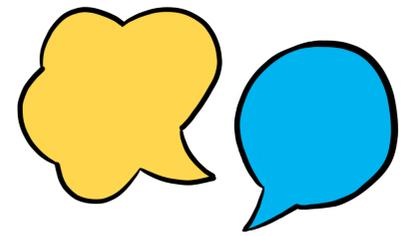


# gender identity & sexual attraction



SMART  
THINGS  
TO SAY

*with Saleema Noon  
Sexual Health Educators*

## preschool-grade 1

- Gender Identity refers to how a person feels in their heart as a boy, girl or something totally different.
- We are all assigned a gender at birth (boy or girl) depending on how our genitals look. But sometimes that's not who a person really is inside.
- When it comes to our gender, we can all choose words to describe our identity (i.e. cisgender, trans, non-binary, gender-fluid, queer, among many others).
- Sexual Attraction refers to who a person is romantically or sexually attracted to, who they want to be in a relationship with.
- When it comes to our sexual attraction, we can all choose words to describe who we are attracted to (i.e. lesbian, gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, among many others).
- All people and all relationships are deserving of respect.
- All families are different and this is a good thing because it makes us unique.

## grades 2-3

*In addition to the messages for grades P-1:*

- Even if we don't do it on purpose, it's never OK to make fun of somebody because they or their family is different or less common.
- If we see or hear someone being disrespectful, we should try to stop it by using a simple "I" statement, eye contact, a firm voice tone and a strong body.
- If what we say to make it stop doesn't work, we need to report it to a trusted adult to get some help.

## grades 4-7

- Over time, we've learned that gender identity and sexual attraction are more complex than we once thought. We no longer think of these concepts as existing on a one-dimensional continuum but rather on a 3-D kaleidoscope.
- If people have genital characteristics that reflect both a typical male body and a typical female body they may identify as intersex.
- Because we know that one's gender assigned at birth and one's gender identity throughout their life may not be in sync, we can't make assumptions about how their body looks or works (i.e. we can't say that all boys have testicles or that all girls get periods).
- Someone can be romantically attracted to one sex, but sexually attracted to another.
- Someone's gender identity and sexual attraction can change over time. A person who is questioning is in the process of exploring who they are.
- Queer is a word that can be used to refer to the spectrum of non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender people.
- An ally is a person who supports, celebrates and actively works to reduce discrimination against queer people.
- Homophobia is a fear or hatred of gay people. Transphobia is a fear or hatred of trans people. It's important that we don't use homophobic or transphobic language.
- It's important to educate ourselves about language that is respectful to gay and trans people. For example, instead of saying that someone is "having a sex change", we should say "transitioning". "Gay" is a more respectful term than "homosexual".
- It's important that we refer to others using the pronouns they want us to use. If it isn't appropriate to ask, use the pronouns "they" or "their".
- LGBTQ2S is an acronym used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and two-spirit (2S) people. Additional letters, or a "+" sign are sometimes added to this acronym (i.e. LGBTQ+, LGBTQI2S) to be more inclusive of all queer people.
- The cisgender identity comes with a lot of privileges, many of which cisgender people take for granted or simply don't notice.
- Heterosexism is the assumption that being straight is more normal, natural, and desirable than any other sexual attraction. This includes the assumption heterosexuality is inherently superior to queerness. Although we all participate in this type of inequality, we should be mindful of the assumptions we make so that we can be respectful and inclusive of all sexual attractions.

**Parental support is the #1 determinant of LGBTQ2S+ and non-binary children's well-being.**