

Gender Spectrum has released a landmark publication outlining the first-ever comprehensive principles for gender-inclusive puberty and health education (PHE). These principles, endorsed by six leading national PHE organizations, are designed to affirm and recognize all students so they can see themselves reflected in their classrooms and learn knowledge and skills associated with healthy behaviors.

On March 12 we held a webinar for educators on understanding and implementing the principles — the recording of the webinar is now available, [enter your information here](#) to view the webinar.

If you would like to help us bring gender-inclusive puberty education to schools across the country, please [click here](#) and donate today!

You can download the publication “Principles for Gender-Inclusive Puberty and Health Education” [here](#).

Read the Executive Summary [here](#).

Read the press release [here](#).

We have a wealth of resources with background and tools you can use to implement the principles. Check our [Resources Page](#) to see what’s new.

Gender-inclusive PHE benefits all students because it recognizes and affirms all students. All young people have a right to accurate information to make healthy, informed decisions about their bodies and their relationships. Beyond their own unique development, this includes understanding the diversity of human experiences they will encounter as adults. Without access to gender-inclusive PHE, many students are left to believe that they are alone as they struggle to make sense of rapidly changing bodies and feelings. Nowhere is this potential for feeling alone and invisible more prevalent than among Transgender and other gender expansive students. But research shows that support for transgender students by schools and families is critical for their well-being. The power of schools to make a difference in young people’s lives by reflecting their experiences through curriculum and other supportive strategies cannot be overstated. Simply stated, gender-inclusive PHE is life-affirming for all students, and life-saving for some.

Gender Spectrum developed the principles for inclusive puberty and health education with valuable contributions from a diverse group of organizations that are recognized for their commitment to young people, including Advocates for Youth, Answer, GLSEN, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, Planned Parenthood and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). While the document is primarily intended for puberty educators, the concepts can be helpful for parents, families and young people in understanding and discussing gender, puberty and health.



Find FAQs for educators [here](#)



Find FAQs for parents and families [here](#)



Find FAQs for youth [here](#)

Our partners have valuable information and resources on PHE for all students. Their websites are:

- [Advocates for Youth](#)
- [Answer](#)
- [GLSEN](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign Foundation](#)
- [Planned Parenthood](#)
- [SIECUS](#)



Educators

In addition to the publication, educators, school administrators, and other educational leaders may have questions or need more resources and support. Gender Spectrum offers professional development for educators and others who work with children, youth and families. Contact us [here](#) to learn about our professional development services. You can learn more about gender inclusion in schools [here](#) and order our documentary film “Creating Gender Inclusive Schools” [here](#). We also have a wealth of resources on understanding gender, our “gender support plan” for schools, our “Bathroom FAQs,” and many more resources [here](#). You can stay updated on our work with professionals by subscribing to our mailing list [here](#).

Principles of Gender-Inclusive Puberty and Health Education: FAQs for Educators

Q: What’s the purpose of these principles?

By using the principles of gender-inclusive puberty and health education (PHE) in your classroom, you will help all students get foundational knowledge about gender, learn accurate information about gender and its relationship to human growth and development, and understand the diversity of pathways to adulthood and families. With a few adaptations to your current curriculum, these principles will help you create a classroom environment that affirms all students’ journeys through puberty, including transgender and Gender-expansive students who can suffer from serious health risks if they are marginalized in school. The principles are life-affirming for all students, and life-saving for some.

Q: Do I need to learn a new curriculum?

No. Your current PHE curriculum can be adapted to include the principles of gender-inclusion. Our guide includes suggested ways to adapt your language and approach to make your current curriculum inclusive.

Q: Will this meet my state’s requirements?

Yes. Incorporating the principles into your current curriculum will insure that you remain compliant with state or local guidelines.

Q: I’d like to adopt the principles but I’m not sure my administration will support me. What can I do?

Some organizations may be ready to adopt the principles immediately; others may want more background and support. Gender Spectrum can help: we have worked with hundreds of school districts, state education departments, and other educational and youth-serving organizations to build gender-inclusive environments. We have found that a great place to start is simply to ask, “How is our school accounting for the unique gender of all students?” [Contact us](#) for more information about our professional development work and how we can support you to make the case for this critical approach to PHE.

Q: I’m already teaching comprehensive puberty ed, do I still need these principles?

Yes. Very few current PHE curricula include a comprehensive approach to gender and gender-inclusion. Curricula that include a section on gender, for example, may still use unnecessarily gendered language or terms in other lessons. We recommend that educators review their current curriculum thoroughly with the principles of gender-inclusion in mind. We expect it will be helpful for determining where your current curriculum can be adjusted and how you can make adaptations that insure all students feel safe, seen and supported in your classroom.

Q: I already cover lesbian and gay sexuality in my classes, isn't that enough?

No. Binary notions of gender still frame many materials that reference LGBTQ people. Sexuality and gender are distinct and both need to be accounted for to insure that classrooms are inclusive of all students.

Q: What if I don't have any transgender kids in my classroom?

