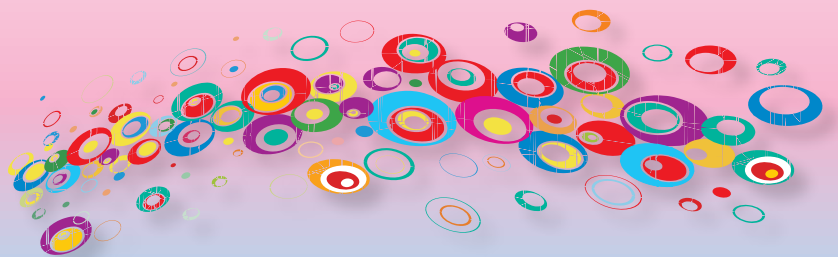




# PEER GROUP START-UP GUIDE

**FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS OF  
TRANS AND GENDER CREATIVE CHILDREN & YOUTH**

**CALL** **Out!**



# Getting Started

When it comes to accessing support and connecting with other parents & caregivers of trans and gender creative children & youth, many people want to **make connections with other caregivers** through face-to-face groups, special events, and online. Ideally, groups are parent-driven, include ongoing in-person connections, offer education opportunities (i.e. guest speakers), and make it possible for trans and gender creative children (and their siblings) to connect and play. **By getting a group started you are responding to a need for community connection expressed by many caregivers and families!**

## Considerations & Questions to Ask Yourself

### Type of Group

- What is the **purpose and intention** behind your group? Support? Advocacy? Education and resource sharing? A fun social space for families to meet? A mixture of all these things?
  - As your group gets started you might find that families are interested in specific discussion topics, and you may want to advertise those topics to community, particularly if you invite guest speakers.
  - **Sometimes your group may want to watch movies or videos, have a picnic, or attend a local event – not all meetings have to be discussions!**
- Running **childcare** for younger ages at the same time is a good way to make the group accessible, but what about for older children and youth? Is it possible for a non-parent to run a fun, age-appropriate, **program for children and youth** at the same time as the parents group?
  - Caregivers have indicated **that an important piece of a caregiver network is having opportunities for their children** to connect with other children with similar experiences, including sibling connections.
- An interesting part of a community-wide parent & caregiver network is bringing a mixture of families, including families with younger children, middle-aged children, and youth, together. **Families of younger children say that they appreciate hearing from families of youth so that they can learn about what to expect.**
  - At the same time, it may be appropriate to ask the group if they would ever like to split up and have **small-group discussions** based on similarity of experiences, for example, dividing based on age-range of children.

## Facilitator and Group Member Roles

### Facilitator qualities:

Good listeners; show care and compassion for people on their journey of acceptance; comfortable managing group dynamics.

- Recommend 2 facilitators, with potential rotation depending on capacity
- Families may be at different points on their journey of acceptance, which may lead to a few voices taking up space or derailing the conversation. Other parent groups have recommended having a counsellor, who can step out to do one-on-one support, co-facilitating the group.
- Other potential member roles: greeter; “buddies” to help new families feel welcomed; someone who emails a follow up with any updates or information.

## Group Logistics

### Promotion

- Contact C.A.L.L. Out! for a digital **copy of a parent support group poster** that you can edit to suit the needs of your community.
  - What contact information can be safely made public? Consider making a group-specific email address

### Places to spread the word:

- **In community:** schools; community and recreation centres; counselling offices; medical centres; LGBT2Q+ positive spaces; service provider spaces; daycares; youth programs; parent resource programs; Native Friendship Centres and Indigenous-specific centres; faith organizations; immigrant and refugee centres; disability resource centres...
- **Online:** Facebook groups; community and/or service provider listserves; local media
- **TransCareBC or other local trans organizations:** Email information about the group and ask that it be posted to the website.

### Who can come?

- Is this group for **parents/caregivers**, or are other family members or allies welcome to attend?
- Is there **childcare**? Does this include age-appropriate options (i.e. programming for younger years, for middle ages, and/or for youth)? Is there a cost to this?
- Is there a need for **sibling** support? Is this a more ‘formal’ discussion, or creating opportunities for siblings to play and build relationships?



