operative status employment mannerisms skin color
Resources

Moms speaking about their children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_lGK7d5HbA

Dad’s speaking about their children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rI7RLbt_OOE
What did you see/hear?

What surprised you?

What did you already know?

How could you use this video?

Would you feel comfortable sharing with others?
The Danger of the Single Story - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

“Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice — and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.”
Stories for us to learn from:

*Raising Ryland: Our Story of Parenting a Transgender Child with No Strings Attached* by Hillary Whittington

*Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family* by Amy Ellis Nutt
Another Story to learn from

Blake Culley
Negative experiences among those with supportive and unsupportive families

- Experienced homelessness:
  - % of respondents whose families were supportive: 27%
  - % of respondents whose families were unsupportive: 45%

- Attempted suicide:
  - % of respondents whose families were supportive: 37%
  - % of respondents whose families were unsupportive: 54%

- Currently experiencing serious psychological distress:
  - % of respondents whose families were supportive: 31%
  - % of respondents whose families were unsupportive: 50%
Implicit Bias

Harvard Implicit Bias
Project-
Take the test!

Watch the Video
Time for your questions
GNC/ AFAB children are 60% more likely to be sexually abused.

GNC/ AMAB children are 300% more likely to be sexually abused.

Roberts, Rosario, Corliss, Koenen, & Austin, 2012
(Harvard School of Public Health)
Advice from an Expert

Julie Olsen Edwards:

Address physical changes that some individuals choose to make to their bodies.

Even though these are young children we are talking about everyone is thinking/wondering about this aspect of gender.
In the end what I choose . . . .

Is *none* of your business
How to be an Ally

A Wisconsin Community Story

I Am Jazz

by Jessica Herthel & Jazz Jennings

pictures by Shelagh McNicholas
*Think about Gender—what do you see within the environments you control? Anything you could shift, change or do differently?

*Continue to educate yourself—reading, professional learning opportunities

*Be aware of legislation, rules, policies that are proposed or in place
• Listen to what children tell you respect words, pronouns and language used to communicate their identity

• Be patient! Lots of preschoolers show some fluidity in gender

• There is no “right or wrong” way to transition individual choice with preschoolers families/caregivers must be involved
*Share your own pronouns with others

*Address jokes and comments when they occur

*Provide bathrooms that are safe & accepting for all

*Expand your own language-teach gender terminology to young children and include gender inclusive language in your own life
Practice Time:

“Johnny can’t wear a pink hat, he’s a boy and only girls wear pink!”

That’s interesting what you just said. I wonder why we think only girls can wear pink/play with Barbies. Do you have any ideas why we might think that?

What if in this classroom we don’t follow those rules? What if here we say anyone can wear what they like and play with what we like?

What if we can always support each other?
Practice Time...

“Boys and girls it’s time to come to the rug for circle time”

What if instead...

“Preschoolers it’s time to come to the rug for circle time”
Practice Time...

“Hey guys, look at this!”

What if instead....

“Hey scholars, look at this”
Practice Time...

“I can’t believe those parents are allowing Robert to wear a dress to school! Why are they doing that?”

**HHMM...** Tell me more about what that means to you

My experience has been.....

Research suggests that.....
Practice Time...

At the Thanksgiving table you ask your niece “how is kindergarten going? Do you have a boyfriend?”

• “Who at school do you like to spend time with? Do you have any friends who are special to you?”
You overhear another parent at your daughter’s gymnastics competition talking about a teammate: “You know she was born a boy—this isn’t fair to my child and I’m going to do something about it!”

You find that family and ask, “How can I help”? Does the gymnastics club have a policy in place and if not, how can you help create a policy to support gender fluid children and their families?
Intake forms...

After name there are 2 boxes: Male/Female or Boy/Girl

What if it simply stated: Gender __________
Building an affirming and inclusive community

INSTEAD OF SAYING LADIES...
Women  Sir  Gals  Dude  Ma'am  Guys  Girls  Gentlemen
Try a gender-neutral term or phrase. Here are some options:

"Good morning everyone."  "What can I get for you folks?"
"And for you?"  "Welcome in today."

Why? Categories of female or male do not include all expressions of biological sex, nor of gender identity and expression. Gendered language can erase people’s experiences, implying they don't belong. Everyone deserves to be acknowledged.
Think about your room set up, materials you share with others

Where are the baby dolls? Always in the house keeping area?

What if you moved them to the blocks?

Do you notice any other stereotypical gender roles being reinforced within your environment? Anything you can change?
You have an adult parent or caregiver who is transitioning as an adult.

At lunch your co-workers start talking about this. “How can this adult do this? Don’t they understand what they are doing to their family? This is just too weird.”

I wonder how it would feel to never be comfortable in your own skin?

Another adult that I know shared this with me...

I wonder how we can best support this family—has anyone had the opportunity to talk with this parent and ask how they would like us to support their child?

I wonder how this adult wants us to answer ?s from other parents.
Web Resources

Gsafe: https://www.gsafewi.org/

Gender spectrum: https://www.genderspectrum.org/

Welcoming Schools: http://www.welcomingschools.org/

The Safe Zone Project http://thesafezoneproject.com/
Ending thoughts/questions
THANK YOU for your time, energy and questions today!

Em Dandridge

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