

8 Tips to Practice Gender Forward Parenting

1. **Be proactive about talking about gender;** you don't need to wait for your child to bring it up or for an incident to arise.
2. **Ask questions**—this is a great way to hear the ideas kids already have about gender.
3. **Talk about yourself**, or things you encounter related to gender, so that children can express their thoughts without having to talk about themselves.
4. When you see media depicting gender, **ask questions that encourage critical thinking:**
“Why is the mom the one making dinner and serving it?”
“Who is strong in that show?”
“Who is kind?”
5. **Read and talk about books that address gender.**
Do you have suggestions for these books? Add them in comments!
6. **Be conscious about how you praise kids.**
Girls are often praised for their clothes or hairstyle, or for being sweet or kind, while boys are often praised for being big, or tough or independent. If you hear this type of praise coming from other adults, think about joining in with other types of praise.
7. **Question and explore your own biases.**
For example, how do you feel about boys who wear nail polish, and girls who want to shop in the boy's department for clothes? What messages about gender expression were you given as a child?
8. **Mix up gender language when reading stories to your kids.**

NOTE: If a MPCS community member would like resources for their own family or friends, please contact Tracy at lovethyselph@gmail.com

*The MCPS Diversity + Inclusivity Subcommittee on Internal Capacity Building used welcomingschools.org and genderspectrum.org for this document.

