



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL
FOR CHILDCARE PROFESSIONALS

GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The topics of gender identity and sexual orientation are gaining more attention in educational settings, including childcare. Organising inclusive play or addressing conflicts arising from prejudices and stereotypes among children and families are becoming daily tasks for childcare professionals. Therefore, it is essential to be updated with latest findings, continuously reflect on, and improve skills to keep up with these rapid changes.

Below you can find a short self-assessment helping you to identify your strengths or highlight areas needing further improvement to promote inclusive and emotionally supportive environment successfully.

The self-assessment is recommended for professionals working with children from 0 to 6 years old, for example, in day-care centres, kindergartens, primary schools, social centres.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Assess yourself

Rate **31 statements** on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 – strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – agree to some extent; 4 – agree; 5 – strongly agree), thus expressing how much you agree or disagree with each of them. For completing the form, you will need approximately **10 – 15 minutes**.

2. Discover your competence level

With step-by-step instructions, calculate your results and find out where you stand from Novice to Expert.

3. Keep growing

Finally, for each competence level, discover literature recommendations and ready-to-use materials, and get tips from experts in childcare, trauma, and social pedagogy.

The self-assessment is completely anonymous and the result will be visible only to you and the person(s) you are willing to share it with (e.g. colleague, mentor, educator).








Try to be objective and honest with yourself to get the most reliable results.











1.













ASSESS YOURSELF

Terminology explanation

LGBTIQA+ refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Asexual persons, while “+” stays for many other identities not covered here.

Self-assessment: Gender Identity and sexual Orientation		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree to some extent	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
	I respect each child's autonomy in exploring and expressing their gender identity (e.g. by not limiting their creativity during playtime, allowing them to choose their toys freely).					
	I can explain and differentiate terms such as gender identity, biological sex and sexual orientation.					
	When encountering intolerant behaviour from family members towards children and families of different gender identities and sexual orientations, I can address the issue directly e.g. by confronting the behaviour or contacting external experts for support.					
	I can use different materials and methods to establish an open and safe space for children to express their identities and to avoid the transmission of gender stereotypes (e.g. provide open ended toys and materials, avoid gender-specific toys, read stories that challenge gender roles)					
	I can search for different information on gender identity and sexual orientation, to be able to understand children's behaviour.					
	I can explain the impact of discrimination and prejudices on LGBTIQA+ individuals and their families and their future social and emotional well-being (e.g. emotions, behaviours or everyday function).					
	I can support parents in affirming their children's gender identity e.g. by offering one-on-one consultations or organising workshops, trainings or guest lectures on the topic.					

Self-assessment: Gender Identity and sexual Orientation		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree to some extent	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
	I can identify the most important national and international laws regulating the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals.					
	I can organize classroom spaces to be shared without gender-based segregation, encouraging cooperative play between boys and girls (e.g. preventing the playground from being dominated by boys playing soccer).					
	I can reach out to colleagues or professional organisations for support when addressing complex issues e.g. by consulting experts in working with LGBTIQ+ individuals or attending relevant training sessions.					
	I can use teachable moments to address gender-based discrimination, for instance, when a child witnesses a peer being teased for its interests, I try to explain why such behaviour is wrong and how we should treat each other.					
	I can use different techniques to help families work through disagreements or conflicts during the interactions around the topics of gender and sexual orientation, e.g., encouraging active listening, finding common ground, facilitating open conversation.					
	I can explain different ways of how children may explore and express their gender identity.					
	I can remain open to future changes in gender identity or sexual orientation, e.g. by adapting my methods with children or doing additional research on the topics.					
	I can offer family members a space for confidential discussion, e.g. where they can openly express concerns, to encourage a trusting relationship between myself and the family.					
	I can list diverse gender identities beyond male and female, and different sexual orientations.					
	I can stay up-to-date with new information in the field of gender identity and sexual orientation, e.g. new scientific research, new teaching methods, vocabulary and pronouns.					

Self-assessment: Gender Identity and sexual Orientation		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree to some extent	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
	I can organise different activities on gender diversity (e.g. projects, games, drawing) to facilitate discussion or raise awareness among the children.					
	I can be patient with families that might be struggling with the acceptance of different gender identities and sexual orientations.					
	I can use real-life examples of individuals with different gender identities and sexual orientations that are opposite to stereotypes e.g., female engineers, male nurses, or non-binary artists.					
	I can recognise when my knowledge or skills need further improvement to meet the needs linked to gender identity and sexual orientation in the workplace.					
	I can show empathy to family members who may be struggling to accept or understand different gender identities or sexual orientations e.g. by actively listening to their concerns.					
	I can take each child's background (e.g. religion, culture, family structure) into account when talking about gender identity and sexual orientation.					
	I can help children express and manage emotions around the topics of gender identity and sexual orientation and educate them to respect each other as equals to prevent discriminatory behaviour.					
	I can support initiatives that promote the acceptance of various gender identities and sexual orientations, e.g. by participating in local awareness campaigns, collaborating with LGBTIQ+ support groups and/or connecting them with families and children in my care.					
	I can reflect on my stereotypes and prejudices regarding different gender identities and sexual orientations and pay attention to the language and words I use in interactions with children.					
	I can explain the role of childcare professionals in establishing an environment that values gender diversity.					
	I can encourage children to embrace the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations, e.g. by using books that show various family forms, such as those with same-sex couples.					
	I can apply active listening techniques while talking to children about their thoughts or concerns related to the gender identity and sexual orientation.					

