



Why Rainbows Matter

National studies show that our Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer Intersex Two Spirit (LGBTQI2S) children and youth are more vulnerable to bullying. They are also 4 times more likely to attempt suicide than their non-LGBTQI2S peers. A recent NB *Wellness Survey* found that LGBTQ teens are 20% less likely than their peers to feel that their caregivers, peers and teachers care for them. The *Canadian Trans Health Survey* found that LGBTQI2S youth who have the support of adults are four times more likely to report positive mental health.

Caregivers are key partners with educators in making homes and schools safe spaces no matter the sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other aspect of a person's identity.

Age appropriate talks at home with children and youth on LGBTQI2S topics are important. These can give them the tools they need to stand up to the influence of negative social norms that can exist in our communities and schools, even in the early elementary years.

Starting the Conversation:

- **Use child friendly language.** Using terms such as “meanness, bullying, dislike” through to more specific language such as “phobia” to describe the experiences that can exist for LGBTQI2S children and youth.
- **Be prepared to listen.** Let your child/youth talk about their experiences as examples for further discussion.
- **Use helpful media.** Books and videos can be great conversation starters.
- **Keep it personal.** Connect with immediate family or friends from the LGBTQI2S community who can help your child/youth make links to some of the real-life consequences of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.
- **Establish a strong network of support.** Let your child/youth see you reaching out to your school and community to support practices that promote safety for the LGBTQI2S community.
- **Show your rainbow.** The rainbow is a recognized symbol that identifies spaces and/or individuals as LGBTQI2S welcoming, affirming and safe. It is a small act that can have a big impact.

For more information on creating safe spaces for our LGBTQI2S children and youth check out:

- [Information and Resources for Parents and Guardians](#) and the [NB Policies and LGBTQ Resources](#) sections of the *NB LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource*

References

Egale Canada Human Rights Trust (2011). [NB LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource](#)
Veale et al. (2015). [Being Safe, Being Me: Results of the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey](#)
NB Health Council (2015-2016). [New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey Grades 6-12 2015-2016: Results for LGBTQ Students](#)

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia—May 17th

