



Impact on the Case. Discuss with the young person how their gender identity and expression impacts the information presented in court, including their placement, educational, medical, developmental, and permanency needs. Explore any potential barriers to appropriate placement that might exist due to foster home licensing requirements that could affect transgender and gender expansive.

Names and Pronouns. Model supportive and affirming interactions by utilizing the name and pronouns the child or youth wants us to use when talking to or about the youth during court proceedings.

Disclosure of Gender Identity. When information related to the child's or youth's gender identity cannot be safely shared in open court, an in-chambers or closed court hearing should be requested in which the information is shared only to the extent it is relevant. A protective order should also be requested which prohibits re-disclosure of the information.

Courtroom Environment. Request that the court permit you to place an affirming symbol or picture in the courtroom as a signal to children and youth that the court is accepting; this helps create a nondiscrimination standard in the courtroom. Ensure the safety of transgender children and youth by promoting the young person's mental and physical well-being and reducing the risk of self-harm.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is a young person's gender identity relevant?

Regardless of whether a child's identity is disclosed to the court, it is relevant to all areas of their life. Consider and discuss with the young person how their experience as a transgender individual impacts their situation, including:

- Placement situation and needs
- Relationship with family and other important people in their lives
- Educational needs
- Medical needs
- Developmental/behavioral needs
- Permanency needs
- Normalcy
- What if the parents do not want me to use the child's preferred name and pronouns?

It is critical to an individual's well-being that we affirm their identity by using their chosen name and pronouns. If a young person asks an advocate to use their preferred name in conversation with their parents, workers and/or advocates should follow the child's wishes.

A young person who came out as transgender now says they are not. What should I do?

Young people may change how they identify for different reasons. They may develop a different sense of their true identity, or they may feel the need to hide their identity to be safe or accepted by their family. When this happens, it is appropriate to follow the young person's lead and use the name and pronouns the child wishes you to use. Yet, recognize that they may still need ongoing support, and continue to communicate to that child that you support them, no matter how they identify.