## Confidentiality

Confidentiality and anonymity will be important to some families. What steps can you take to make your group as confidential as possible?

- **Reminding people about confidentiality at each meeting.** What is said in the room (especially name, school, etc.), stays in the room.
- Putting information about confidentiality and anonymity on the poster
- Inviting families to share during check-in about if or how they want to be acknowledged outside of the meeting space. **Some families may prefer to remain anonymous outside of the meeting.**

## Where to Meet

### Accessibility:

- Is the location accessible to people of varying abilities and mobility?
- Is there childcare or subsidies for childcare?
- Are there all-genders washrooms accessible?
- Is the location accessible via public transportation?
- Is the space **private/confidential**? Is it quiet? Is there space for people to go if they need to be away from the group?
- Will you always meet in the same location? For people travelling for the group, is there a spot in-between that is more easily accessible? Is it worth changing locations to accommodate people from surrounding areas?
- Booking space – who is in charge of this? Is it possible to book space for multiple months at a time?
- **Is the space as inviting to as many people as possible?** Some people may have negative association with certain spaces such as churches, schools, or “professionalized” and “clinical-feeling” spaces, etc.

## Time / Date

- Weekday? Weekend?
- How long will you meet for? (other groups in BC typically meet for 1.5-2 hours)
- How often will you meet? (other groups in BC meet monthly)

## Costs

- **Is there a cost to the space?** If so, how much would group members have to contribute to cover space costs? Is this accessible to low-income families?
  - If you cannot find a free space, consider a pay-what-you-can sliding scale
- Do you want to have food or coffee/tea for the group? Could this be rotated between families?
- Is there someone who can bring or donate supplies such as resource books or for childcare? Are there games or supplies at the location of the meeting that are child-friendly and accessible for your group?

## Additional Support

### C.A.L.L. Out!

Creating more welcoming and inclusive communities for LGBT2Q+ youth in BC.

<http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/trans-care-bc>

## Local Supports

Are there local resources and supports you can draw on to get your group started? Friendly service providers to do presentations? Enthusiastic youth workers or child-minders who could do childcare? Counsellors interested in co-facilitating? Community centres that could provide free space or funding for food?

Caring for trans and gender creative children and youth is a community responsibility, so think about what networks and resources you can lean on for additional support.



# SAMPLE AGENDA

You can use this sample agenda to help you shape the structure and flow of your group. There is no one way to run a group, and you will certainly find that the way meetings are run will shift and change as your group gets to know each other better.

One recommendation from other Parent and Family Groups in BC is to have **multiple facilitators who can take turns** planning and leading the meeting. You may also want to consider having more than one facilitator so that they can work together and support one another. Another consideration is whether or not you want to have someone, perhaps an outside counsellor or someone from the group with support skills and experience, **who can be available to step outside of the meeting with families who require additional support.** This can be a helpful way to open up the space for families in crisis, or families who need extra processing time, while balancing the limited time available for larger group discussion.

## COMMUNITY CARE AGREEMENTS

Community Care Agreements are a set of guidelines about how to be supportive and respectful during conversation. They show what the expectations are, and are good to refer back to if someone is being disrespectful or taking up too much space (ex. talking over people).

### Here is an example agreement:

- 1) Non-judgemental and welcoming space for all journeys
- 2) Confidentiality  
"Every family/child will be at a different place in terms of being 'out'. How do we want to (or do we want to) acknowledge each other outside of this space?"
- 3) "We can't be articulate all the time"  
"Language learning curves are a big part of this process; making mistakes is how we learn"
- 4) Be Aware of Time



Meeting at Salish Sea Secondary School  
Date: October 11  
Location: Soaring Eagle Room 222  
Time: 12-1:30pm

### Agenda

(6pm-7:30pm)

**Pre-Meeting (15 mins)** 5:45 – 6:00 Have a returning member near the entrance to provide a friendly welcome people and invite them to look at resources, make some tea, or take a chair and chat.