♥	I actively raise awareness of the harmful effects of prejudices and discrimination concerning gender and sexual orientation in different contexts, e.g. in meetings with parents or at team meetings.					
🧑	On my own initiative, I can organise activities (e.g. workshops, presentations, meetings) for family members to explain and discuss the topic of gender identity and sexual orientation.					

Well done!

You have reached the end of the questionnaire and can now move on to the next step – calculating and interpreting the results!

2.

DISCOVER YOUR COMPETENCE LEVEL

Follow the steps
bellow to get your
results!



STEP 1: CALCULATING THE POINTS

First, count the total number of points as follows:

- Strongly disagree = 1 point
- Disagree = 2 points
- Neither agree nor disagree = 3 points
- Agree = 4 points
- Strongly agree = 5 points

The maximum
number of points is

155

**TOTAL NUMBER
OF POINTS**

STEP 2: COMPETENCE LEVEL IN THE TOPIC OF GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Now it is time to check your competence level in the topic of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation. Based on your score, the table below will tell you whether you are Beginner, Competent or even Expert.

Competence Level	Points
Novice	31 – 44
Beginner	45 – 75
Competent	76 – 106
Proficient	107 – 137
Expert	138 – 155

**COMPETENCE
LEVEL**

STEP 3: EXPLANATION OF THE COMPETENCE LEVEL

What does it mean for a childcare professional to be Novice or Expert in the topic of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation?

Find your answer in the following table.

Competence level	Explanation
Novice	You have limited understanding of the concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation, but struggle to differentiate between them or understand their developmental aspects in children. While you strive to create a supportive environment, you lack specific strategies to foster inclusive play and develop an inclusive curriculum. You may unintentionally show stereotypical behaviour through gender-based language or using gender-specific toys. Addressing conflicts arising from prejudices or discrimination among children or family members is challenging for you, and you often require guidance to handle such situations.
Beginner	You have a basic understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation, recognising their importance in children's development. You attempt to create an emotionally supportive environment and occasionally introduce some inclusive materials or activities, though your approach might be inconsistent or hesitant. You try to address conflicts related to prejudices and discrimination, but sometimes require further support from more experienced colleagues. When discussing gender identity and sexual orientation with families, you might lack confidence and guide them towards professionals that are more knowledgeable.
Competent	You understand and differentiate the concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation, understanding their developmental in children. You consistently maintain an emotionally supportive environment that encourages exploration of different gender identities without fear of judgment. You implement anti-bias education through inclusive play, language, and materials. You can address and resolve most conflicts related to prejudices and stereotypes. You communicate effectively with families on these topics, though you might still face challenges with particularly resistant family members.
Proficient	You demonstrate a deep understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation, taking into account differences between them and their development among children. You create an environment supporting children to explore and express their identities, and celebrating the diversity. Your anti-bias education is well-integrated into daily activities, with a wide range of inclusive materials and practices. You promote inclusion, prevent discrimination, and handle conflicts arising from prejudices. Your communication with families on these topics is nuanced and effective, able to navigate most instances of resistance with tact and expertise. You regularly organise activities for families to discuss and emphasize the importance of these topics and to prevent any discrimination and prejudices.

Expert

You possess a comprehensive understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation, including the latest research and best practices in supporting children’s development in these areas. You create an exemplary educational environment that serves as a model for other professionals in promoting exploration and expression of gender identity. You promote anti-bias education and manage to integrate it into all aspects of the childcare setting. Your communication with families is effective, able to address even the most challenging situations with sensitivity, respect, and expertise, often changing perspectives and fostering greater understanding among resistant family members. You actively promote an inclusive education accepting various gender identities and sexual orientations by organising or participating in different activities on the topics. You excel at preventing discrimination, and resolving conflicts, often being called upon to train others in these skills.

STEP 4: COMPETENCE LEVEL IN FOUR AREAS

Go back to the statements and look for the symbols next to them (♥ 🎲 🗨️ 🔍).

