

Coming Out to Your Child: A Resource Guide for Sharing Your Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity



Run by and for LGBT+ parents/carers, their children and those considering parenthood living in Greater Manchester.



INTRODUCTION

Coming out to your child about your sexual orientation or gender identity is a deeply personal and significant moment. It can be both exciting and challenging, as you navigate the emotions and potential impact on your relationship with your children. There is no magic recipe to follow, and many times it can be the beginning of a much longer conversation.

You are already doing the work; simply by taking the time to consider how to sensitively approach coming out to your child, you are starting the process. However, just because they want to know doesn't mean that they are always thrilled about the situation, especially initially. It can signify a big change in the family, especially if it is accompanied by a divorce or break-up.

This resource guide aims to provide support and guidance for parents/carers during this process, offering valuable insights and practical tips to help facilitate a positive and loving conversation with your children.

If you have any further questions regarding this resource please get in contact with [Proud 2 b Parents](#). We look forward to seeing you and your family at some of our meet-ups soon.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

1

Self-Reflection and Preparation: Take time to reflect on your own journey, emotions, and readiness to come out to your children. Ensure you have a solid understanding of your sexual orientation or gender identity, as this will help you articulate your feelings to your children with clarity and confidence. It's never too early to come out to your child. Most children understand love and honesty. What they might not understand is deception or hiding. Also, it's never too late to come out to your child, even if they are an adult. There are people in their forties whose parents are just now coming out to them. A lot of mysteries are being solved and missing puzzle pieces fall into place for these families. Often, knowing the truth will eventually be a relief for children of all ages.

2

Timing and Environment: Choose a suitable time and place to have the conversation. Create a safe and comfortable environment where your children feel at ease and can openly express their thoughts and feelings. Make sure you tell them when there will be plenty of time for the conversation to continue if it needs to or pause for processing. If they are staying with you for the weekend, for example, talk with them on Saturday morning instead of waiting until the drive back to their other home on Sunday night. If you are agonising over exactly what to say, try writing it down first or practicing with a friend.

3

Children's responses are going to vary: Some may need some time and space to process the information on their own. Some might have a million questions. Others may barely react at all. No matter how your child responds to your coming out, honor the process that they need to go through for themselves. Listen and ask your child what they already know and feel about LGBTQ+ people, both as a starting point for them to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as regarding suspicions they may have had about you.

4

Age-Appropriate Communication: Tailor your language and level of detail to your children's age and maturity level. Younger children may require simpler explanations, while older children may benefit from more discussions. Use age-appropriate resources and terminology to help them understand your sexual orientation or gender identity. Don't think that coming out to your child means it's time to have 'the big sex talk'. Talk about having feelings of love, care, and concern, along with attraction. If you are involved with someone and feel comfortable sharing this information, it can make the conversation less abstract for your child, especially if they might already know the other person.

5

Open and Honest Communication: Be open, honest, and authentic when sharing your truth with your children. Use "I" statements to express your feelings and experiences, emphasizing that your sexual orientation or gender identity is a natural and normal part of who you are. Encourage your children to ask questions and share their thoughts, ensuring a two-way conversation.

6

Assure Them of Your Love and Support: Reassure your children that your love for them remains unchanged. Emphasise that your sexual orientation or gender identity does not impact your ability to be a caring and supportive parent. One of the main things children worry about is that you will no longer share the common interests that you used to, or that you will somehow be different than you used to be. At the time of coming out, some parents do go through what is fondly referred to as a 'second adolescence'. Let your child know that you are happy and are enjoying a new aspect of your life, but that no matter what, they are your number one priority. Then prove it to them by being consistent, attentive, and communicative.





Patience and Understanding: Acknowledge that your children may need time to process and adjust to this new information. Be patient and understanding as they navigate their own emotions and potentially seek their own support networks. Reassure them that they can always come to you with any questions or concerns. Discuss with them in age-appropriate ways what to do when faced with people who are not accepting or supportive of your family or LGBT+ people. This will help everyone in your family in the long run and help your child learn how and when to tell your family story in ways that feel safe and affirming to them.



Stereotypes: Help break down stereotypes of gay people for them. If your child already knows other gay people, draw comparisons between you and them. If they don't, tell them things that may seem obvious to you, like the fact that 'not all gay men are hairdressers'; give examples of famous LGBT+ people who they can look up to. They may be concerned that your whole personality is going to change now that you are gay; reassure them that you are still you – being gay is simply one more thing about you.



Sibling Dynamics: If you have multiple children, consider the dynamics between them when coming out. Plan how to address potential differences in age, understanding, and reactions. Encourage open communication and empathy among siblings, fostering an environment of love and support for each other.



