

SECTION 1 MESSAGES FROM PARENTS

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SECTION 1 MESSAGES FROM PARENTS

one of the dads from the dinner group recommended this article with a link to a radio program about a family's acceptance of their transgender child.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/10/19/449937765/becoming-nicole-recounts-one-familys-acceptance-of-their-transgender-child>



'Becoming Nicole' Recounts One Family's Acceptance Of A ...

www.npr.org

When Kelly and Wayne Maines adopted identical twin boys in 1997, they didn't anticipate raising one of their sons as a daughter. They tell their story ...

A Mom's Letter Introducing Her Transgender Daughter

11-15-14

Dear family and friends,

Many of you already know that, over the past year, my youngest child, who has been known to us all as "Jon" since birth, has been questioning, exploring, and, more recently, affirming her gender identity. (Yes, I have used the female pronoun here correctly. It turns out that for all these years I was using the wrong one. My bad!) What my child has come to understand is that she is transgender and identifies as female. She has chosen to call herself "Elana," a name she feels more aptly reflects the person she knows herself to be.*

I realize that some of you might not be familiar with the term "transgender" or what it means to live as a transgender person. I have learned that a full understanding can be both deceptively simple and extraordinarily complicated at the same time. Thinking back to the moment of Jon's birth 15 years ago reinforces this observation. Toward the end of my labor, my husband and I experienced some moments of terror when the monitor showed a slowing heartbeat and the doctor declared, "We have to get this baby out." I remember hunkering down into a primal space and pushing for dear life, and although I did succeed in pushing this baby out, the room was leaden with silence as we all waited for that first cry of life, which was notably, frighteningly absent. When the wail came, the room seemed to explode with a palpable measure of joy. This is the simple part: I had birthed a healthy baby.

What followed is what follows the natural sequence of all births: the proclamation of the baby's sex -- in our case, a boy! Within seconds of the birth, everyone in the room had begun making and acting on assumptions about the significance of our child's genitalia. Since our baby quite visibly had a penis, we did not give the matter a second thought, and we forged ahead along the gendered path before us, as we had with our three older children, and as our parents had done when raising us. On a very basic level we assumed that the genitalia wholly determined the gendered direction of our child's life, and we also assumed that our child's identity would naturally align with maleness.

So here is where it gets more complicated. Most children are born with a penis or a vagina (and some are born with genitals that don't fall neatly into either category). For the majority of children, the brain and the body will match; that is, the interior -- the brain, or neuroendocrine system -- will work in tandem with the exterior, the physical body. These children will typically grow up aligned with the

gender assigned to them at birth, and they will be comfortable in their skin, so to speak. For other children, the brain/body relationship is differently matched, complicating the relationship between the two. This can simply mean that that an individual with male genitalia knows herself to be female, and another with female genitalia knows himself to be male. (There are many other variations along the gender spectrum, which I will not go into here, but I would be happy to point you in the direction of more in-depth information, should you wish to learn more.) And now back to the simple part of this story and the most important truth of my life: I gave birth to a healthy baby, a human being, not a prepackaged promise of a predictable gendered life.

And now I am the fortunate parent who lives in awe of her 15-year-old child, whose courage and conviction to live authentically in a largely unfamiliar and often less-than-friendly world is humbling. And as Elana has grown into herself, so too have those around her. I have watched our family's love deepen as we've traveled alongside Elana on her journey. I have seen the care with which our friends have made the switch from male to female pronouns and from "Jon" to "Elana" without blinking an eye or missing a beat. I have watched our community -- neighbors, teachers, doctors, nurses, and, yes, even police officers -- unequivocally agree to see and address my child as the person she knows herself to be. I have been blessed to see humanity outshine ignorance again and again.

I am writing to you today to thank you for being a part of this amazing community we are fortunate to call home, and to ask you to join us in using the name "Elana," along with her chosen corresponding pronouns, "she" and "her."

Much love to you all,

L.

**I have used the pseudonym "Elana" to protect my child's privacy.*

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/liz-hanssen/a-moms-letter-introducing-her-transgender-daughter_b_6151766.html

June 16 2014 12:20 PM

How to Tell Aunt Esther about Your Child's Gender Transition

Dear Family,

We have some big news to share, so we thought it best to write you personally. Our child, who you know as Lacey, has shared since she was two or three years old that she feels she is a boy. Not that she wants to act like a boy or play boy games, but she feels like she was born a boy. We have, in fact, learned we are not the parents of a little girl, but the parents of a little boy. Through long and careful exploration, discussion, prayer, therapy, family talks, and careful self-reflection, we have come to understand this new truth. We are proud and excited to introduce a new but old member of our family, Justin!