Now count the points for the statements with the same symbol to check your competence level in different areas:





- Personal (♥),
- Activity and decision-making (🎲),
- Social-communicative (🗨️),
- Methodological and professional (🔍) competences.

Competence Level	♥	🎲	🗨️	🔍
Novice	8 – 11	8 – 11	8 – 11	7 – 10
Beginner	12 – 19	12 – 19	12 – 19	11 – 17
Competent	20 – 27	20 – 27	20 – 27	18 – 24
Proficient	28 – 35	28 – 35	28 – 35	25 – 31
Expert	36 – 40	36 – 40	36 – 40	32 – 35

YOUR SCORE:

 _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

The table below explains the meaning of each of these areas as related to childcare education and the topic of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Competence Area	Explanation
	<p>Personal competences refer to the ability to be self-reflective, critical, and to act based on one's values, attitudes, and ideals. It involves self-awareness, ethical considerations, and the capacity for personal growth. For childcare professionals, it refers to respecting child's autonomy in exploring and expressing its gender identity, reflecting on own prejudices and stereotypes, being open towards future changes by expanding own knowledge and improving skills needed to address them, etc.</p>
	<p>Social-communicative competence encompasses the ability to interact effectively with others, communicate clearly, and cooperate creatively. It includes skills like teamwork, empathy, and conflict resolution. In the context of childcare, it means being able to effectively communicate with family members around the topics of gender identity and sexual orientation, while showing empathy and patience, and effectively resolve conflicts related to prejudices and discrimination, among children or family members.</p>
	<p>Methodological and professional competences involves the ability to apply methodological and technical knowledge to solve complex problems. It includes analytical thinking, organisational skills, or ability to share knowledge and skills with others. For example, it refers to understanding the concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation, explaining the impact of discrimination and prejudices on LGBTIQ+ individuals, understanding own role in fostering acceptance of gender diversity, etc</p>
	<p>Activity and Decision-making competence is the ability to perform job-specific tasks effectively using specialised knowledge and skills. It includes expertise in a particular field and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge practically. For childcare professionals, it means to organise an emotionally supportive environment offering inclusive materials allowing children to freely express and explore their gender identities. It refers to introducing different activities and methods to promote understanding among family members and children such as organising workshops, meetings, or introducing real-life examples, opposite to gender stereotypes.</p>

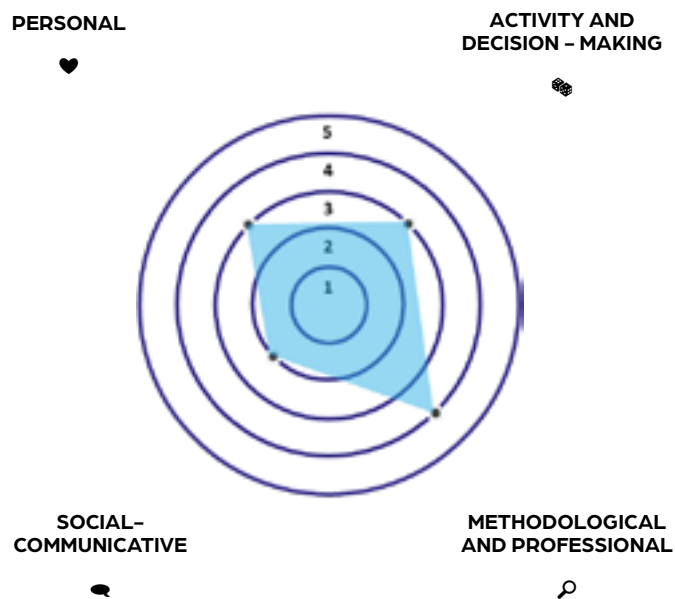
STEP 5: DIAGRAM CREATION

Follow the steps below to create your own diagram illustrating your competence profile in the topic of culture.

1. Select one of four areas.
2. Go back to Step 4 and check your competence level in the chosen area (Novice – Expert)
3. Find the number on the diagram that corresponds to your competence level as follows: Novice = 1; Beginner = 2; Competent = 3; Proficient = 4; Expert = 5
4. On the chart, mark your competence level (see example on the left).
5. Repeat the steps for each area.
6. Connect the dots.

