

# NICKELODEON BELIEVES EVERYONE SHOULD BE PROUD OF WHAT MAKES THEM WHO THEY ARE - NOT ONLY DURING PRIDE MONTH, BUT EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR!

This guide is meant for parents and caregivers who are looking for support in talking with their kids about the strength, resilience, joy, and diversity of LGBTQ+ families. Included below are resources, videos, and activities that uplift LGBTQ+ voices and spread love and acceptance.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) people and their families are part of every community. Kids may have loved ones including parents, siblings, or other family members who are LGBTQ+, friends, classmates, or neighbors who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, or they may be exploring or discovering their own identity. People's gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are what makes them who they are. It is important for families to have conversations about the diversity of their own and others' identities and experiences. It helps kids grow pride in themselves and builds empathy and acceptance for others.



Today, the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and respect is a response to the hate and fear people have experienced because of who they are, how they live, and who they love. Kids in the LGBTQ+ community often experience bias, discrimination, and bullying in school, in sports, online, and in society. Many are afraid for the safety of themselves and their family. These experiences may leave them feeling difficult emotions, including sadness, loneliness, anxiety, shame, or self-doubt. It can take a toll on their mental and physical health. Children's health experts agree family support and acceptance is essential to combating negative thoughts and feelings. Love and support within the home is one of the single most important factors linked to LGBTQ+ kids' overall health and well-being.

"Identity formation is integral to positive, healthy child development. Children who do not feel a sense of belonging and validation during this critical developmental process often experience high levels of stress, which can have long-term impacts on mental health. Open, direct, and ongoing conversations about diversity in our world — including LGBTQ+ identities — send children a clear message that they are safe and supported as they develop their own identities."

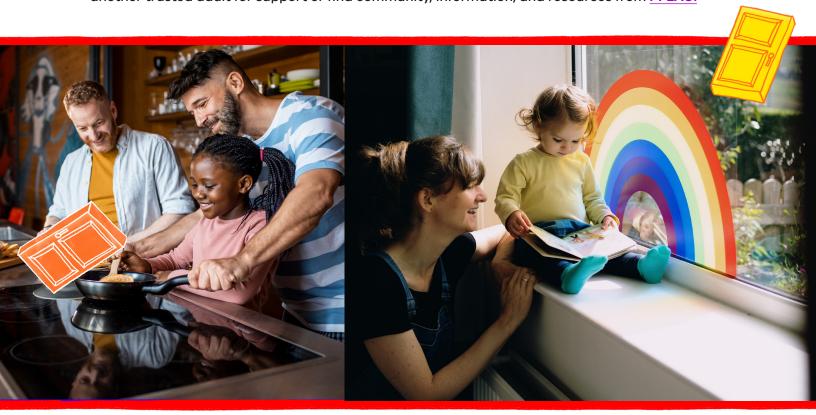
- Dr. Jessica R. Toste, Childhood Development Expert



Members of the LGBTQ+ community have the right to express themselves and be proud of exactly who they are. When a person feels safe, seen, and supported, they feel more secure in themselves and their identity. Here are some actions you can take to support your child if they have questions about LGBTQ+ identities or if someone in their life is exploring or discovering their LGBTQ+ identity:

- Talk openly with your kid about LGBTQ+ identities. Your willingness to have these conversations sends a powerful message; it builds trust, strengthens bonds, and signals that they can share their feelings and questions with you. It's okay not to have all the answers; what's important is that they feel your respect, love, and acceptance.
- Stay focused on love and support. This is especially important if your child is exploring their identity and place in the LGBTQ+ community. <a href="Explore this resource">Explore this resource</a> for parents and families of LGBTQ+ kids and <a href="read this letter">read this letter</a> from a member of the LGBTQ+ community about the impact it has when parents listen to their kids and respond with acceptance and compassion. Show your child unconditional love and support not only at home but with extended family and your broader community as well.

• **Process your own feelings.** Having conversations about LGBTQ+ identity may bring up a range of challenging thoughts and feelings of your own. You may also have many questions. Reach out to another trusted adult for support or find community, information, and resources from **PFLAG**.





# SPREAD LGBTQ+ ACCEPTANCE, CELEBRATE THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY, AND AFFIRM KIDS' IDENTITIES WITH THESE FAMILY ACTIVITIES!

- **Celebrate what makes your family special.** Hear Josh and Blue's friends from *Blue's Clues & You* share <u>Pride family traditions.</u> Then talk together about what qualities make your family unique and special. Get inspired and create a magnificent picture of your family.
- Learn about the history of Pride Month. Discover what it means, and how it's celebrated each
  June with Nick's Shine a Light: Pride Month. Then, see how Nickelodeon highlights the LGBTQ+
  community through authentic representation in its shows' sto ries, families, and talent.
- Express yourself with a sign, poster, or flag that shows solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.
   The Pride flag's colors are full of meaning. Learn about what each <u>color represents</u> and incorporate them in your drawing. Listen to <u>this song</u> while you work! To show even more pride, make your own tie-dye flag t-shirts.
- Read books that share and celebrate LGBTQ+ stories. Reading is a great way to gain insight into a
  person's unique experiences! Grab this LGBTQ+ booklist from the Seattle Public Library and head
  to your own local library to check them out.
- **Use inclusive language.** Actively using the <u>name and pronouns</u> a person chooses for themselves affirms their identity and conveys love and respect for who they are. As a family, practice using people's correct pronouns and steering clear of words and phrases that overlook someone's individual identity like "guys" or "boys and girls." You can never know someone's gender identity based on their appearance, if you don't know, it is best to ask "What are your pronouns?" or "What pronouns do you use?"
- **Be an Upstander.** Speak up if you hear or see someone being mean or rude to others. From your actions, you can support those who are being treated unfairly. Check out some of the ways you can be an Upstander with advice from <u>Michael D. Cohen</u> from *Henry Danger* and *Danger Force*.
- Explore GLSEN and their resources. <u>GLSEN's</u> mission is to ensure all LGBTQ+ youth have access to safe and affirming learning environments. Nickelodeon and GLSEN teamed up to create an indepth Talk and Take Action Guide to Combatting LGBTQ+ Discrimination that includes LGBTQ+

history, conversation starters, and suggestions for community action. GLSEN also offers a free program called Rainbow Library that sends books to school libraries upon request.

• Be proud of who you are! Listen to TIME and Nickelodeon Kid of the Year Finalist, Rebekah Bruesehoff, share her vision for a world where every kid is celebrated for who they are. Then, each member of your family can make their own identity flower. Fill in each petal with words, colors, and pictures that celebrate who you are. Hang your flowers together to create a family garden!

LGBTQ+ is the inclusive term used to represent the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer community. The plus sign (+) encompasses people who identify themselves in others ways like agender, nonbinary, or genderqueer. The acronym was created by LGBTQ+ activists to unify, empower, and give voice to those in the LGBTQ+ community. Learn more about identity with GLSEN's Gender Triangle.

### WANT TO LEARN MORE? NICK IS HERE TO HELP.

#### NickHelps.com

for kids of all ages

#### NickParents.com

for parents and caregivers

#### NickCommunity.com

for youth organizations and educators

## SPECIAL THANKS

Nickelodeon extends appreciation to GLSEN, an organization that exists to guarantee every member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Additional thanks to Laura Stricker, Dr. Jessica R. Toste, and Janella Watson for their contributions to this guide.





