


QUEERING parenting!





From an early age, parents learn that their kids are each unique in their own way. Mom likes chocolate ice cream and Dad likes vanilla. Joey also likes vanilla, like Dad, and Liz and Mom are chocolate fans. The oldest daughter, Emma, should like chocolate, but instead likes vanilla, like her dad and brother. Mom and Dad can't figure out why, but assume that one day Emma will like chocolate. Mom and Dad are trying to be supportive but are confused as to why she's not "normal!" They think that Emma's life will be easier if she just liked chocolate ice cream. Eventually, Emma's parents realize that Emma doesn't have to be like everyone else.

Just like kids know what foods they like at a young age, many kids also know that they identify differently - even if they don't have the words to describe how they feel. That can be a lot for parents to take in - especially if they are only used to certain ways of living. Parents often dream of their little girl's big wedding to her Prince Charming, or their son bringing home his first girlfriend. These dreams fill up so much space that it can be hard to accept that their kids might be different from their expectations. Kids can pick up on those complicated emotions too, and can't understand the disconnect in their relationship. What can be hard is for parents to learn about their kids identity while finding ways to still be supportive despite their questions. The important thing is to show love rather than mourn lost dreams. Instead, form new ones!



It's okay to ask questions as your kids develop and grow into their identities, but it is important convey unconditional love and support through what can be a difficult time. Kids are more aware than many assume, and will draw back if they feel you do the same. No parent is - and will be - perfect when it comes to coming out. What kids will remember is the effort you put in. They will remember the questions you ask in order to feel closer. They will think of every time you correct yourself when you use the wrong name or pronoun, or talk about your kid's husband or wife instead of their partner. Kids are aware, and will recognize your love and effort, not your mistakes. To grow alongside your kids is a beautiful thing.





RESOURCES



FOR KIDS:



welcomingschools.org

kidshelpline.com.au/teen/issues/lgbtq-ultimate-dictionary

www.genderwheel.com/resources/pride-and-pronouns



FOR PARENTS:



<https://public.oed.com/blog/a-brief-history-of-singular-they>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

<https://stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faq-and-glossary/list-lgbtq-terms>

