

Gender Role Development in Young Children

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Children are sexual beings!

Early interest in their body and issues of sexuality

- masturbatory behavior
- gender development
- gender/sex role behavior expectations
- quickly realize that sexuality is taboo

Masturbation

- pleasurable, relaxing
- more prevalent and more frequent as children age
- issue of public/private behavior
- avoid punishment - may lead to shame

Nudity/Sex Play

- What have you learned in this play?
- Watch for exploitation

Same-Sex Attractions

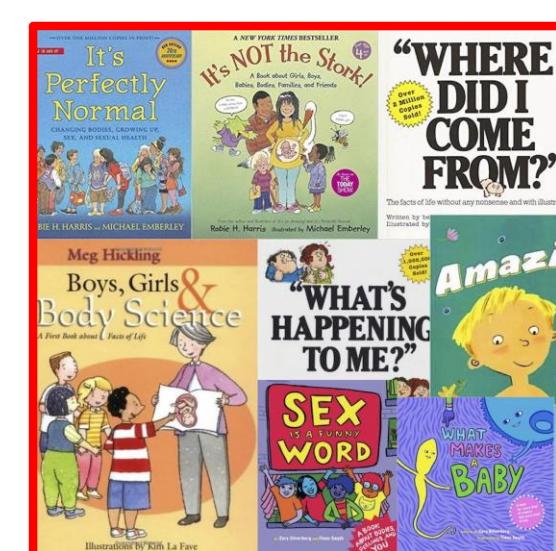
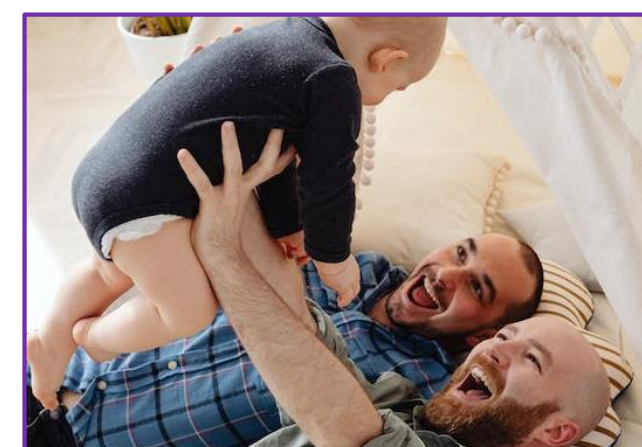
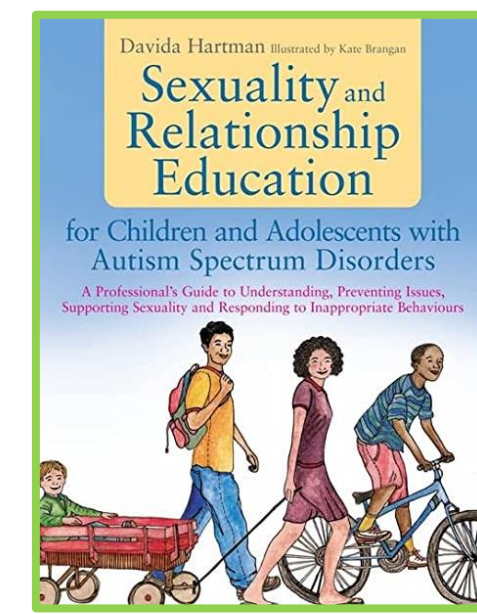
- not a reliable indicator of adult sexual orientation
- begin to understand different aspects of attractions between couples

