



WELCOMING SCHOOLS

HRC Foundation's *Welcoming Schools* is the nation's premier professional development program providing training to elementary school educators:

- Welcome Diverse Families
- Create LGBTQ and Gender Inclusive Schools
- Prevent Bias-Based Bullying
- Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Students

Welcoming Schools is grounded in research that links improved academic achievement and social-emotional well-being with an inclusive school climate.

Welcome Diverse Families

- Elementary school students' families are central to their understanding of who they are. A range of family structures is represented throughout the materials to help ensure that no student feels either left out or singled out, and that all students feel welcome.
- Every child should feel safe when talking about the important people in their lives.
- Acknowledging family diversity lays the foundation for increased family involvement in the school community.

Create LGBTQ and Gender Inclusive Schools

- Elementary students are having conversations about LGBTQ people regardless of adults taking part in framing these conversations.
- It is our responsibility to educate and to be prepared to interrupt negative behaviors and comments – including those related to LGBTQ topics – while helping students understand bias and learn to use respectful language.
- Pressure to conform to gender stereotypes can limit both academic and social development.
- Schools that promote greater gender equity and do not tolerate gendered harassment have less bullying, less aggression, and there is a greater willingness to intervene and stand up for others.
- A majority of bullying is based upon gender put-downs and anti-gay slurs and it is our responsibility to effectively respond.

Prevent Bias-Based Bullying

- Hurtful, bias-based name-calling and bullying occur in elementary schools including words and actions based on skin color, religion, gender, appearance, perceived sexual orientation, ethnicity and abilities. Effective intervention requires naming and understanding these biases.
- Bullying has a negative impact on the social and academic development of all students, regardless of having an active or passive role in bullying behavior.
- Children often target difference in hurtful and misinformed ways. No child is too young to learn that bias-based use of language — such as LGBTQ, gender or racial put-downs – is hurtful to other children in their school and to people in the community.

Support Transgender and Non-Binary Students

- Affirming children for who they know themselves to be allows students to reach their full potential.
- Families and elementary schools are actively reaching out for advice on ways to support transgender and gender expansive students in school.