Justin, as he is now known by everyone in our neighborhood and school, is living full time as a boy. He is unbelievably happy and comfortable about this big change and so are we. As you are a very important part of our lives, we decided to also share this truth with you.

We understand this may be confusing. In the beginning, we too felt confused. For years now Justin has told us how he feels inside with the words he knew.

There is plenty of information available about transgender children—we invite you to explore this information as we have. There is quite a bit of information on the Internet. There are also several good books on the subject. We recommend [*The Transgender Child*](#) and [*Gender Born, Gender Made*](#).

We request you welcome Justin fully as part of our family. Please refer to Justin only with male pronouns (he, him) and by his name, Justin. Despite any personal reservations you may have, we expect and hope you will be fully welcoming, respectful, and kind to Justin. All the experts we have consulted on this subject agree this is the right approach for maintaining Justin's mental health and happiness long term. Transgender kids are much more prone to suicide, depression, and self-harm when they don't have the support and love of their family.

If you are no longer able to treat our child with complete respect, we will decline further contact until that changes. Regardless of religious belief, all of us as parents want our children happy and safe. Our friends, community, and Justin's school have been extremely helpful and supportive. Our love and support for Justin is complete. We hope yours will be also. We love you all so much and miss you.

The Johnsons

Reprinted from [Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community](#) with permission from Oxford University Press USA. © Oxford University Press, 2014.

REPRINT [PRINT EMAIL](#)

[http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2014/06/16/gender transition how parents can tell family about their child s transition.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2014/06/16/gender_transition_how_parents_can_tell_family_about_their_child_s_transition.html)

September 01. 2013 2:00AM

Letter from parents of transgender child

We hope that you all had a wonderful summer and welcome back! For those of you who may not know us, we are Mark and Linda (last name deleted). Today we are writing to update you on some personal changes regarding our child, Peter. *Editor's note: This is a letter sent by the parents of a transgender child before the start of the youth's school year last year. The child's name has been changed to protect her identity.*

Aug. 25, 2011

To the parents of the fourth-grade class:

We hope that you all had a wonderful summer and welcome back! For those of you who may not know us, we are Mark and Linda (last name deleted). Today we are writing to update you on some personal changes regarding our child, Peter.

Peter has been diagnosed with gender identity condition. This can be a devastating condition that can turn the life of a child upside down. Many of you have probably read about gender identity condition, also called transgender, or seen this subject discussed on talk shows or news programs. In essence, a person with this condition is born into the body of the opposite gender. Biologically, Peter is a boy. But in every other sense, she is a girl. Obviously this can be incredibly difficult to deal with. It's hard to imagine how heartbreaking it is for a child to realize that they have been born into the wrong body.

We realize that many of you will find this news shocking and confusing. But it wouldn't be fair to say that this diagnosis has caught our family by surprise. Peter has always identified with the female gender from a very early age. Many of

Peter's friends and playmates have been girls. He has always preferred playing with dolls and girl things. Whenever we are home, he has usually been dressed up in girls' clothes, shoes, wigs, etc. This is not about dress up or imaginative playtime, this is the reality of Peter living a life that is comfortable and natural.

This summer, Peter has transitioned from living as a boy to living as a girl. Our family and friends now call Peter by the name Melissa. As loving and supporting parents, we have chosen to show our unconditional love for our child by assuring Melissa that she will not be destined to a life of misery. We will do everything possible to make Melissa's life as normal and happy as possible. Today we sadly recall those many nights Melissa couldn't fall asleep at bedtime because she had a lot of worries and was asking "why did God make me a boy, I want to be a girl!" Imagine living the first 10 years of your life pretending to be someone that you are not.

Since Melissa courageously decided to be the person she truly is, she is a much happier child. She loves to laugh and play, sing and dance! We have the support of family, friends, neighbors, doctors and therapists. Our family is very blessed in that respect. (Our local school) has been very helpful and supportive! It's not easy to be different! God has blessed us with this wonderful little person, but at the same time, God has given our family some unique challenges. After all, of all the challenges a parent might expect to face one day, gender identity probably wouldn't be on the list.

We have worked with the school administration to ensure a smooth transition. Plans are in place to work through normal daily occurrences and activities like bathrooms, gym class, locker rooms, etc.... These practices may be new to town, but are common in many other schools nationwide.

We understand there will inevitably be questions from the students and parents. It's important that everyone keep an open mind to accept that knowledge is power. With this knowledge we can all make sure that our transgender child can successfully integrate into a normal school experience. We ask for your support in this transition. For any of you that may have questions or confusion, please contact us directly or contact the school psychologist. For those of you interested in reading more on this topic, there is a very informative book titled "The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals" by Stephanie A.

