ACM 2017

10 Easy Ways to be More LGBTQ-friendly—and Why It Matters

Rob Hadaway – Duluth Children’s Museum – MN
Katie Slivovsky – Chicago Children’s Museum – IL
Theresa Volpe – Author, CCM Advisor, Parent – IL
LGBTQ =

Lesbian
Gay
Bisexual
Transgender
Questioning/Queer
Today:

- Outcomes and Intros
- Why LGBTQ access and inclusion?
- 10 Easy Ways...
  - Activity
  - Small group reflection
  - Assessment Tool: How LGBTQ friendly is my museum?
Outcomes

1. Explore how to *apply what you already know* about young children and customer service to LGBTQ families

2. Demystify a topic that can feel controversial

3. Leave with 10 easy tips and feeling empowered!
Introductions

Who are you?

• Why are you here today?
Katie: Exhibit Development Director
LGBTQ Inclusion founder (2011) and chair (2013-present)
Highlights

• Our all-gender bathroom sign put CCM in the national spotlight
  *Huffington Post, Museum 2.0, Architectural Digest*

• Article for ACM’s Hand to Hand, Jan 2017, “Value of a $27 Sign”

• “10 Easy Ways...” published by AAM’s Center for the Future of Museums
Rob Hadaway

Creative Director and Curator @ Duluth Children’s Museum, Duluth, MN

Masters in American Studies, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia

Former Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Baily Circus Clown
Theresa Volpe
Testifying for marriage equality
First same-sex couple without a life threatening illness to marry in Illinois
How a children’s museum got a nationally-recognized LGBTQ advocate to be an unpaid intern.

stumbled upon the help wanted ad while doing research for a diversity and inclusion program. The ad read, “Intern needed to support Chicago Children’s Museum’s (CCM) initiative to welcome and engage the LGBTQ community. Contribute ideas and develop activities that build awareness and sensitivity to the LGBTQ community. Photograph LGBTQ families on-site to diversify museum’s photo library.”

My first thought, a children’s museum has an initiative for the LGBTQ community? That’s brave.
My next thought: apply for the position.” – Theresa Volpe
Why should children’s museums focus on LGBTQ Inclusion?

A Parent’s Perspective
No one should feel invisible

- Visibility sends a message of inclusion.
- Not seeing your family structure represented says you’re not important.

The White House lit up in rainbow colors was an important image to our family and LGBTQ+ folks.
Letting us know we’re welcome
Kids see the details
Advice I give visitors...

• Call out language, forms, photos, and signage.

• Write a note stating what you don’t like, include a suggestion on how to be inclusive.

• Write a complimentary note.

... in the end, we are consumers.
Support the LGBTQ+ community, we support you.
Traveling Mom
List of LGBTQ+ Family-Friendly Places to Visit

While not every business or attraction in Chicago makes an effort to welcome non-traditional families, there are many that do. From public art to museums to a nontraditional hair salon, here are a few spots that are particularly open to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning people and their families.

FAMILY FRIENDLY LGBTQ CHICAGO
When my kids, my spouse and I head out for the day in Chicago, we want to visit places that treat us like royalty. We're an LGBTQ family. We're special. We want a red carpet rolled out, horns to announce our arrival, and somebody to attend to our slightest need. Not really. We simply want to frequent places that welcome our nontraditional family as much as they entertain our children. Let's face it, we're taking our kids out of our house and into the public so they can make a mess there, not in our family room.

My suggestions for LGBTQ+ families to go when visiting Chicago include:

THE QUEEREST STREET IN CHICAGO

Businesses or attractions don't always make a conscience effort to be welcoming and inclusive for non-traditional families. But there are some common signs that indicate a place is welcoming to LGBTQ+ — lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning — people and their families. Read on to learn key ways public places can be more inclusive.

The Legacy Walk, Photo credit Theresa Volpe
Why should children’s museums focus on LGBTQ Inclusion?

An Early Childhood Perspective
“We know every child benefits when they see themselves and their family configuration represented in the world around them. It’s simply what’s best for kids.”
Healthy Growth & Development

“To develop optimally, children must have their life experiences, feelings and thoughts affirmed and taken seriously.”  *Anti-bias Education*, 2010
“Children’s identities and sense of self are inextricably tied to their families.” Do No Harm, 2010
“The experience of being welcome or unwelcome, visible or invisible begins in early childhood.”

“When children never hear words nor see images that reflect their families or themselves in positive ways, they are being harmed.”

