

# #BIGPRIDE



## **I'm Interested in Enrolling my Child...**

My child has disclosed to me that they identify as LGBTQIA+, but they are not comfortable sharing this with anyone else yet. How do I approach this in regard to the program?

We absolutely respect your child's privacy and their trust in you. You can let them know that BBBS of Southwest Louisiana is a safe place for them, but you do not need to break their confidence and disclose their identity/orientation to us if it is against their wishes. At no point would we want you to "out" them to us if they are not ready. Rather, when discussing preferences, you may let us know that you are very open to (or interested in) an LGBTQ Big, if this is your child's preference.

I think my child might be questioning, but I am not certain. Am I able to request an LGBTQIA+ Big for them?

Of course! During the enrollment process, we will ask your family and your child about preferences for a potential Big. One of the questions we ask is if you would be comfortable being matched with an LGBTQIA+ Big. During this process, please keep in mind that we also ask your child their preferences, so if they indicate they would not be comfortable with an LGBTQIA+ Big, then we would not make this match. However, we would make sure to match your child with a Big that was accepting and supportive of LGBTQIA+ families.

Will the waiting period for my child to be matched be longer if my child discloses, they identify LGBTQIA+?

Absolutely not. The waiting period is based on how many Bigs we have that have completed their enrollment process and if that Big's preferences align with a Little's. This process remains the same for all active waiting Littles who have completed their enrollment process.

I am the parent and I identify LGBTQIA+. Do I need to disclose this information?

We respect your choice to choose what information you want to share. We ask you to share information that will help us make the best match possible for your Little, but also for a Big that we think would work well and respect you, as the parent. Our parents are an extremely vital part of the match and the overall success of the match.

## **During the Match....**

My child has been matched for awhile now, and just recently indicated that they have changed their preferred pronouns, will their Big and the agency respect this?

Yes! Absolutely. If a Little has changed their preferred pronouns, all you need to do is inform your Big and your Match Relationship Specialist. Your Match Relationship Specialist will be sure this is noted in their file and their preferences will be respected.

My child is matched but has recently disclosed that they are trans and would like to go by a different name. Will the agency respect this?

Yes! If your child is more comfortable with themselves and their identity when being referred to by another name than we previously knew, let us know! Your Match Relationship Specialist will make a note in their file and their preferences will be respected throughout the agency. All staff members will refer to your child by their preferred name. The only exception to this may be on legal/confidentiality documents where their full legal name will be listed but can include their preferred name as well.

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## I am a Little in a match and want to come out to my Big, will they support me?

We know that coming out can be a very scary and intimidating process. However, you know your relationship with your Big better than anyone and you are wanting to come out to them for a reason. Trust your instincts and know that your Big is there to support you. However, if you are uncertain of how to approach this conversation with your Big, your Match Relationship Specialist is always available to help guide you through this conversation, if you feel comfortable talking to them first. Your Match Relationship Specialist can help you determine how you want to approach the conversation, what you want to say, what you think your Bigs reaction might be, and how you may respond to their reaction. BBBS of Southwest Louisiana is a safe place for you and is here to support you.

## **Youth Safety....**

### I believe my child is being picked on or bullied at school due to their gender/orientation. What can I do?

If you believe that they are in imminent danger, please contact 911.

If they are not in urgent danger, but you believe their mental and physical health is being affected by incidents at school, please reach out to your Match Relationship Specialist and start this conversation with them. Your Match Relationship Specialist will be able to connect you to various resources in the area for you and your child, can connect you with individuals at the school that may be able to help, and will be able to help you create a plan of action to have this concern alleviated. Although bullying is a complex issue, your Match Relationship Specialist has the expertise and available resources to be your ally in navigating this situation.

### I am a Little and I don't feel safe at home or at school due to my gender/orientation, what do I do?

If you feel that you are in imminent danger, contact 911 immediately.

However, if you don't feel that you are in immediate danger but have concerns for your safety and/or wellbeing or any reason, please reach out to a trusted adult as soon as possible and let them know your concerns. This adult could include your Big, your Match Relationship Specialist, your Enrollment Specialist, or any staff at BBBS of Southwest Louisiana. If, for any reason, the first adult you talk to does not take you seriously or does not follow up on your concerns, please reach out to another adult.