Brill.

Sincerely,

Mark and Linda

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20130901/News/130839974>

The Huffington Post | By [Cavan Sieczkowski](#) | 12/02/2014

All birth announcements are meant to be celebrated, but an ad written by one Australia mom for her 19-year-old transgender son is particularly special.

Yolanda Bogert, of Jimboomba, recently took out an ad in the birth section of [Australia's Courier-Mail newspaper](#) for her son, Kai, who came out to her as transgender last week. The ad was a combination retraction, announcement and symbol of love.



Transgender Children & Youth: Talking to Grandparents and Other Adult Family Members

From Human Rights Campaign Website

Talking to older adults about your child's gender identity or transition can be some of the more difficult conversations parents of transgender children face.

Grandparents and other older relatives and friends often have more conservative ideas about gender roles, and thus may have a more difficult time understanding or accepting your child's transgender or gender-expansive identity.

Being an advocate for your child can be difficult when the person you are defending them against is your own family, so first and foremost, try to approach these initial conversations with patience and compassion, rather than being confrontational or defensive.

Situations to Prepare For:

- Hard time with terminology – People who are not familiar with transgender people or concerns may have a steeper learning curve when it comes to terminology and pronoun use. They may be inclined to use terms that are now considered offensive or derogatory because those terms are more familiar to them, and it may take more time for them to understand the importance of preferred gender pronouns. As long as it's clear that they are trying to change, be patient but firm in correcting their terminology and pronoun use.
- Holidays, family gatherings, buying presents – If your child's transition or gender-expansive expression is something new, it's best to talk to your extended family before any family gatherings to avoid having potentially contentious conversations about your child's gender identity while your child is present. If you know a family gathering is coming up, talk to family members one-on-one ahead of time and explain your child's transition and ask that any new names and pronouns be respected. Cultivate allies among your family members and let them help you facilitate conversations that you anticipate being difficult. For holidays, remind grandparents and other family members to give your child clothing that affirms their gender identity, or if that's a source of discomfort, give a gender neutral present like books, science kits or art supplies.
- Family members who are determined not to accept your child's identity – Unfortunately, there is often a family member who cannot accept your child's gender identity. This lack of acceptance can include deliberate misgendering of your child, attempts to "change" your child and make them conform to their

gender assigned at birth, to microaggressions that young children might not even notice. In these situations, you have to determine what is best for your child, even if that means keeping your child from having a relationship with that family member. Often people who are initially reluctant to accept LGBTQ people eventually change their minds, so the best practice is to keep supporting and loving your transgender child and hope that others come around.

Talking Points for Conversations With Family Members:

- This is the same child you have known and loved, just a different gender – it's often helpful to be able to [explain the basics of things like gender dysphoria and the difference between sex and gender](#) to show that this is something you have educated yourself about and understand thoroughly.
- My child is happy living as their affirmed gender – Parents of children who have transitioned and are living openly as their affirmed gender often report that their child seems significantly happier than before transitioning. If that is the case with your child, it's worth pointing out that you're being a supportive parent and that your child is happier because of your support.

There is not anything “wrong” with my child or my parenting – Being transgender is not a phase, and trying to dismiss it as such can be harmful during a time when your child most needs support and validation. Trying to change your child's gender identity – either by denial, punishment, reparative therapy or any other tactic – is not only ineffective; it is dangerous and can do permanent damage to your child's mental health. [So-called “reparative” or “conversion” therapies](#), which are typically faith-based, have been uniformly condemned as psychologically harmful by the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and numerous similar professional organizations.

<http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/transgender-children-and-youth-talking-to-grandparents-and-other-adult-fami>

Talking with Extended Family and Friends

It can be nerve-wracking and scary to bring up the topic of our child's gender with family and friends. Even if our closest friends and immediate family members are aware of our child's gender expression and identity, it may be hard to see people that didn't previously know about our child's gender, and may not be supportive.

There is not just one way to deal with this situation, of course, as every family and group of friends are different. Remember that family members and friends are at different places in their understanding of gender identity and gender expression; recognize that while we've had some time to think about this (and think about it, and think about it...), this may be completely new to them, as it was to us at some point in time. They also aren't around our children as much as we are, and may not see what we see in our kids.

One strategy is to call or write to family and friends before seeing them. Let them know about your child's gender and that you are fully supportive of your child. Of course, it's natural for them to have questions; let them know they are welcome to ask you anything in private, but they should not talk about it in front of your child. Let them know that regardless of their personal feelings about your child's gender and/or your parenting choices, that you expect them to be kind and respectful to your child. We have collected [some sample letters that parents/caregivers](#) have sent to family members and friends to assist you in this communication.

