Transgender-Inclusive Children’s Museums

Rob Hadaway Duluth Children’s Museum
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Transgender & Gender-Expansive Identities

Ames Simmons
Director of Transgender Policy
Key Terms

- **Gender identity**: A person’s deeply held internal sense of being male or female or somewhere else on or outside the gender spectrum.
- **Transgender**: An umbrella term for people whose gender expression is nonconforming and/or whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.
- **Non-binary**: An umbrella term for people who reject the gender binary male vs. female.
- **Sex assigned at birth**: The classification given at birth, usually according to how their outward appearance compares to those typically-appearing.
- **Cisgender**: A term for people whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.
The Gender Spectrum

For folks who experience attraction, gender may or may not be a factor. For when it is a factor, here are some examples.
What is Gender Transition?

- Transition is the process through which a transgender person changes their gender expression (social), legal identity (legal) and/or body (medical) to reflect their gender identity rather than their sex assigned at birth.

- Not every person takes every step – each person’s transition is different and specific to them.
Pronouns

- These are some examples of pronouns:
  - He/him/his
  - She/her/hers
  - They/them/theirs
  - Zie/hir/hirs

- Some people may say:
  - “Just use my name”
  - “Any pronoun is fine”

- Remember a person’s pronouns are subject to change.
When someone asks you to use a different pronoun:

Ooooh....I'll tryyyyy but I'm warning you
I'm going to mess that up so much.

source: www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/
When someone asks you to use a different pronoun:

source: www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/
When someone asks you to use a different pronoun:

'Dont’ What? 'Zie’ isn't a real pronoun. Don't you have something more normal that you use?

But it's not grammatically correct to use 'they' as a singular pronoun.

source: www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/
She - sorry, I mean he - he and I used to...

DO

(if necessary, probably in private)

Hey man, I know I keep messing up this pronoun thing,
I promise I'm doing my best.
Thanks for your patience so far.

source: www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/
Practice makes perfect:

Greg is my friend, I've known him for 7 years. He works in landscaping and he has 3 dogs...

source: www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/
Pronoun Etiquette

When someone asks you what your pronouns are:

Can't you tell??
What are you trying to imply???

source: www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/
In our gift shop, toys are chosen that reflect the inclusiveness and playfulness of our museum and exhibits. A recent vendor that approached our museum had a line of "girl science"- toys included a "bath bomb studio", "kaleidoscope studio", and a "crystal growing studio". This not only disregarded boys and other gender identifying children, but it cornered girls into a very limited category of science. We provided this feedback to the vendor, and unfortunately, the product line remains available and unaltered. -Lauryn Casady Duluth Children's museum
Pronoun Etiquette

When someone asks you what your pronouns are:

I use she/her, thanks for asking! Yourself?

source: www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/
Questions?

there’s no equality without the T

equalitync.org

ames@equalitync.org 770-713-0513
Gender Inclusion in a Small Children’s Museum

Rob Hadaway Duluth Children’s Museum
Let gender be a part of play, no matter what gender a child wants to play.
Showtime with Shane and Robbi
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.”

Danielle Linzer, 2014
Manager of Access and Community Programs
Whitney Museum of American Art
Gender Inclusive Restrooms
Greetings and Forms

Avoid the Binary in forms, applications, surveys:

- Male
- Female

Do you really need to know?

Greetings

- “Hello Boys and Girls” vs. “Hello Friends”
- “Hi Ladies and Gentlemen” vs. “Hey kids let’s play!”
- “Let’s get it together, people!”
See Anything Wrong With These Pictures?
Gender in the Gift Shop
Signs of LGBTQ Inclusion

We respect WOMEN. We value BLACK LIVES.

We stand with our LGBT COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

We stand with IMMIGRANTS and REFUGEES and PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS.

We stand with OUR COMMUNITY.

All are WELCOME HERE.

Peb tos txais txhua tus
欢迎各界人士
Tous sont les bienvenus ici
Waan soo dhaweyneynaa dadka oo dhan
모두 여기에 오신 것을 환영합니다
نحن نرحب بالجميع
Todos son bienvenidos
Mọi người đều được chào đón ở đây.

Sign of LGBTQ Inclusion

Rainbow flag

All gender restroom sign
Designing for Trans Inclusion

Margaret Middleton
Independent Exhibit Designer
Family Inclusive Language

Visitors come to the museum with people they love.

*Family inclusive language* aims to avoid making assumptions about visitors’ identities and their relationships to one another.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>Instead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“parents”</td>
<td>Not everyone accompanying a child is a parent. Grandparents, step-parents, and nannies may not identify as parents. Not all children have a mom and dad.</td>
<td>“grownup”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“mom”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“adult”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“dad”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“caregiver”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“mom and dad”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“son”</td>
<td>The children in someone’s care could be grandchildren, nieces, nephews, godchildren, etc. You may also not want to assume the gender of a child.</td>
<td>“children”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“daughter”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“extended family”</td>
<td>This term is usually meant to include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins but for folks of many cultures this isn’t “extended” family—it’s just family.</td>
<td>“family”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“family resemblance”</td>
<td>We’re conditioned to look for similar features in family members so you may see resemblance where there is none. Many families include step-parents, adoptive parents, or parents who conceived with donated eggs or sperm. Inversely, don’t assume that a child who doesn’t look like their caregiver is adopted—many multi-racial children resemble one parent more than the other.</td>
<td>keep it to yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“members of a household”</td>
<td>Families don’t always live together. For example, families with divorced parents or incarcerated parents.</td>
<td>“family members”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mimi’s Family, 2015

Mimi’s Family
Photography by Matthew Clowrey

What makes your family special?
¿Qué es lo que hace a tu familia especial?
Process
Visitors’ Stories

Tell us about your family.
Cuéntanos sobre tu familia.
Developing BCM’s Training Program

1. Assessment of Training Needs
   a. Observations (normal duties)
   b. Informal interviews
   c. Identify gaps

2. Identify Learning Objectives
   a. Specify observable, measurable outcomes that the learner will be able to
deremonstrate as a result of participating in the training
Developing BCM’s Training Program

3. **Implement training to improve performance**
   
a. Not a “one-time” training: Training series (3 trainings by community partner: September/October/December 2015, Resource distribution to BCM staff, Brown-bag Lunch Series)
   
b. Develop a Community Engagement Plan for Mimi’s Family/Museum
   
c. Compensation for Community Partners (economic development/value other “ways of knowing”/naming experts)
Community Partner Suggestions

1. Having buy-in from leadership is key
2. Continuous integration throughout the institution (Not only on “Family Day”)
3. All staff need to be there
Take Bite Sized Action

1. Goal: What are you trying to plan or focus on? *Be clear in your mission.
2. Rules/Research: What are the laws, policies or rules involved in your work? Gain a knowledge foundation before beginning your project.
3. Allies/Adversaries: Who are your partners and supporters in this project? Are there any unlikely allies you might have overlooked? Research can direct you to allies.
4. Strategic Story: What are some stories that can be powerful or influential in gaining you support? Strategize on how best to present your work or cause.
5. Power Players: Who has the power to make the decision or allow you the thing that you are advocating for? Also, remember we are all power players in our own right?
Large Group Discussion/Q&A