

Considerations for LGBTQIA+ children and young people

Sexual development of all children and young people is a natural process and should be understood as such and not viewed differently because of the child and young person's identity.

Children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual or other sexual orientation may experience sexual development or display sexual behaviours differently to their peers. It's important is that we recognise and support each young person's individual experience in a respectful and inclusive way.



Sexual development for LGBTQIA+ children and young people might include:

1. Being curious about the bodies of peers:

- Children and young people who are experiencing gender dysphoria may be curious/ interested in parts of their bodies which do not align with their gender or may show interest in looking at or comparing bodies with other children to understand these differences.
- Children and young people who are intersex (i.e. born with an innate variation in sex characteristics) may notice differences between their bodies and those of others and may have questions about this. These children may have specific health needs or may have undergone surgical interventions to alter the function or appearance of their genitals and as a result and may be curious about the development of their and others' sex characteristics.

2. Being curious about their sexual and romantic attraction:

- Children and young people who are same-sex attracted or unsure of their attraction, like other children and young people might choose to experiment with sexual curiosity, behaviours or sexual conversations with peers to explore and understand their attraction.
- In the absence of accessible resources, pornography might also be used to exploring their attraction that aligns with their sexual preference.



Helpful responses

1. Language matters. Use gender affirming language that aligns with the child and young person's identity, including using correct name and pronouns.
2. Recognise that all children and young people experience sexual development differently.
3. Maintain an empathetic, child-centred approach when discussing sexual development, identity or behaviour, recognising that LGBTQIA+ children and young people may experience higher levels of stigma, misunderstanding, exclusion and discrimination.
4. Stay curious and be mindful of potential biases about sexual development, identity, or behaviour, and consider how heteronormative perspectives may influence how behaviour is understood.

Further information

Together We Can is currently being piloted. Public access to the site is expected to be available in coming months.