Spend some time identifying your expectations, then be very explicit about what you are requesting of them. For example, you'd like them to use your child's preferred pronoun and name; you'd like them to avoid negative comments about their hair, clothes, toys, etc. If presents are being exchanged, you'd like them to give what your child actually wants to play with and not what they think your child should play with.

Remind your family and friends that your child is more than just their gender and they should see and relate to your whole child. If they are nervous, tell them what your child's current interests are so they will have some safe topics to discuss. Direct them to the Gender Spectrum website, or offer some articles or books for them to read so they can learn more about gender-expansive kids. [The Transgender Child](#) is a good primer on the topic. [Share articles that explain gender](#) and kids so you don't have to be the expert.

The more you learn to speak with confidence and pride about your child, the easier it will be for others to accept your child and your parenting. People look to you for their lead on how to respond or react to your child. You have nothing to apologize or be ashamed about. Remember, it's your job to take care of your child, not the needs of other adults. A desire to help other people feel comfortable is natural. Yet if you find yourself doing so by denying or dismissing your child's authentic self, it can be quite hurtful. For example, if an acquaintance or new person you meet asks about your dress-wearing boy, rather than making comments such as, "Oh yes, that is my son. He's just pretending to be a princess today," consider simply saying,

“Yes, that’s my son,” or even “Isn’t it great that he’s not afraid to be himself.” Your priority is your child’s well-being.

<https://www.genderspectrum.org/explore-topics/parenting-and-family/>

Transitioning or gender reassignment is a major turning point and new beginning. Share the news that he is now she or she is now he. Your friends and family will want to know of your transition, and our quality announcement cards are the perfect way to share the news.

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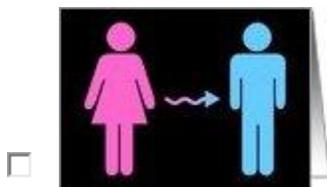
www.greetingcarduniverse.com

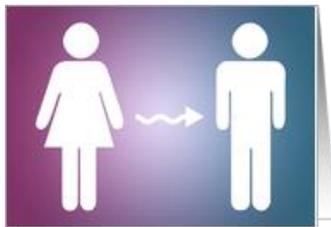
M-F 8am to 6pm PST.

You can create your own inside message or use ours.

Card Categories

Gender Reassignment / Sex Change (24)





Resources for Transgender Teens and their Parents

Andrews, Arin. *Some Assembly Required: The Not So Secret Life of a Transgender Teen*.

Beam, Cris. *I Am J*.

Brill, Stephanie and Rachel Pepper. *The Transgender Child, a Handbook for Families and Professionals*.

Cronn-Mills, Kristin. *Beautiful Music for Ugly Children*.

Duron, Lori. *Raising My Rainbow*.

Erickson-Schroth, Laura. *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community*.

Ewert, Mark and Rex Ray. *10,000 Dresses*.

Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta—Transgender Teens Speak Out*

Pepper, Rachel. *Transitions of the Heart*.

Peters, Julianne. *Luna*.

Teich, Nicholas. *Transgender 101*.

Wittlinger, Ellen. *Parrotfish*.

Grace is Gone: Grieving a Child Who Is Still Alive

By [Mary Moss](#) on April 7, 2013 at 4:41 PM

My daughter, Grace passed away in September 2010. There wasn't an obituary. There wasn't a funeral. There wasn't a casket or even a body to put in one. No one sent me sympathy cards. No one brought me casseroles. This wasn't because no one cared; it was because my child is still alive.

When my daughter came out to me as transgender I was driven by fear. I feared my child would kill herself if she couldn't begin her transition from my daughter to my son. That fear and longing to save my child overtook anything else. I forged into a new life and helped her transition. I didn't expect to feel such grief. C.S. Lewis said: "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear."

I had to put away all of the girl pictures. I had to get rid of any sign that Grace ever existed. I had to remember to call my child the name that she chose: Chris. I had to replace "she" with "he". I had to start calling who I thought was my daughter my son.

I distinctly remember crying one Saturday afternoon in bed mourning the loss of my daughter. Grace came in and hugged me and said, "Mom, if this is going to be so hard for you I won't do it." I looked in her eyes and saw such fear. I knew in her heart she needed to transition to alleviate her pain. She was willing to keep going through that pain to spare me pain. I thought what a great kid I had and how her heart and soul were what I loved not her gender. I then said, "No, I know you need to do this and I'll be ok just give me time." She looked so relieved and said "Thanks, mom and we'll get you help too."