- friend behavior
- lover behavior

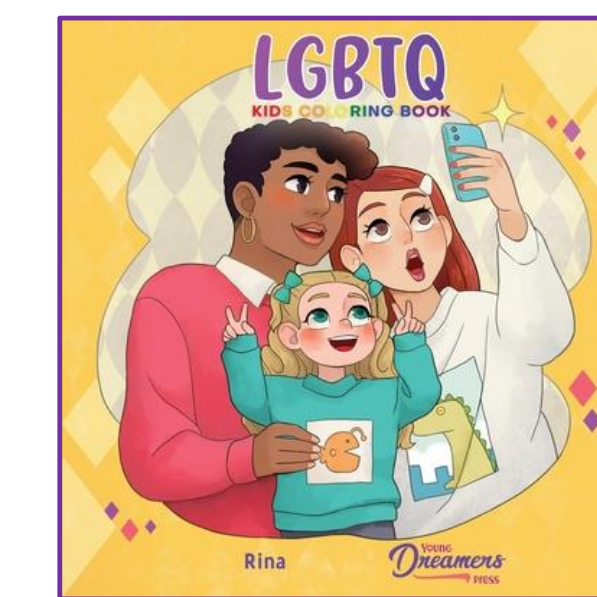
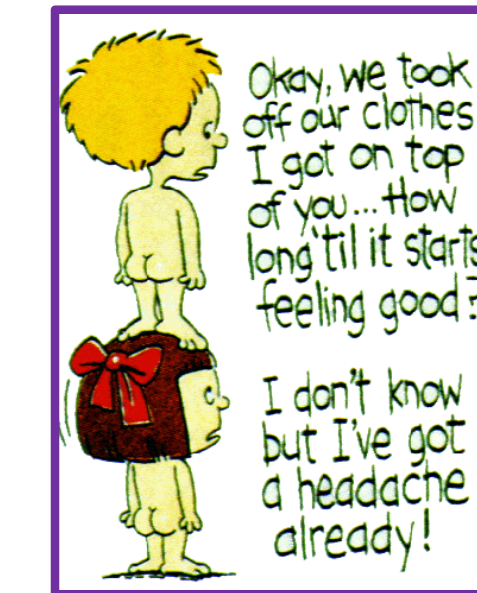
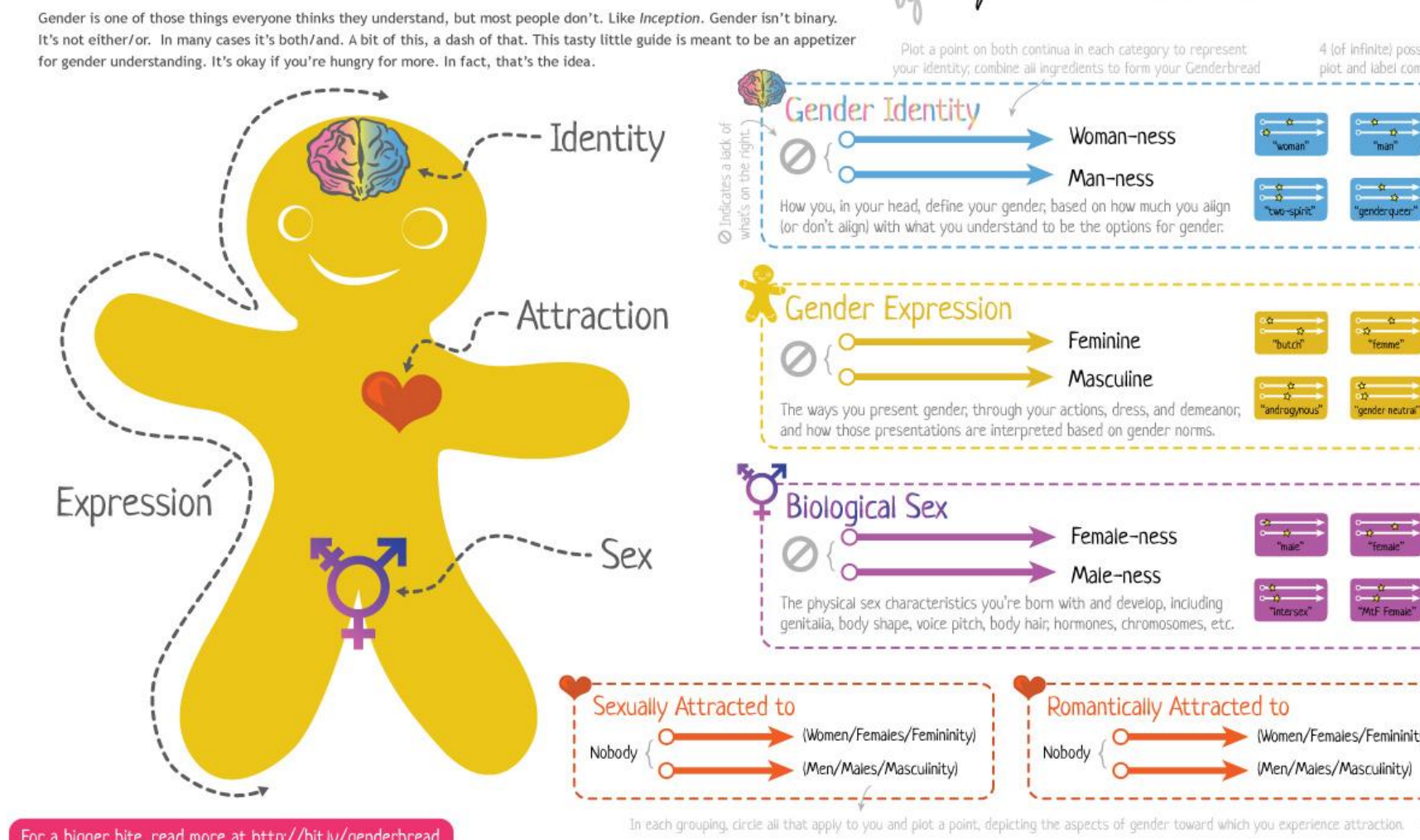
Erotic Material