Example

- ♥ = 3
- 🎲 = 2
- 🗨️ = 2
- 🔍 = 4



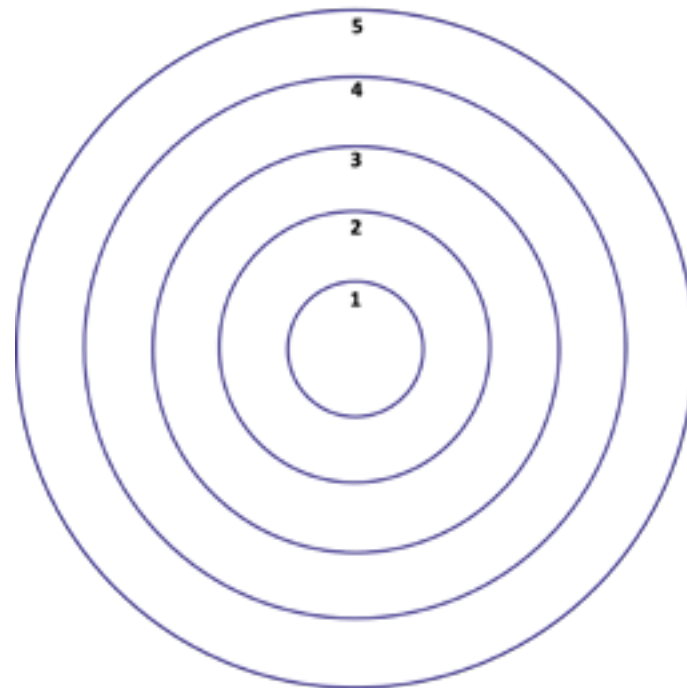
Indicator	Competence level
1	Novice
2	Beginner
3	Competent
4	Proficient
5	Expert

Create your diagram!

PERSONAL



ACTIVITY AND
DECISION - MAKING



SOCIAL-
COMMUNICATIVE



METHODOLOGICAL
AND PROFESSIONAL



YOUR SCORE:

Indicator	Competence level
1	Novice
2	Beginner
3	Competent
4	Proficient
5	Expert

3.

KEEP GROWING

After having your competence profile in Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation completed, you might be interested in improving certain competence areas.

For different competence levels, you can find:



Books/Handbooks/Articles

Different materials with theoretical information, e.g. books and articles with theoretical insights or scientific findings; guidelines on the topic of trauma; policy documents; etc.



Ready-to-use Materials

Different types of materials that you can directly implement in practice, e.g. worksheets, digital tools, videos, etc.



Tips and Tricks

Suggestions/advices from the experts in trauma-informed practice, childcare, and social work on how you can improve your competence.

NOVICE

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- American Psychological Association (2021) Gender and sexual orientation diversity in children and adolescents in schools. Available at: <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/diversity-schools>. Focuses on the importance of fostering safe and inclusive environments for students of all gender identities and sexual orientations. It highlights the need for comprehensive policies, programs, training, and practices to support and affirm LGBTQ+ students. The resolution also addresses the reduction of stigma and discrimination, emphasizing the role of schools in promoting the well-being and academic success of these students.
- Caring for Kids (2023) Gender Identity. Available at: <https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/behavior-and-development/gender-identity>. This article focuses on understanding gender identity, gender expression and diversity and encourages parents and caregivers to support healthy gender identity development.
- Killerman, S. (2013) The Social Justice Advocate's Handbook: A Guide to Gender. Lightning Source Inc. It is a highly regarded resource for understanding gender from a social justice perspective. It's known for its accessible language, engaging style, and use of humor and comics to explain complex concepts.
- Kimmel, M.S. (2007) The Gendered Society. Oxford University Press. It is a foundational text in the field of gender studies. It offers a comprehensive and insightful analysis of how gender is socially constructed and how it shapes our lives.
- Ronni, L. S. (2005) Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Research, Policy and Personal Perspectives. Wiley. It is a valuable resource for understanding the complexities of gender identity and sexual orientation. It explores the research, policies, and personal experiences related to these topics, particularly within the context of higher education.
- Stanford University (n.d.) Health Across the Gender Spectrum. Available at: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/health-gender-spectrum>. Free online course from Stanford University to understand gender identity and sexual orientation and create inclusive environments and societies, with entertaining videos and real stories.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Bisnath, J. (n.d.) Nurturing a gender inclusive environment. Child Care Providers Resource Network. Available at: <https://ccprn.com/nurturing-a-gender-inclusive-environment/>. Article on gender inclusive environments with many links to ready to use materials such as books and worksheets.
- Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (2013) Gender: Early Socialization – Boys and Girls: Two of a Kind? Available at: <https://www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/gender-early-socialization-info.pdf>. PDF sheet on early socialization of gender with tips for caregivers.
- Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity (2021) Learning About Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CrjaFBF5dY>. This video gives a simple explanation of the differences between sexual orientation, gender identity and the main terms and concepts related to them.
- Goepferd, A.K. (2020) The Revolutionary Truth About Kids and Gender Identity. TEDx Talks. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knNjvX6eoBl>. YouTube video of the TEDx Talk held by Dr. Goepferd, to deepen the understanding of gender diversity in early childhood.
- Human Right Campaign (n.d.) Tools for equality and inclusion. Available at: <https://www.hrc.org/resources> (Accessed at: 6 February 2025). The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is the largest LGBTQ+ advocacy group and political lobbying organization in the United States. They have a wide range of resources available on their website covering various aspects of LGBTQ+ life, rights, and issues.