Grace slept in bed with me that night. When we awoke I found her staring at me so pensively. I said, "What are you thinking about?" She said, "You have a really big nose." I burst out laughing and so did she. She and I had always used humor to get through life, and I needed it now more than ever. I realized that my child would be the same honest, wisecracking kid I grew to know and love no matter what the gender. I knew in my heart we would both be ok.

My grief lessened over time as I saw my child blossom when transitioning to my son, Chris. He became happier and had a confidence I hadn't ever seen. He and I formed a closeness that I hadn't anticipated.

I need parents out there of transgender children to know they are not alone. They need to know feeling grief is a very real and normal part of the process. They need to know that it really does get much better.

Grace is gone but Chris is very much alive. I am grateful every day that he is my son, and that I was lucky enough to be chosen to be his mom. It is an honor that I cherish.

There wasn't an obituary. Instead, there was a birth announcement. I gave birth to my child again but this time in the correct gender.

Mary J. Moss

Single mom to a terrific 14 year old boy who just happens to be transgender
<http://gendersociety.com/forums/topic/9299/grace-is-gone-grieving-a-child>

From Mary:

'I moderate a private Facebook group for parents/family of transgender kids (young and grown) we now have 170 members across the whole world. It's a very supportive group that has helped me immensely. You can feel free to send me an email at transparentmary@gmail.com to request to join our group.'

The Five Stages of Grieving Loss of a Son (Daughter)

Stage		In Terms of Transgender Experience
Denial	It can't really be happening.	This is just a phase; it will pass.
Anger	Anger at the child, anger at oneself	It is so selfish of her to make the family through this. I am so mad at myself for happen.
Bargaining	God, I promise if you intervene and let her live, I will donate lots of money to the church.	Why can't you just be a lesbian instead transgender. I will be OK with that.
Depression/Sadness	Tears, sadness, feelings of unfairness	Things will never be the same. My wish child won't come true now. I miss my li
Acceptance & Resolution	Realizing you will survive, that you did not cause this, that things will get better	Things will get better for my child and m the same loving child I had before, just v different label. Together we will get thro will provide my child with the help he n transition to who he really is. Look how better he is doing! It will all be OK.

SECTION 2 LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Social Security

Administration FAQs

<https://faq.ssa.gov/link/portal/34011/34019/Article/2856/How-do-160-I-change-my-160-gender-on-160-Social-Security-s-records>

How do I change my gender on Social Security's records?

To change your gender on Social Security's records:

Step 1: Gather documents proving your:

- Identity

We can accept only certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information (date of birth or age) and, preferably, a recent photograph. For example, as proof of identity Social Security must see your

- - U.S. driver's license;
 - State-issued non-driver identification card; or
 - U.S. passport.

If you don't have one of these specific documents, or you can't get a replacement for one of them within 10 days, we'll ask to see other documents, including

- - Employee identification card;
 - School identification card;
 - Health insurance card (not a Medicare card); or
 - U.S. military identification card.

- Gender

We'll need to see a

- - Full-validity, 10-year U.S. passport showing the new gender;
 - State-issued amended birth certificate showing the new gender;
 - Court order directing legal recognition of change of gender; or

- Medical certification of appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition in the form of an original letter from a licensed physician.

The document must have enough biographical data (e.g., name and date of birth) to clearly identify you.

- U.S. citizenship

If you haven't established your citizenship with us, and you were born in the US, we need to see proof of U.S citizenship. We can only accept certain documents as proof of U.S. citizenship. These documents include

- - U.S. birth certificate; or
 - U.S. passport.

If you haven't established your citizenship with us, and you are foreign-born, we need to see proof of U.S. citizenship. We can only accept certain documents as proof of U.S. citizenship. These documents include:

- - U.S. passport
 - Certificate of Naturalization (N-550/N-570)
 - Certificate of Citizenship (N-560/N-561)
 - Certification of Report of Birth (DS-1350)
 - Consular Report of Birth Abroad (FS-240), CRBA
- Immigration status (if you aren't a U.S. citizen).

To prove your U.S. immigration status, you must show us your

- Current U.S. immigration document, such as Form I-551 (Lawful Permanent Resident Card, Machine Readable Immigrant Visa) with your unexpired foreign passport;
- I-766 (Employment Authorization Document, EAD, work permit); or
- I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) or admission stamp in the unexpired foreign passport.

If you're an F-1 or M-1 student, you also must show us your I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status).

If you're a J-1 or J-2 exchange visitor, you must show us your DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status).