Like each student's journey through puberty, gender is uniquely personal to each of us and gender-inclusive PHE benefits all students. Further, as teachers we can never be sure that we know the Gender identity of every young person in our classrooms. It is virtually certain that you have students who do not conform to the rigid, binary ideas about gender that prevail in our society, and many who feel their experience is somehow off course. Each and every one of these students are supported by a gender-inclusive approach to PHE.

Q: This is new to me - what if I do something wrong and look foolish, or if I make my transgender students feel uneasy?

Gender is evolving rapidly, and much of this is new to all of us! You can tell your students when something is new or uncomfortable for you — they will likely appreciate your openness and willingness to try. If your students use different pronouns or new terms for their gender identities, they can teach you, and help you make the classroom a safe place. The first step is to simply make an effort, and not worry about doing it perfectly. As long as you are clear that your intent is to be welcoming to all students and willing to learn new ideas, your students will follow your lead. What's most important is that you model being open and accepting of experiences and language with which you are unfamiliar.



Parents and Families

Our new publication has valuable information for all parents and family members who are navigating the pre-teen and teenage years, including those who have transgender or gender-diverse children. Gender Spectrum also has a wealth of [information](#) and [resources](#) for parents, [online groups](#) for parents and other family members, parenting videos on our [YouTube channel](#), and much more.

You can stay updated on our work by subscribing to our mailing list [here](#).

Principles of Gender-Inclusive Puberty and Health Education: FAQs for Parents

Q: What's the purpose of these principles?

Using these principles, your child's teachers can make their puberty and health education (PHE) classes more inclusive and welcoming to all students. For parents, this document can give you information about today's evolving understandings of gender and inform conversations with your child about puberty and health.

Q: My child is Cisgender and straight, why does my child need gender-inclusive puberty ed?

Gender is uniquely personal to each of us, so gender-inclusive PHE is for all students. All students benefit from discussions about gender, gender stereotypes, and gender in puberty. Further, regardless of their own gender, students are already surrounded by a diversity of gender and will grow up in an increasingly gender-diverse world. Additionally, information such as knowing that there are many pathways to creating family are important for all students to know, both as a reflection of the families they come from, as well as the family they may want to create in the future. While gender-inclusive puberty and health education is

valuable for all students who need to understand gender and its impacts on health through puberty, it can be especially important for their gender-diverse peers so they also feel supported and welcome in PHE classes.

Q: How can parents use these principles?

As parents, we need to understand gender and today's evolving understandings so we can help our children navigate their gender journeys. The principles of gender-inclusion are intended for educators, but parents may find useful information, tools and language for your conversations with your children. They can also be an important tool for working with your child's school and advocating for a more inclusive PHE program. The principles can help them see what such an approach might look and sound like.

Q: My child's school already has a puberty ed curriculum — can they still use these principles?

Yes. The principles complement any existing PHE curricula and can be adapted without major changes, so your child's school does not need to change its current curriculum.

Q: How can I get my child's school to adopt the principles?

Schools may have varying levels of interest in adopting these principles, so you may have greater success by aiming to start a conversation, and then determining how to proceed. Some schools may be ready to adopt the principles immediately; others may want more background and support. We have found that a great place to start is simply to ask, "How is our school accounting for the unique gender of all students?" Gender Spectrum can help: we have worked with hundreds of school districts, state education departments, and other educational organizations to bring gender-inclusive environments to schools. [Contact us](#) for more information about our work with schools.



Young People

Young people can find valuable information on puberty, health, gender and gender diversity in the publication, and can also find tools and resources that can help your teachers and parents understand the evolving understandings of gender. Gender Spectrum also has a wealth of [information](#) and [resources](#) for youth, [online groups](#) for pre-teens and teens, videos made by and for young people on our [YouTube channel](#), and much more. You can stay updated on our work by subscribing to our mailing list [here](#).

Principles of Gender-Inclusive Puberty and Health Education: FAQs for Youth

Q: What's the purpose of these principles?

Using these principles, your teachers can make their puberty and health education (PHE) classes more inclusive and welcoming to all students. This is valuable for all students, who need to understand gender and its impacts on health through puberty, and can be especially important for transgender and gender-expansive students so they feel supported and welcome in PHE classes.

Q: How can these principles help me and my friends feel more comfortable in puberty ed classes?

You know that puberty is a time of change, but you may not see yourself represented in your

PHE classes. Every journey to adulthood is unique, regardless of gender, and every student deserves to be safe, seen and supported in your classrooms.

Q: How can I get my school to adopt the principles?

Schools may have varying levels of interest in adopting these principles, so you may have greater success by aiming to start a conversation, and then determining how to proceed. Some schools may be ready to adopt the principles immediately; others may want more background and support. Try to find adults in the school community, including parents, teachers, and administrators who can help you create a plan. We have found that a great place to start is simply to ask, “How is our school accounting for the unique gender of all students?” Gender Spectrum can also help: we have worked with hundreds of school districts, state education departments, and other educational organizations to bring gender-inclusive environments to schools. [Contact us](#) for more information about our work with schools.