- Stuart, S. (2022) My Shadow is Pink | Animated Short Film by Scott Stuart. Available at: <https://youtu.be/dlwaQGHB1LU?feature=shared>.
My Shadow is Pink is an animated short film by Scott Stuart that tells the story of a young boy born with a pink shadow who loves princesses, dresses, and "things not for boys." The film explores themes of identity, acceptance, and the courage to be different.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Focus on using worksheets, digital tools, and videos designed to explain gender identity and sexual orientation, since these resources can provide structured information and facilitate discussions.
- ✓ Use gender-neutral language and display diverse books and materials.
- ✓ Learn key terms and concepts and stay updated with workshops and articles.
- ✓ Challenge stereotypes, encourage all activities for all children, and be mindful of your own biases.
- ✓ Respect preferred pronouns and allow self-expression through clothing and play.
- ✓ Communicate openly with parents and provide resources on gender diversity.
- ✓ Model inclusivity: lead by example and celebrate diverse identities.
- ✓ Teach understanding and respect and encourage kindness towards everyone.

BEGINNER

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Caring for Kids (2023) Gender Identity. Available at: <https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/behavior-and-development/gender-identity>.
This article focuses on understanding gender identity, gender expression and diversity and encourages parents and caregivers to support healthy gender identity development.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000) Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality. Basic Books. It is a highly influential and important book in the fields of gender studies, biology, and sociology. Published in 2000, it challenges the traditional binary understanding of sex and gender.
- Hager, A. (2022) Supporting gender identity: a beginner's guide for friends, family and University staff. San Francisco: Transcend Publication.
A comprehensive resource aimed at helping friends, family members, and university staff understand and support individuals with diverse gender identities. The book covers essential topics such as the basics of gender identity, the challenges faced by transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals, and practical advice on how to create an inclusive and supportive environment.
- Stanford University (n.d.) Health Across the Gender Spectrum. Available at: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/health-gender-spectrum>.
Free online course from Stanford University to understand gender identity and sexual orientation and create inclusive environments and societies, with entertaining videos and real stories.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Bisnath, J. (n.d.) Nurturing a gender inclusive environment. Child Care Providers Resource Network. Available at: <https://ccprn.com/nurturing-a-gender-inclusive-environment/>.
Article on gender inclusive environments with many links to ready to use materials such as books and worksheets.
- Butler, J. (2023) Berkeley professor explains gender theory | Judith Butler. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UD9IOIUR4k> (Accessed at: 6 February 2025)
Sex, gender, and the debate over identity explained by Berkeley professor Judith Butler.
- Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (2013) Gender: Early Socialization – Boys and Girls: Two of a Kind? Available at: <https://www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/gender-early-socialization-info.pdf>.
PDF sheet on early socialization of gender with tips for caregivers.
- Goepferd, A.K. (2020) The Revolutionary Truth About Kids and Gender Identity. TEDx Talks. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knNjvX6eoBl>.
YouTube video of the TEDx Talk held by Dr. Goepferd, to deepen the understanding of gender diversity in early childhood.
- Stuart, S. (2022) My Shadow is Pink | Animated Short Film by Scott Stuart. March 13, 2022. Available at: <https://youtu.be/dlwaQGHB1LU?feature=shared>.
My Shadow is Pink is an animated short film by Scott Stuart that tells the story of a young boy born with a pink shadow who loves princesses, dresses, and "things not for boys." The film explores themes of identity, acceptance, and the courage to be different.
- VVOB, FAWE, and partners (2019) Gender-Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education Toolkit. Available at: https://www.vvob.org/sites/belgium/files/grp4ece-toolkit-72dpi_0.pdf.
Very useful toolkit to empower early childhood educators to identify and challenge gender stereotypes within the classroom setting. This toolkit supports young children in exploring and developing their unique interests and talents without the constraints of traditional gender roles.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Establish a discussion with the whole group, paying attention on creating a supportive environment using inclusive language – normalize the use of inclusive terms such as “everyone,” “folks” or “students/children” instead of gendered terms like “girls and boys”.
- ✓ Learn the basics and try to understand terms like gender identity and pronouns.
- ✓ Encourage all activities – let children explore all toys and activities.
- ✓ Ask and use children’s preferred pronouns.
- ✓ Talk to parents about inclusivity.
- ✓ Show kindness and respect to everyone and lead by example.
- ✓ Encourage children to be kind and respectful.