Step 2: Complete an [Application for a Social Security Card](#).

Step 3: Take or mail your completed application and documents to your [local Social Security office or your local Social Security Card Center](#).

All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We can't accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents. We'll return any documents you mail to us, along with a receipt.

Introduction - Name change for Minors in PA

http://www.nwls.org/Name_ChangeMinors.htm

Parents often wish to change their children's names when they make a new start in life. A name change for a child is simple, if the birth certificate was issued in Pennsylvania and both biological or adoptive parents consent to the change of name. Both of the biological parents must complete and sign the form on the back of their child's birth certificate. A legible copy of one parent's valid government issued photo ID must be included with the correction request. There is a \$4 fee if the original (incorrect) birth certificate is returned with your request. This fee will be waived for members of the armed forces. The form is then mailed to the Department of Vital Statistics. The Department of Vital Statistics will send the parents a new birth certificate containing the child's new name.

Please note that Social Security will not change your child's name on his or her Social Security card unless you get a court order to change his or her name or you can show Social Security two acceptable forms of identification for the child, one in the child's previous name and one in the name on the new birth certificate. Some acceptable forms of identification include: a passport, school identification card, health insurance card and state issued identification card. It is very important that your child's name be the same on his or her birth certificate as on his or her Social Security card as it may otherwise be difficult in the future for your child to get a driver's license, passport or state issued identification card.

More information on changing a child's name on a Pennsylvania birth certificate may be found on the Internet at:

www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/site/default.asp A petition for a change of name for a child, where the other parent will not consent, should not be attempted without the advice of an attorney, because a petition must be filed in court. An attorney will help you find out if the Court is likely to grant a name

change under the particular circumstances of your case. The following general rules apply to such petitions.

- **The Judicial Standard** for changing the name of a child is "the best interest of the child." A parent or guardian who is seeking to change the name of a child must prove that the change is in the best interest of the child. The following matters are usually considered by the Court in determining whether to grant a petition to change a child's name:
- **The natural bond between parent and child.** A change of name may affect the relationship between a parent and child.

Most Courts find it in "best interest of the child" to maintain the link between parent and child. The Court will look at the parent's history of visitation with the child, whether child support payments have been maintained, and whether the parent has been consistently involved in the child's life. The Court must also consider the ties between the child and the parent's extended family.

- **The social impact or respect afforded a particular name in the community.** A name change may be granted by the Court to protect a child from the bad reputation of a biological parent in the community. The link between the parent and child may cause embarrassment or problems for the child in school and the community. For example, a name change may be granted where a parent has committed a notorious crime in the community and the child suffers harassment because of bearing his or her parents' surname.
- **The age and ability of the child to understand the significance of changing his or her name.** A Court is reluctant to change the name of a child when it fears that the petitioning parent is motivated by self interest. Children who are involved in bitter divorces or custody battles are often influenced by parents. The Court may look to the child to figure out whether the child understands the impact of changing his or her name. A young child will most likely not be able to understand what it will mean to change his or her name. Of course, a teenager can probably express his or her desire and understanding of the impact of the name change to a greater degree. The Court will decide how much weight to give to the desires of the child.

If you want to do a legal name change, but do not qualify or cannot do a free legal name change with Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund, below is all of the information you will need to complete your legal name change:

1. Visit a [PA State Troopers location](#) to get your fingerprints completed (Be sure that the fingerprint card says "Name Change" on the right-hand corner)
2. If you are low-income and plan to "[Petition to Proceed in Forma Pauperis \(IFP\)](#)", complete this before starting the name change process.
3. File the [name change petition](#) and [civil cover sheet](#) with the Department of Court Records, Civil/Family Division at the City-County Building (414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219): Be sure to bring the fingerprint card, a check or money order for filing fees, which are \$131, and 2 stamped envelopes.
4. Next, presuming you have no criminal background, within roughly 14 days, you will receive a letter stating no criminal background. Go back to the City-County Building with that letter to get court date (about 30-60 days later).
5. After you schedule your court hearing, you will be required to do two newspaper advertisements and a judgement search, first through the Common Pleas Court and second through Family Court. (You can petition the court not to require you to publish your name in a newspaper if you feel it would put you in danger.)
6. On the day of the court hearing, be sure to arrive early so you can meet your court buddy, give the clerk your paperwork for your file, and/or ask the clerk to not call you by your birth name.
7. The judge will ask you a few minor questions and hopefully you will be good to go.
8. Take the signed petition with you so you can go downstairs and get officially stamped copies, \$10 each.
9. Then the real fun begins changing your name everywhere else. Social security, banks, birth certificate, credit cards, work, insurance, etc!