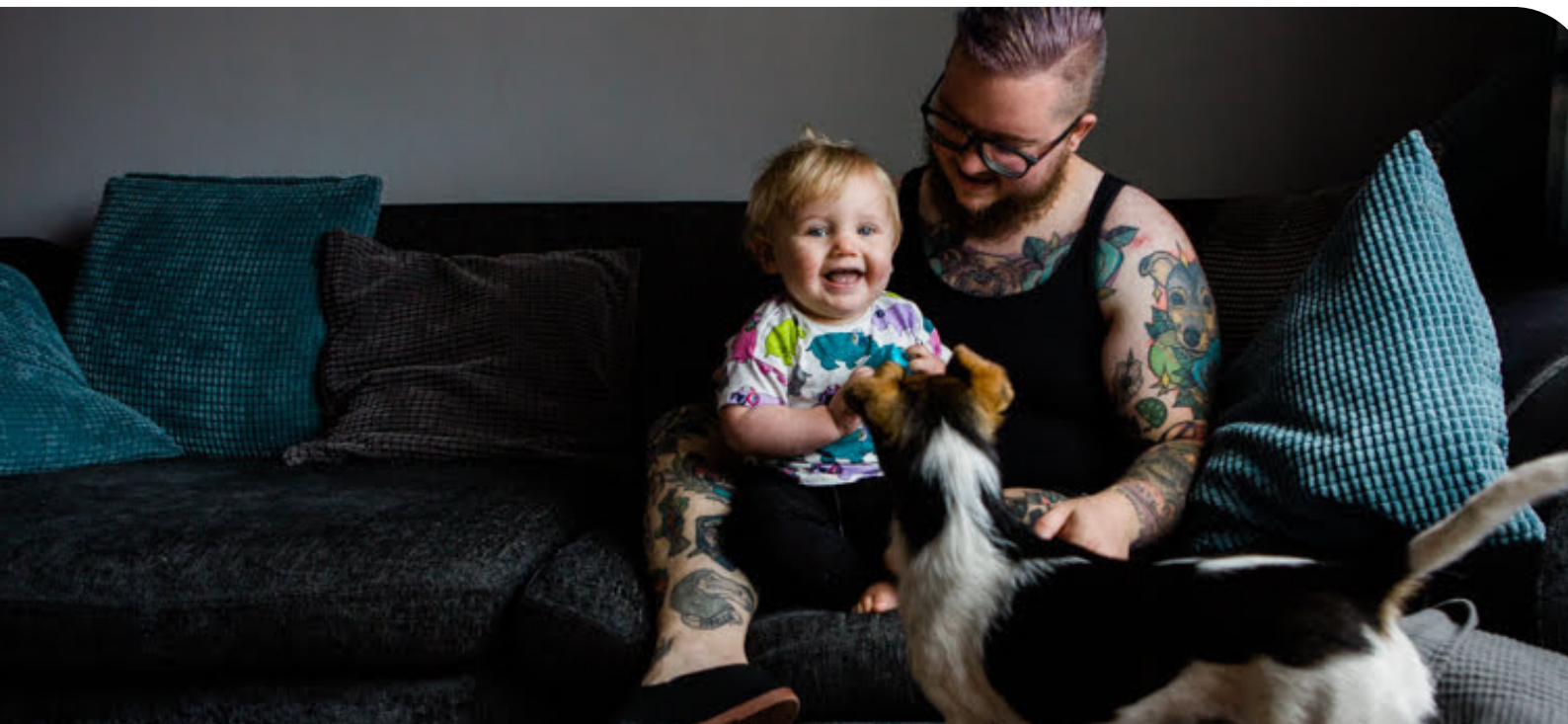
Seek Support: Most importantly, connect them with other children who have similar families to themselves. Remember that you don't have to go through this alone. Reach out to trusted friends, family members, or support groups who can provide guidance, empathy, and a listening ear. Let them know they are part of a community that cares and understands. They are not alone. Millions of other children have experienced what they are now going through, and there are ways that they can connect to this caring community of peers.



Ongoing Communication: Coming out is not a one-time conversation; it is an ongoing process. Keep the conversation alive by planning time to talk about it as a family or one on one. Don't overload or overwhelm your child by talking about it non-stop until you feel content. In the beginning, look to them and ask them to help you plan special times, places, or occasions that feel safe and affirming to talk about your family's coming out process. If you're able to, try to make the discussion process a positive experience that ends with an activity you both enjoy such as eating ice cream or enjoying a tv show. Remember, you are not the only one who has to come out now. Your child will also have to choose when and how they come out about their family throughout their life. Now that you are all in it together, set up times to talk that work for all of you, not just when one person wants to talk about it.

CONCLUSION

Coming out to your children about your sexual orientation or gender identity is a deeply personal and unique journey. By approaching the conversation with love, honesty, and patience, you can lay the foundation for a stronger and more understanding relationship with your children. Remember to seek support, be prepared for ongoing dialogue, and celebrate the diversity that makes your family special.



If you have any further questions regarding this resource please get in contact with [Proud 2 b Parents](https://www.proud2bparents.co.uk). We look forward to seeing you and your family at some of our meet-ups soon.