COMPETENT

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Butler, J. (2004) *Undoing Gender*. Routledge.
It is a significant contribution to gender theory and queer theory. It delves into the complexities of gender and sexuality.
- Ehrensaft, D. (2016) *The Gender Creative Child: Pathways for Nurturing and Supporting Children Who Live Outside Gender Boxes*. New York: The Experiment.
A comprehensive resource that explores the concept of gender fluidity in children. Dr. Ehrensaft, a developmental and clinical psychologist, advocates for the gender affirmative model, encouraging caregivers to listen to each child, understand their unique needs, and support their journey toward discovering their true gender self. The book delves into the interconnected effects of biology, nurture, and culture on gender identity, and provides practical guidance for parents and professionals on how to create supportive environments for gender creative children.
- Martin, C.L. (2014) *Gender: early socialization*. Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development.
Available at: <https://www.child-encyclopedia.com/pdf/complet/gender-early-socialization>.
This document explores the process through which children learn societal gender expectations, attitudes, and behaviors and emphasizes the importance of providing children with diverse experiences to foster positive interactions across genders and to mitigate the limitations imposed by rigid gender roles.
- Stanford University (n.d.) *Health Across the Gender Spectrum*. Available at: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/health-gender-spectrum>.
Free online course from Stanford University to understand gender identity and sexual orientation and create inclusive environments and societies, with entertaining videos and real stories.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Powered By Rainbows (2022) *How To Find Your Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-wEGr5moNU> (Accessed at: 6 February 2025)
The video shows a complete guide to finding your sexual orientation or gender identity, including free worksheets.
- Gender Creative Kids (2017) *Sam's Story*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/fdl9Sljy8sc?feature=shared>.
Short animated film illustrating the experiences of a gender non-conforming child. It aims to foster understanding and support for gender diversity among children, their families and their environments.
- Gender Justice in Early Childhood (n.d.) *Resources*. Available at: <https://lucy-shack-wz98.squarespace.com/resources>.
A variety of materials aimed at promoting gender inclusivity in early childhood education. It includes tools such as the "Classroom Audit Tool" for reflecting on program practices, the "STAR of Supporting Young Children's Gender Development" handout summarizing key support strategies, and many others.
- Keshet (2025) *LGBTQ+ Book List for Children and Families*. Available at: <https://www.keshetonline.org/resources/lgbtq-inclusive-book-list-for-children-and-families/>.
A comprehensive guide of LGBTQ+ books and resources for younger and older children and their families.
- PFLAG (2025) Available at: <https://pflag.org> (Accessed at: 6 February 2025)
PFLAG is a national organization with a focus on supporting the LGBTQ+ community. They provide resources, support groups, and information for LGBTQ+ individuals, their families, and allies.
- VVOB, FAWE, and partners (2019) *Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education: A toolkit for teachers and school leaders*. Available at: https://www.vvob.org/sites/belgium/files/grp4ece-toolkit-72dpi_0.pdf.
Very useful toolkit to empower early childhood educators to identify and challenge gender stereotypes within the classroom setting. Through practical tools, this toolkit supports young children in exploring and developing their unique interests and talents without the constraints of traditional gender roles.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Encourage open and respectful conversations among children and provide guidance on how to navigate questions and discussions about gender and sexuality.
- ✓ Integrate into curriculum – incorporate gender identity and sexual orientation topics into everyday lessons and use literature and projects that reflect diverse identities and experiences.
- ✓ It could be useful to provide families with different resources to help them support the LGBTQ+ community their children belong to. A good way to do it could be through organising a workshop with the families.
- ✓ Advocate for inclusive policies that support gender diversity and inclusion and establish a clear, respectful communication protocol for addressing gender and sexuality topics. Work with parents, colleagues, and the community to promote understanding and acceptance.
- ✓ Dive deeper into gender studies and LGBTQ+ resources and stay informed on the latest research and educational practices.
- ✓ Engage in professional development. Attend advanced workshops and training sessions and collaborate with other educators to share best practices and insights.
- ✓ Regularly assess your own practices and their impact and seek feedback from children, parents, and colleagues to continuously improve.