Legal Documents:

[Petition for Change of Name](#)

[Civil Cover Sheet](#)

[Motion To Proceed IN FORMA PAUPERIS](#) (If you are considered to be low-income, you may request to "Petition to Proceed In Forma Pauperis (IFP)" which asks the court to waive filing and other fees to include the requirement to advertise your name change in a newspaper. This must be done BEFORE you begin the actual steps of changing your name).

- "I feel that the publication of this information will lead to employment discrimination."
- "With the most recent attack against the trans* community, I believe that by publishing my name change it will put my life in danger."
- "I feel that the publication of this information will lead to housing discrimination and harassment due to the lack of state and federal laws protecting trans* person from being fired or refused a job on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity."

Provided by Garden of Peace Project - Pittsburgh

www.palawhelp.org and search for *Changing Your Name*

U.S. Department of State

Gender Reassignment Process for Changing Passport

If you are in the process of or have completed gender reassignment, please note that you must apply using the [DS-11](#). Your supporting documentation should include the following, **in addition** to the normally required documents:

- ID that resembles your current appearance
- Passport photo that resembles your current appearance
- A physician certificate that validates whether your gender transition is either [in process](#) or [complete](#) (required if you would like your passport issued in your new gender)
- Proof of legal name change (if applicable).

If a physician certifies that your transition is complete, you are eligible for a full validity ten-year passport. The signed original statement from the attending medical physician must be on office letterhead and include:

- Physician's full name
- Medical license or certificate number
- Issuing state or other jurisdiction of medical license/certificate
- Address and telephone number of the physician
- Language stating that he or she is your attending physician and that he or she has a doctor/patient relationship with you

- Language stating you have had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition to the new gender (male or female)
- Language stating “I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the forgoing is true and correct”

If a physician certifies that your transition is in process, you are eligible for a limited validity two-year passport. The signed original statement from the attending medical physician must be on office letterhead and include:

- Physician’s full name
- Medical license or certificate number
- Issuing state or other jurisdiction of medical license/certificate

A limited passport book can be extended to the full ten-year validity book with no additional fee by submitting [Form DS-5504](#) within two-years of the passport issue date.

Example Certification from Attending Physician:

(Attending Physician’s Official Letterhead)

I, (physician’s full name), (physician’s medical license or certificate number), (issuing State of medical license/certificate), am the attending physician of (name of patient), with whom I have a doctor/patient relationship.

(Name of patient) has had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition to the new gender (specify new gender male or female).

Or

(Name of patient) is in the process of gender transition to the new gender (specify new gender male or female).

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the

forgoing is true and correct.

Signature of Physician

Typed Name of Physician

Date

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/information/gender.html>

talking to your child's school to talk about accommodating them as transgender young people but will go into greater detail this time. Here is a link to a 68-page document the National Education Association shared with schools last August on the subject.

<http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf>

Devin Browne from Pittsburgh City Schools will be joining us to talk about how parents and their child's schools can work together to make schools welcoming and accommodating for transgender young people. Read more about Devin and the transgender policy at Brashear High School in this article:

<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/education/2015/08/10/Brashear-s-transgender-policy-inspires-district-action/stories/201508070023>

BTW- there was an article in today's PG about Brashear's transgender policy being adopted by the entire Pittsburgh Public schools. Devin Browne was interviewed for the article. Hopefully this will spark a positive trend in the region.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/education/2016/04/10/Pittsburgh-Public-Schools-to-unveil-transgender-policy/stories/201604100117>

[Dispelling Myths, Misconceptions and Lies About Gender-Nonconforming Children](#)

Recently, a video about a transgender child in California named Ryland Whittington went viral. It is beautiful and moving and shows the power of unconditional parental love.

Read the entire article here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brynn-tannehill/dispelling-myths-misconceptions-and-lies-about-gender-nonconforming-children_b_5472189.html

information about changing passport gender markers and Pa. drivers license and State I.D. gender information. Also, someone brought up traveling as a transgender person and TSA guidelines for dealing with transgender travelers.

Ann

TSA Guidelines for Transgender Travelers:

<https://www.tsa.gov/transgender-passengers>

National Center for Transgender Equality - Know Your Rights – Airport Security:

<http://www.transequality.org/know-your-rights/airport-security>

Gender change on Pennsylvania driver's license or State I.D. card:

<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Public/DVSPubsForms/BDL/BDL%20Form/DL-32.pdf>

Gender change on U.S. passport for gender reassignment applicants with sample letter for your physician to prepare:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/information/gender.html>

this information about a very private Facebook group for families of transgender children. New members are added after a screening process to ensure privacy and legitimacy of the request to join.

