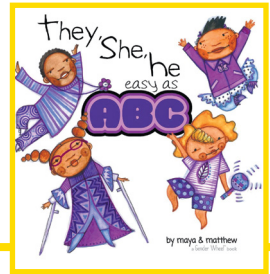


They, She, He easy as ABC

Community Discussion Guide



Before the Reading

- + You may want to read the book yourself before your event so you can think about questions you and community members may have.
- + Practice how you want to respond. Being prepared will help you be comfortable with a topic you may be unfamiliar discussing.
- + Review [Defining LGBTQ Words for Elementary School Students](#) to prepare to define words for people.
- + If a community member asks you a question and you're unsure of the answer, it's OK to say that you don't know or that there are likely multiple answers to the question depending on who you ask!
- + Our handout [Be Prepared for Questions and Put-Downs About Gender](#) will help guide your answers to common questions that can arise around gender stereotypes.
- + You may want to reference the [Gender Snowperson](#), a simple tool to break down the concepts of how you feel and know yourself to be (gender identity), who you love (sexual orientation), pronoun assigned at birth (sex assigned at birth) and gender expression. Many people do not realize that gender identity and sexual orientation are two very different concepts and that all of us have both a gender identity and sexual orientation.

Introducing and Reading *They, She, He easy as ABC*

The book *They, She, He easy as ABC* by Maya and Matthew Smith-Gonzalez provides a wonderful opportunity to discuss names, pronouns and gender expression, all of which can serve as a familiar starting point for kids and adults to expand their ideas about gender. One of

the learning objectives of this book is to teach children to accept and embrace the many ways people may choose to express who they are through clothing and hairstyles (gender expression), free of gender norms.

Community Discussion Questions

- + Can we know how someone feels on the inside based on how they look on the outside?
- + Can we know someone's pronouns by how they look (gender expression)? If you are unsure of what pronouns someone uses, you could ask politely: "My pronouns are she/her/hers. What, if any, are your pronouns?" Using the right pronouns is one way to show someone they are seen. Some people use more than one pronoun. Some people choose not to use pronouns at all; they might use their name instead. People are adding and creating new pronouns every day which are shaping and reshaping our language.
- + How can we teach people to care for and welcome people who are different from them? What could you do if you saw someone being teased or bullied for their gender or gender expression?
- + What are some important steps we can take to support transgender and non-binary youth?

Answers might include:

- Be respectful of gender expression—everyone can wear their hair and clothing in the manner that makes them happy without being teased or bullied.
- Understand that we don't know how someone identifies based on their gender expression.
- Advocate for full community access, such as all-gender restrooms and locker rooms in public spaces.

- Use correct name and pronouns (do not ask someone what name they used to use or what their “real” name is).
 - Protect privacy—do not out someone because that can put them in danger. If someone shares their gender identity with you, it means they trust you—check in with them about what you can or cannot share.
 - Remember that transgender and non-binary bodies are private—no, it isn’t OK to ask about surgeries, etc. unless you are someone’s trusted partner or medical provider.
- + Have everyone turn to each other and share their name, pronouns and something they like to do.

Action You Can Take

Are there actions that you would like to take in your community to help transgender and non-binary youth feel welcomed and affirmed? In your schools? In your religious community? In your workplace? What might those steps be?

- + Advocate for full community access, such as all-gender restrooms and locker rooms in public spaces. Many businesses have single stall restrooms that are gendered—they just need to change the sign.
- + Ask your community or school library to carry more books with transgender and non-binary characters.
- + Keep educating yourself and learning. Follow transgender advocacy organizations or social media accounts of transgender and non-binary advocates. Read books written by transgender and non-binary authors.
- + Be an ally. Speak up in support of transgender and non-binary people. Interrupt transphobia.
- + Share your pronouns when you meet people and in your email signature.
- + Advocate for transgender inclusive policies at your place of work and in your schools.
- + Vote for transgender and non-binary affirming candidates.

Discussions with Children

- + Ask the children if someone’s gender expression (how you wear your hair or how you express the spirit of who you are, even what colors you like) is affected by their pronouns. Is there one way to be if your pronouns are she? Is there one way to be if your pronouns are he? Is there one way to be if your pronouns are they?
- + Can we know someone’s pronouns by how they look or do we need to politely ask?
- + Have the children (and adults) turn to each other and share their name, pronouns and something they like to do.

Want a more in-depth learning opportunity?
Welcoming Schools also has a lesson plan
available for download at WelcomingSchools.org



Illustration from *They, She, He easy as ABC* by Maya and Matthew Smith-Gonzalez.