PROFICIENT

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Dillabough, J.A.V. & Pybus, J.A. (2021) *Creating Gender-Inclusive Schools: A Practical Guide for Teachers and School Leaders*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Offers practical advice and strategies for educators and school leaders to create gender-inclusive environments. The guide emphasizes the importance of understanding gender diversity, implementing inclusive policies, and fostering a supportive school culture. It provides actionable steps to ensure that all students, regardless of their gender identity, feel safe, respected, and included in the school community.
- Ehrensaft, D. (2016) *The Gender Creative Child: Pathways for Nurturing and Supporting Children Who Live Outside Gender Boxes*. The Experiment LLC.
It is a ground-breaking book that offers a fresh perspective on gender identity in children. It challenges the traditional binary view of gender and provides guidance for parents, educators, and professionals on how to support children who express their gender in ways that don't conform to societal expectations.
- Letts, W. J., & Sears, J. T. (Eds.) (1999) *Queering Elementary Education: Advancing the Dialogue about Sexualities and Schooling*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
A collection of essays that challenge traditional views on gender and sexuality in elementary education. The book advocates for creating classrooms that promote critical thinking, interpersonal intelligence, and inclusivity. It encourages educators to move beyond heteronormative assumptions and to foster environments where all children feel valued and respected.
- Pastel, E., Steele, K., Nicholson, J., Maurer, C., Hennock, J., Julian, J., Unger, T. and Flynn, N. (2022) *Supporting Gender Diversity in Early Childhood Classrooms: A Practical Guide*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Available at: https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-03-02_621fa5a6bb6d3_SupportingGenderDiversityinEarlyChildhoodClassroomsAPracticalGuidebyEncianPastelKatieSteeleJulieNicholsonCyndiMaurerJuliaHennockJonathanJulianTessUngerNathanaelFlynnz-lib.org_.pdf
A practical guide that offers early childhood educators strategies and tools to create inclusive classrooms that affirm and celebrate gender diversity. It provides insights into addressing gender stereotypes and family resistance, fostering an environment of acceptance, and supporting children in expressing their authentic selves.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Big Think (2023) Berkeley professor explains gender theory | Judith Butler. Available at: <https://youtu.be/UD9l-OllUR4k?feature=shared>.
In this video, philosopher Judith Butler discusses the concept of gender performativity touching different topics such as feminism, queer theory and trans rights. It provides a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural nuances and historic background of gender theory.
- FAWE (2018) *Gender-Responsive Pedagogy: A Toolkit for Teachers and Schools*. 2nd edn. Nairobi: Forum for African Women Educationalists. FAWE House. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/6726/file/GRP-A-Toolkit-for-Teachers-and-Schools-2020.pdf>.
A toolkit with practical strategies to implement gender-responsive pedagogy in educational settings.
- Gender Spectrum (2019) Available at: www.genderspectrum.org (Accessed at: 6 February 2025)
Gender Spectrum is a non-profit organization that provides resources and support for transgender and gender-diverse children, teens, and their families. They offer online articles, guides, and videos on a variety of topics related to gender identity. They also have online discussion forums where people can connect with others who share similar experiences.
- Gender Spectrum (n.d.) Resources. Available at: <https://www.genderspectrum.org/resources>.
A comprehensive collection of materials designed to deepen understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation. It includes articles, guides and tools aimed at fostering inclusive environments and supporting communication with families, making it a valuable resource for educators, parents, and professionals.

- Testa, R.J., Coolhart, D., Peta, J. (2015) The gender quest workbook: a guide for teens & young adults exploring gender identity. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc. https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-07-23_60fa10b39be9a_TheGenderQuestWorkbookAGuideforTeensandYoungAdultsExploringGenderIdentitybyRylanJayTestaDeborahCoolhartJaymePetaRyank.SallansArlenelstarLevz-lib.org_.pdf (Accessed at: 6 February 2025)
It is a resource designed to help young people navigate questions about their gender identity. It typically includes exercises, journaling prompts, and information to help readers explore their feelings, understand different gender identities, and develop self-acceptance.
- UNESCO (2021) Connect with Respect: Preventing gender-based violence in schools. UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380633/PDF/380633eng.pdf.multi>. A curriculum tool by UNESCO designed to assist teachers in preventing gender-based violence through education. It includes lesson plans, activities, and guidance on fostering respectful relationships among students.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Use some of the activities from the workbook and implement them in the group, so that they can have an idea about how to use this resource on their own professional lives.
- ✓ Facilitate in-depth discussions by creating a safe space for open dialogue about gender and sexuality and provide children with tools to express their thoughts and feelings respectfully.
- ✓ Develop and implement inclusive policies and practices, and create and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and discrimination.
- ✓ Integrate inclusivity into curriculum. Design lessons that incorporate diverse gender identities and sexual orientations and use multimedia resources and guest speakers to provide varied perspectives.
- ✓ Regularly evaluate your teaching practices and their impact on children and seek feedback from children, parents, and colleagues to refine your approach.
- ✓ Deepen your understanding by engaging in specialized courses on gender studies and LGBTIQ+ topics and keep up with the latest scholarly research and publications. You can also participate in training sessions, seminars and network with other professionals to exchange ideas and best practices.
- ✓ Champion inclusive practices within your institution and community and work with parents, colleagues, and policymakers to foster a supportive environment.