- may be a source of information
- tend to be exploitative
- don't provide information related to interpersonal relationships
- punishment is not appropriate

Sexuality Now: Embracing Diversity 6th Edition by Janell L. Carroll



The Genderbread Person v3.3



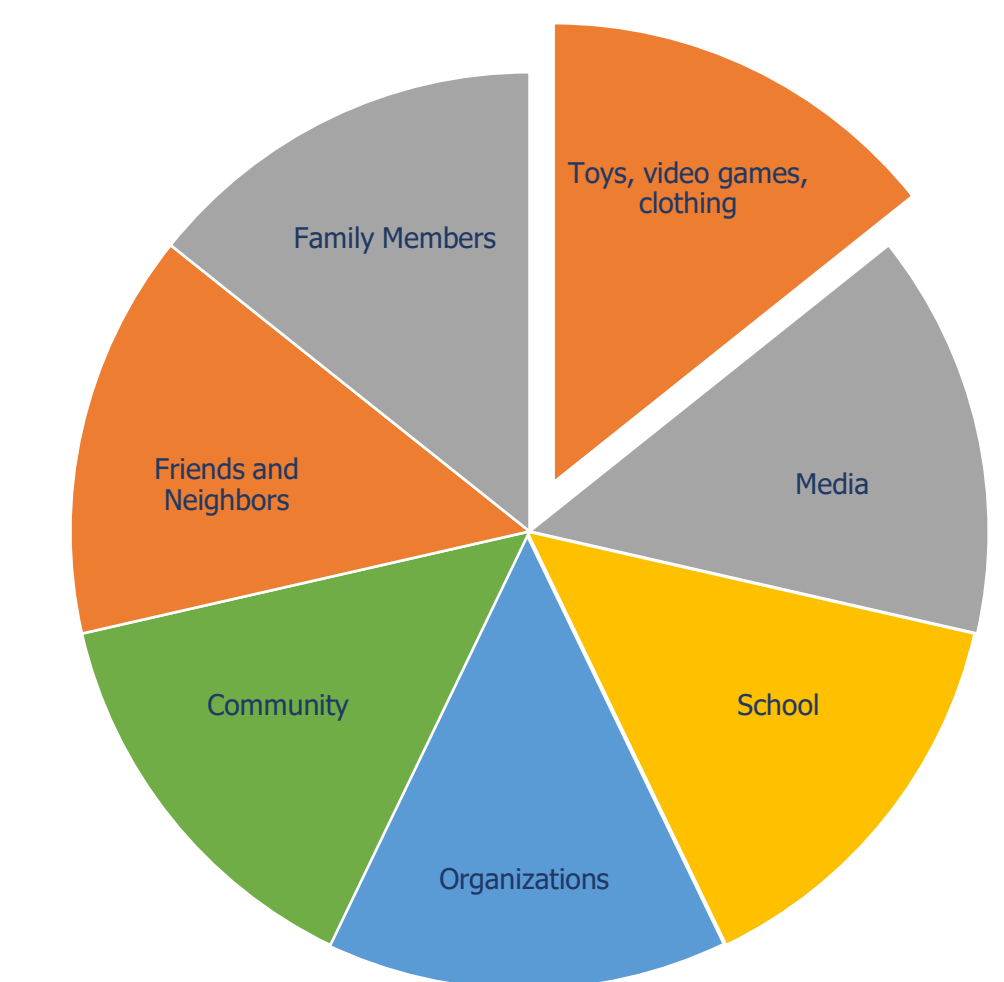
Become as Askable Adult

- Start early
- Don't worry about providing too much information
- Communicate even if not completely comfortable
 - discuss discomfort
- Less can be more
- Don't worry about offering information that can't be understood by children
- Don't be afraid of mistakes
 - search for information together
- Relate personal/family values
- Have a sense of humor
- Address special circumstances

• "When I was born, they looked at me and said: 'What a good boy, what a smart boy, what a strong boy!' And when you were born, they looked at you and said: 'What a good girl, what a smart girl, what a pretty girl!'"
- "What a Good Boy," The Barenaked Ladies

Erin Ryan @morninggloria • Sep 23
the next time somebody makes a comment that my 10 month old daughter is "flirting" or has another baby as a "boyfriend," i'm going to tell them that it's weird to project sexuality onto infants and besides, she's a lesbian

Expand your Idea of Gendered Behavior



Avoid Assumptions – be ready with a variety of resources