_Do No Harm_, 2010
“LGBT families are pervasively rendered invisible throughout the early childhood field.”

Do No Harm, 2010
"A school needs to be a place for all children, not based on the idea that they are all the same, but that they are all different."
- Loris Malaguzzi
Why should children’s museums focus on LGBTQ Inclusion?

Children’s Perspectives
Young adults reflecting on their childhood experiences:

Brett
Sara
Rick
Renee
10 Easy Ways to be more LGBTQ-friendly
1

Smile and be nice.
Show signs of welcome.
Adrienne Rich:

“When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you’re not in it, there’s a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.”
Use “customer service” with unhappy parents.

At CCM, we handle most complaints the same way:

1) calmly restate the museum policy
2) keep the conversation brief, without brushing people off
3) never engage in debate or add personal statements about the policy
4) let your boss handle it!
Keep in mind...

...not every single person (on staff or parents) has to understand and believe the exact same thing.

- Don’t wait around for total understanding!
- My BZ example: Some zookeepers believe in Creationism...
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Use inclusive images.
This experience is brought to you by the museum’s LGBTQ Inclusion initiative that furthers the museum’s commitment to all families by actively welcoming the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning community.
Sisters
5

Provide LGBTQ family-friendly books
Avoid the gender binary.

☐ Male
☐ Female
Activity
The Genderbread Person

by www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com

Gender Identity

Woman  Genderqueer  Man
Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.

Gender Expression

Feminine  Androgynous  Masculine
Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

Biological Sex

Female  Intersex  Male
Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual  Bisexual  Homosexual
Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.
Transgender Inclusion

- Creative gender exploration - Facilitate it!
- Everyone gets to wear tutus
- Everyone gets to wear tool belts
- All colors are for everyone
- PA Announcements
- Forms
- Gift shop
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Pronouns-- A How To Guide

**Subject:** ____ laughed at the notion of a gender binary.

**Object:** They tried to convince ____ that asexuality does not exist.

**Possessive:** ____ favorite color is unknown.

**Possessive Pronoun:** The pronoun card is ____.

**Reflexive:** ____ think(s) highly of ____.

The pronoun list on the reverse is not an exhaustive list. It is good practice to ask which pronouns a person uses.

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Gift Shop Challenge

Snuggie Tails
soft, cuddly blanket

Perfect for reading a book, watching a movie, playing games, and more!

Wraps You in your Favorite Underwater Character!

Gray Shark
Wraps You in your Favorite Underwater Character!

Pink Mermaid
Wraps You in your Favorite Underwater Character!
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Restrooms as Activism
No child should have to make this decision!
Restrooms as Activism

The Transgender Law Center considers bathroom access to be a significant issue that historically has been a focal point of activism.

From the hard-won victories of the Civil Rights movement and the desegregation of public facilities, to the battles over introducing women’s restrooms in previously all-male spaces such as construction sites in the 1970s, to the struggles of people with disabilities in advocating for accessible restrooms with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, safe, comfortable, and equitable access to bathrooms has long been a contested and controversial topic.

Outreaching to the LGBTQI Community
Pride Festival: A Sign You’re Welcoming!

• Outreach to an underserved community
• Shows that you are open and welcoming to that community
• You reach a Population not only from your city; pride attracts a regional and national audience
• Great marketing opportunities
How do I find the Pride festival committee?

- Pride festival’s website  (Pride + City name)
- “Outfront Minnesota” a list of LGBT orgs
- Universities in your area
- LGBT Community Centers
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Pride

Programming
READY FOR PRIDE!
CCM: Giant rainbow, music, snacks, resources, stories
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Move forward with calm and confidence ... and keep learning!
Resources & National Organizations

- Gender Spectrum
- Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation: Welcoming Schools
- The Trevor Project
- Family Equality Council
- Our Family Coalition
AAM has new guidelines:
In Your Town or State

- Gay Pride Committee
- LGBTQ chamber of commerce or business network/association
- Gay community centers
- University LGBT services.
- University education departments
- Open and affirming churches
- LGBT family services
- **PFLAG** (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
Consider Being a Leader!

Be Comfortable with the fact that what you are doing is showing kids that their family structure and gender creativity have a place in the world.
Assessment

How LGBTQ-friendly is my museum?
Q & A

- What have YOU tried already? What would you like to try?

- What are your hopes? Concerns?

- What resources/support do you need?

- What will you take away from this session?