


Coming Out to Your Children

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- **Get comfortable with your own sexual orientation** before sharing this with your child. When you are not comfortable being gay or lesbian your discomfort may become transparent to your son or daughter, causing them to internalize the feelings (shame, fear, embarrassment, discomfort, etc.) that you are also feeling.
 - **Create a safe place.** Tell your children in a place that is safe, private and comfortable
 - **Start where you are.** It's never too soon to tell your kids and it's never too late to tell your kids. Although the news may not be meaningful to your three year old, or it may be a surprise to your 13 year old, you can only start exactly where you are. You will either be laying a good foundation for future understanding or helping your child put together some of the missing pieces of the puzzle.
 - **Be patient** with your kids while they process the information. Some kids may be open to the news and others may need more time to let it sink in.
 - **Be open** to answering your children's questions. Be honest and gentle with your responses.
 - **Invite questions.** Some children will feel uncomfortable asking questions even if they have one, so make it clear that you are open to talk when and if they want to.
 - **Keep it simple.** Explain your sexual orientation in an age appropriate way. Discuss feelings of love as well as feelings of attraction.
 - **Stress your love.** Children are most concerned about their safety and security. Reassure them that the nature of your relationship with them is the same.
 - **Educate.** Inform your kids about the LGBT population. Break down stereotypes and teach your kids even the most obvious facts.
 - **Empower.** Allow your kids decide when, who, and how they come out about their family.
 - **Normalize.** Connect your kids with other children of LGBT parents. Research indicates that when their situation is normalized, and kids know they are not alone, they have fewer problems.