



MAMA DRAGONS

Accepting vs. Rejecting Parenting Behaviors

Introduction

Supporting transgender and gender-diverse kids involves understanding and practicing accepting behaviors. This guide highlights the differences between rejecting and accepting behaviors and underscores the importance of acceptance in reducing the suicide rates among LGBTQ+ youth.

Accepting Parenting Behaviors

Examples:

- 1. Using Preferred Names and Pronouns:**
 - *Action:* Consistently use your child's chosen name and pronouns.
 - *Importance:* This affirms their identity and shows respect, reducing the risk of depression and suicide.
- 2. Listening and Offering Support:**
 - *Action:* Create a safe space for your child to express their feelings and experiences.
 - *Importance:* Helps your child feel valued and understood, fostering a positive self-image.
- 3. Educating Yourself and Others:**
 - *Action:* Learn about gender diversity and share accurate information with family and friends.
 - *Importance:* Reduces stigma and promotes a supportive environment, protecting mental health.
- 4. Advocating for Your Child:**
 - *Action:* Support your child in school and community settings, including addressing discrimination.
 - *Importance:* Ensures they feel safe and accepted in various environments, which is crucial for their well-being.
- 5. Encouraging Self-Expression:**
 - *Action:* Allow your child to explore their gender expression through clothing, hairstyles, and activities.
 - *Importance:* Fosters a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, essential for healthy development.

Rejecting Parenting Behaviors

Examples:

- Misgendering and Deadnaming:**
 - Action:* Using your child's birth name and incorrect pronouns.
 - Impact:* Causes distress and invalidates their identity, increasing the risk of mental health issues.
 - Refusing to Listen:**
 - Action:* Dismissing or ignoring your child's feelings and experiences.
 - Impact:* Leads to feelings of isolation and rejection, which can result in severe emotional harm.
 - Imposing Gender Norms:**
 - Action:* Forcing your child to conform to traditional gender roles.
 - Impact:* Suppresses their true identity and can cause emotional trauma.
 - Withholding Support:**
 - Action:* Not advocating for your child in school or community settings.
 - Impact:* Leaves them vulnerable to discrimination and bullying, leading to anxiety and depression.
 - Threatening or Punishing for Gender Expression:**
 - Action:* Punishing your child for expressing their gender identity.
 - Impact:* Causes fear, anxiety, and can lead to mental health issues, including suicidal thoughts.
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Importance of Accepting Behaviors

Impact on Mental Health

- **Reduced Suicide Rates:** LGBTQ+ youth with accepting families are less likely to attempt suicide.
- **Improved Well-Being:** Acceptance leads to higher self-esteem, better mental health, and a sense of belonging.
- **Strengthened Family Bonds:** Supportive relationships create a nurturing environment for growth and development.

Statistics

- **Acceptance Reduces Risk:** The Trevor Project's research indicates that LGBTQ+ youth who feel highly rejected by their families are 8.4 times more likely to attempt suicide than those who feel accepted .
- **Mental Health Benefits:** The Family Acceptance Project shows that family acceptance is linked to lower rates of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse .

Conclusion

Accepting parenting behaviors are crucial for the well-being of transgender and gender-diverse children. By practicing acceptance, parents can significantly reduce the risk of mental health issues and suicide, fostering a supportive and loving environment.

References:

1. [The Trevor Project](#)
2. Family Acceptance Project