EXPERT

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Pastel, E., Steele, K., Nicholson, J., Maurer, C., Hennock, J., Julian, J., Unger, T. and Flynn, N. (2022) Supporting Gender Diversity in Early Childhood Classrooms: A Practical Guide. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Available at: https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-03-02_621fa5a6bb6d3_SupportingGenderDiversityinEarlyChildhoodClassroomsAPracticalGuidebyEncianPastelKatieSteeleJulieNicholsonCyndiMaurerJuliaHennockJonathanJulianTessUngerNathanaelFlynnz-lib.org_.pdf.
A practical guide that offers early childhood educators strategies and tools to create inclusive classrooms that affirm and celebrate gender diversity. It provides insights into addressing gender stereotypes and family resistance, fostering an environment of acceptance and supporting children in expressing their authentic selves.
- Rawee, P., G. M., Rosmalen, J., Kalverdiijk, L., M. & Burke, S. (2024) 'Development of Gender Non-Contentedness During Adolescence and Early Adulthood', Archives of sexual behaviour, 53 (5), pp. 1813–1825. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38413534/> (Accessed 6 February 2025).
It is a study published in the Archives of Sexual Behavior in 2024. It examined the development of gender non-contentedness, which is defined as unhappiness with being the gender aligned with one's sex, from early adolescence to young adulthood.
- Sadowski, M. (2016) Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
Explores how schools can go beyond merely ensuring safety for LGBTQ students and instead create truly inclusive and supportive environments. Sadowski emphasizes the importance of adopting LGBTQ-inclusive curricula, fostering supportive school climates, providing mentorship opportunities, and engaging in effective family and community outreach.
The book highlights successful case studies from various schools and offers practical strategies for educators to support the positive development and academic success of LGBTQ students.
- World Health Organization (2024) Frequently asked questions on sexual and gender diversity, health and human rights – an introduction to key concepts. Available at: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/gender/sogie---faq-final-08.10.2024.pdf?sfvrsn=ef076e29_3&download=true.
This document provides a concise overview of key concepts and frequently asked questions related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, aiming to promote understanding and inclusivity in health-related contexts.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Big Think (2025) Berkeley professor explains gender theory | Judith Butler. Available at: <https://youtu.be/UD9l-OllUR4k?feature=shared>.
In this video, philosopher Judith Butler discusses the concept of gender performativity touching different topics such as feminism, queer theory and trans rights. It provides a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural nuances and historic background of gender theory.
- FAWE (2018) Gender-Responsive Pedagogy: A Toolkit for Teachers and Schools. 2nd edn. Nairobi: Forum for African Women Educationalists. FAWE House. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/6726/file/GRP-A-Toolkit-for-Teachers-and-Schools-2020.pdf>.
A toolkit with practical strategies to implement gender-responsive pedagogy in educational settings.
- UNESCO (2021) Connect with Respect: Preventing gender-based violence in schools. UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380633/PDF/380633eng.pdf.multi>.
A curriculum tool by UNESCO designed to assist teachers in preventing gender-based violence through education. It includes lesson plans, activities, and guidance on fostering respectful relationships among students.
- Varjas, K. & Lorig, C. American Psychological Association (2021) Imagining Inclusive Classrooms with Sexual and Gender Diverse Students. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3Xlob5qD2s> (Accessed at: 6 February 2025)
The video is a Virtual Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers and it is about imagining inclusive classrooms with sexual and gender diverse students. This workshop was held with generous support from the American Psychological Foundation/Education Directorate Lee Gurel Fund for Professional Development of High School Teachers of Psychology.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ At this level is essential to update your knowledge constantly. For this purpose, I recommend visiting websites such as PubMed or Google Scholar, where you can find the latest researches and studies.
- ✓ Stay at the forefront of educational innovation by exploring new methods and technologies to support gender inclusivity and regularly review and adapt your practices to ensure they remain relevant and effective.
- ✓ Conduct and publish your own research on gender and sexual orientation in early childhood education and develop and lead professional development workshops and seminars.
- ✓ Advocate for and help implement institutional policies that promote gender inclusivity and work with school boards and administration to integrate gender-inclusive practices across the curriculum.
- ✓ Establish support groups for children exploring their gender identity and sexual orientation and collaborate with counsellors and psychologists to provide comprehensive support for children and families.
- ✓ Design and implement a curriculum that thoroughly integrates gender identity and sexual orientation topics across all subjects and utilize advanced educational tools and resources to provide a rich, inclusive learning experience.
- ✓ Lead community workshops and forums on gender inclusivity and sexual orientation and partner with local organizations to support and promote inclusivity beyond the classroom.
- ✓ Mentor other educators in inclusive practices and strategies and take on leadership roles within professional organizations to drive change and advocate for inclusive education.

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