Article today on Yahoo:

http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-0516-transgender-student-20160513-snap-htmlstory.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+latimes%2Fsports%2Fbasketball%2Fnba%2Fclippers+%28L.A.+Times+-+Clippers%29

This is the link/Facebook page for your email list. Professionals can share it with their clients too. Everything I've seen it's been a very good and active group. Parents share their personal stories, ask for feedback and share resources and information:

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/217511945247094>

This is not the group itself but the "front door" that then leads to the screening process (share a picture of your Trans child and your story to ensure you're legitimate). Then you are added to the secret group by Jon. Regarding privacy, due to it being a "secret group," no ones other Facebook friends can see that they're a member of this group, no one can see your posts or your comments - they are all invisible even to your "friends." It's been really nice to meet a wide range of parents at different ages and stages. There are apparently some other teen and young adult groups too that are also private. A teen peer group has been mentioned. Also a young adult Autism and Trans group was recently added.

When the Kid Becomes the Teacher on What It Means To Be Transgender:

http://www.npr.org/2016/06/01/480309305/when-the-kid-becomes-the-teacher-on-what-it-means-to-be-transgender?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20160601

and

Transgender Students and School Bathrooms - Frequently Asked Questions

[Transgender Students and School Bathrooms](#)

Inspirational interview with transgender teen Jazz Jennings:

[undefined/katiecouric/transgender-activist-jazz-jennings-on-her-teen-years-her-new-book-and-equality-202321316.html?soc_src=mail&soc_trk=ma]Transgender advocate Jazz Jennings on her teen years, her new book and equality

[undefined/katiecouric/transgender-activist-jazz-jennings-on-her-teen-years-her-new-book-and-equality-202321316.html?soc_src=mail&soc_trk=ma]

It is an inspirational TED talk by Nicole Maines, a young transgender woman.

[Transgender: You're Part of the Story | Nicole Maines | TEDxSMCC](#)

I from The Washington Post. Another challenge for transgender people: Choosing a new name <http://wapo.st/2anlile>

Studio Raw is a hair salon and spa on Babcock Blvd. in the North Hills that is LGBT and especially transgender friendly. Call them at 412-367-2444.

For an appointment with Gender Services at Children's Hospital's Adolescent and Young Adult Health (**CAYAH**), call 412-692-7618 and ask specifically for an appointment for "gender care." Providers most frequently seeing patients for gender care are Nurse Practitioner Joanne Goodall, Psychologist Dr. Dana Rofey, and Physician Dr. Gerald Montano.

Fathers wishing to talk with another father about their transgender or gender variant child can call my husband **Gabe Aya** at **724-766-0955**.

Books frequently recommended for parents who want to learn more about gender variance:

The Transgender Child by Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper

Gender Born, Gender Made by Dr. Diane Ehrensaft.

The Gender Creative Child by Dr. Diane Ehrensaft

Transgender 101 by Nicholas Teich, Director of Camp

Pa. Department of Health, Division of Vital Records has a newly-issued policy (August, 2016) that permits parents of under-18 transgender children to correct not only the name but also the gender of their child if both parents consent. If you are at that point in your child's journey, contact one of the following offices:

Main Office:

Division of Vital Records
Room 401 Central Building
101 South Mercer St.
New Castle, PA 16101
724-656-3100

Allegheny County Branch, Division of Vital Records:
Allegheny County Clerk
414 Grant St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 350-4188

Follow this link for more information:

[Birth Certificates](#)

Binding:

<http://www.ftmguide.org/binding.html>

FTM passing tips:

<http://www.ftmpassingtips.com/passing.html>

Binders and hip and butt trimmer briefs for FTM:

<http://www.underworks.com/>

Genital hiding gaff panties for MTF:

gaffpanty.com

GLCC (Gay and Lesbian Community Center) of Pittsburgh

GLCC Youth Drop In

Youth drop in is for GLBT and allied youth 14-18 years old and older Games, conversation and networking in a safe space for GLBT youth.

When	Fri Oct 9, 2015 7pm – 10pm Eastern Time
Where	Main Conference Room

Another event held at GLCC but sponsored by Persad Center:

PERSAD'S After School Program is a place for LGBTQ youth to meet up with friends, meet new people, decompress after school, get help with their homework, and talk with other youth and youth leaders about their lives. Held at the Pittsburgh Gay and Lesbian Community Center (210 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA) on Tuesday and Thursdays from 3:30-7:30pm, the program is free and open to just drop in. For more information, contact Lyndsey Sicker at lsickler@persadcenter.org or 412-441-9786 ext. 220