Gender-Affirming Policies

A summary of the scientific literature on policies affecting transgender and gender-diverse youth, including healthcare, school-based policies, and research needs.



How This Impacts Children's Development

Gender affirming social environment and medical care are crucial for the positive development and mental health of transgender and gender-diverse youth (TGD) and their families. When TGD youth can access developmentally appropriate gender-affirming support services, they are less likely to experience depressive symptoms and suicidal ideations.

Read the Brief: Anti-transgender legislation poses mental health and safety risks for transgender and gender diverse youth and their families, 2026Read the brief: Gender-Affirming Policies Support Transgender and Gender-Diverse Youth's Health, 2022

Talking Points from the SRCD Briefs:

- Transgender and gender-diverse youth (TGD) are two to three times more likely to experience discrimination and a lack of safety in schools than their cisgender peers.
- Gender affirming care and puberty blocking has been linked to positive outcomes for TGD youth (e.g. lower levels of anxiety, depression and suicidality).
- Anti-TGD exclusions and restrictions are associated with higher risk of anxiety, depression, suicidality, and victimization among TGD youth and their families.
- There is no research that substantiates the need for anti-TGD policies, and growing evidence demonstrates the deleterious impact of these policies on the mental health of TGD youth and their families.

Policy Considerations in the Brief

- The use of developmentally appropriate, gender-affirming health care, including puberty suppression, gender-affirming hormones, surgical interventions, and mental health care for TGD youth should not be subject to political scrutiny.
- Healthcare companies could provide insurance coverage of developmentally appropriate, gender-affirming health care, including puberty suppression, gender-affirming hormones, surgical interventions, and mental health care for TGD youth.
- Medical records could standardize the collection and privacy of gender identity and expression data in medical records, while also allowing greater research on health disparities.

- School-based policies that promote inclusion and acceptance have been linked to positive outcomes for TGD youth, such as addressing bullying, allowing students to change their names in school files, engaging in sports and activities that align with their affirmed gender, allowing the use of bathrooms and locker rooms that align with the student's affirmed gender, using the student's preferred name and pronouns, and training school personnel on inclusion for TGD youth.

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