GENDER AFFIRMING CARE
• Is a respectful approach to supporting trans and gender diverse children, youth, families and colleagues.
• Enhances and improves mental health outcomes when provided by caring adults inside and outside of the home.
• Is widely supported by trans and gender diverse communities, professional organizations and experts in the field.
• States that transgender identities and diverse expressions are NOT a mental health disorder.
• Supports that variations in expression are a normal part of human diversity and are impacted by biology, development, socialization and culture.
• Addresses mental health concerns for trans and gender diverse individuals most often stem from stigma, negative experiences and transphobia.

CISSEXISM OR CISNORMATIVITY ASSUMES THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE CISGENDER AND THAT IS THE “NORM”
It can create systemic prejudice that may be unintentional or unrecognized by people or organizations responsible.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:
• Be specific and avoid equating gender identity with body parts
• Consider diversity of families – not all have “mom and dad”
• Use gender neutral terms: “partner” instead of “husband/wife” or “child/youth” instead of “son/boy/daughter/girl”
• Include gender diverse characters in books, stories, resources
• Change approach to separating children by gender as this is difficult for diverse folks to navigate
• Maintain confidentiality – do not “out” people without their consent. This could be a safety issue if not all caregivers are supportive
• Intervene when you hear inappropriate comments (interrupt, question, educate, echo)

BEING AFFIRMING
IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL ORGANIZATIONS TO BE SAFE, WELCOMING, AND AFFIRMING FOR PEOPLE OF ALL GENDER IDENTITIES AND EXPRESSIONS.

CHANGING SOCIAL CLIMATE
• More access to information and open discussion about transgender identities in mainstream and social media helps many people to identify their experience.
• Changing social norms may make it easier and safer for some people to come out.
• For many people it is unsafe or less safe with the increase in hateful rhetoric, laws etc.

HOW TO BE AFFIRMING
• Listen to children and support them to feel safe and comfortable expressing their needs
• Encourage a supportive family environment given a child’s positive self esteem is better achieved this way
• Dispel myths and biases about gender diversity
• Encourage caregivers to reflect and be aware of their own biases and adjust over time the words they use (children are listening)
• Support individuals to feel comfortable and welcome in all spaces
• Acknowledge that transition may be a fluid process that can change and adjust over time
• Support and facilitate communication and problem solving when challenges arise