**5min 6:00-6:05** Introduce yourself (including name and pronoun) and the purpose of the group.

Review the plan for the meeting, and ensure people are aware of washroom locations, tissues, food, etc.

**10min 6:05-6:15** Share community updates, events, or information that may be of interest to the group

**5min 6:05-6:10** Set the tone for the conversation by reviewing the "Community Care Agreement". Ask if people would like to modify or clarify anything on the agreement.

**30min 6:10-6:40** Invite participants to check-in by introducing themselves and answer an open question such as: "what (or who) brings you here today?" "what successes and challenges are in your family these days?"

**40 min 6:40-7:20** Group discussion and support. You may want to choose and advertise a topic before the meeting (i.e. local resources, school support, coping with extended family, accessing transition-related care) or topics of conversation may emerge through the check-in round. This time will likely require flexibility and question prompts from facilitators to keep the conversation flowing.

This time could also be used for presentations on topics of interest to the group.

**10 min 7:20-7:30** Closing round. Wrap up any loose ends from conversation and invite members to say a few words about how they are feeling after the meeting.



# QUICK TIPS RESOURCE LIST

## RECOMMENDED STARTER RESOURCES

### TransCareBC

- A BC-wide hub providing access to information about gender affirming care and supports. Parents can email or call for further information about local resources.
- [www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/trans-care-bc](http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/trans-care-bc)

### Gender Creative Kids (disponible en français – Enfants Transgenres)

- A resource website for gender creative kids, their families, schools, and communities. Parents and caregivers can sign up to connect with other families of gender creative children and youth.
- [gendercreativekids.ca](http://gendercreativekids.ca)

### Gender Spectrum (some resources available in Spanish)

- Website with resources for further reading and information and connection online or in-person.
- [www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

### The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals by Stephanie Brill and Rachel

- Information from legal rights, to medical and social transition and challenges, to navigating and advocating for trans and gender variant children in schools.

### Gender Born, Gender Made: Raising Healthy Gender Nonconforming Children by Diane Ehrensaft (2011)

- Offers strategies for understanding and supporting gender variant children, and contends that gender non-conformity should be celebrated as an expression of human diversity.

## CONNECT WITH OTHER FAMILIES

**Canadian Parents of Gender Creative Kids - Peer Support Group:** [facebook.com/canadianparentsofgendercreativekids](https://facebook.com/canadianparentsofgendercreativekids)

**Parents of Gender Creative Kids – PG:** [facebook.com/gendercreative](https://facebook.com/gendercreative)

**Parents of Transgender Children:** [facebook.com/groups/108151199217727](https://facebook.com/groups/108151199217727)

**Parents of Transgender\* kids:** [facebook.com/PARENTSOFTRANSKIDS](https://facebook.com/PARENTSOFTRANSKIDS)

**Parents of Transgender Kids:** [facebook.com/Parents-of-Transgender-Kids-102798079808117](https://facebook.com/Parents-of-Transgender-Kids-102798079808117)

**PFLAGCANADA.CA:** visit PFLAG Canada for information about local PFLAG chapters.

**For the Love of the Rainbow Parent:** [facebook.com/LGBTQ2familysupportgroupprincerupert](https://facebook.com/LGBTQ2familysupportgroupprincerupert)

## OTHER BC FAMILY GROUPS

**Prince George:** [parentsgendercreativekidspg@gmail.com](mailto:parentsgendercreativekidspg@gmail.com)

**Prince Rupert:** [fortheloveoftherainbowparent@gmail.com](mailto:fortheloveoftherainbowparent@gmail.com)

**Nanaimo:** [gendercreativekidsnanaimo@gmail.com](mailto:gendercreativekidsnanaimo@gmail.com)

**Tri-Cities through PLEA:** [transsupport@plea.bc.ca](mailto:transsupport@plea.bc.ca)

\*For additional resource lists visit the TransCareBC Website at [www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/trans-care-bc](http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/trans-care-bc).





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