

11 Ways to Support Gender Non-Conforming Youth in Grades K-5

1. Believe them (don't dismiss their feelings as a phase or an attention getting tactic, etc).
2. React positively; don't act shocked or surprised.
3. Thank them for telling you and trusting you with this important information about themselves.
4. Ask questions but keep it light – let the situation evolve at the child's pace.
5. Ask them what pronoun (he, she, etc) they would like you to use for them when you are together. Ask if there is a different name they would like to use when you meet privately.
6. Inquire if the child has told their parents/caretaker yet and if so, how they (the parents) feel about the situation.
7. Offer to help them tell their parents or to have another adult help them when they are ready.
8. Reassure them that you won't tell anyone unless the child gives you permission.
9. Let them know that it is OK to be different and that they are not the only child who feels they don't fit their assigned gender.
10. Ask the child if they are being teased or bullied in any way.
11. Let the child know that they can come to you if they need to talk again.

Adapted by SMYRC (www.smyrc.org) from GIRES (2008) Guidance on Combating Transphobic Bullying in Schools. Version 2.2.1 February 10, 2009.