

# Open letter to the community from the parent of a transgender child:

I have a young transgender child whose struggle, heartache and triumph with gender identity teach me new ways to love both my children every day. My child happened to be born with male genitalia, and for a while we thought she was a boy. We were wrong. She is not just girly, she knows herself to be a girl. It's not about a preference for pink and princesses (and dinosaurs, in her case). When she is misgendered as a boy (e.g. referred to with male pronouns), she is withdrawn, mistrustful, angry and depressed. For all their wonder, skirts and ballet lessons and fingernail polish are not enough to make her more exuberant and open and comfortable and joyful. She desperately needs to be a girl, not just secretly on the inside, but in her family, school and community.

The challenges she faces are daunting, as are the objections I have encountered for choosing to support her, which brings me to a critical point: No parent can cause their child to be transgender. Period. Additionally, I do not know of a single trans-parent (and there are more of us than you might suppose) who would have chosen for their child to be transgender. Please do not mistake me. For those of us who are supportive, this is not for a lack of fierce pride and joy in our trans and gender-nonconforming children. Rather it is because we recognize with dismay how much negativity and rejection they face from others who cannot or will not accept them. I am terrified for my child. Trans people are at high risk for becoming victims of hate crimes. They also face severe discrimination in housing and employment. Their suicide rate is over 40%. In kindergarten, even before transitioning, my child was called names, teased and harassed for

her gender expression and attempts to assert her true identity -- and in case you're wondering, yes, bathrooms were horrible for her. In kindergarten.

But it doesn't have to be that way. A recent study from the University of Washington found that transgender children who were affirmed in their identities had no greater risk for depression and anxiety than their cisgender (non-trans) peers. In other words, they are as happy and healthy as the kid next door. (In fact, they might be the kid next door. Many trans families live in "stealth" for their own protection. There is a reason our names are not on this article.) The obstacles to success and happiness faced by children like mine are not inherent to being trans. They are the direct result of being trans in a society that shuns them,

which is why it is so important that we continue to strive for public awareness and education. Trans rights are not a distraction from important issues. For my daughter and thousands of others like her, they are the most important of issues. As long as our society continues to wage an ideological war on these children's existence and to systematically ostracize them in schools and elsewhere, children like mine will continue to feel lesser than their peers simply for trying to live authentically. So to the schools, the legislatures, and the strangers rolling their eyes, please stop punishing transgender kids for their courage and integrity. I promise you'll be glad you did.

Sincerely,  
A Loving Parent to a Beautiful Six-Year-Old Transgender Girl



## *Bexar County Dispute Resolution Center*



**By: Elena Terrill**

Having problems with your neighbors? Unsatisfactory home repairs? Landlord keeping the security deposit or not responding to needs? Tenant not paying rent? The Bexar County Dispute Resolution Center (BCDRC) can help!

The BCDRC offers mediation and referral services to residents, businesses and organizations in Bexar Co. at no charge. Located on the first floor of the Cadena-Reeves Justice Center, the BCDRC has served Bexar Co. for 32 years resolving conflicts and rebuilding relationships one case at a time through mediation.

Mediation is a voluntary, common-sense alternative to resolving disputes without the expense and inconvenience of going to court. Parties in conflict meet with a neutral, impartial mediator in a secure setting. The mediator helps all parties work towards a mutually agreeable solution. Mediations are confidential and are scheduled in a timely manner. Bilingual mediators are also available.

Types of disputes mediated at the Bexar County Dispute Reso-

lution Center include family conflicts, neighbor complaints, rental property issues, business/customer problems, real estate matters, child visitation issues, consumer problems and workplace issues. Cases are mediated Monday through Thursday starting at 6pm so people do not have to miss work to participate in mediation. The BCDRC also mediates litigation cases referred by courts in Bexar County. Litigation mediations are available for people involved in law suits such as divorce cases, personal injury, real estate and personal property issues to name a few.

If mediation is not appropriate for a particular situation we may still help by providing referrals to other resources that might help you resolve your issue. Our goal is to try to help everyone who contacts the BCDRC.

For help, call the Bexar County Dispute Resolution Center at 210-335-2128 or visit us at 300 Dolorosa, Suite 1102, San Antonio, Texas 78205. We are open Monday-Thursday 8-8 PM and Friday 8-12 PM and 1-5 P.M. To learn more or to request mediation visit our website at [www.bexar.org/drc](http://www.bexar.org/drc).