



FAQS:

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS OF LGBTQ+ CHILDREN

Wales Women's Lacrosse Senior Team Manager Erin Williams answers FAQs for working with unsupportive parents and carers of LGBTQ+ children. Always remember to support the participant



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As with all other aspects of being an inclusive coach, it's important not to make assumptions about whether **parents and carers** of LGBTQ+ children or young people will be supportive of either them or their involvement in sport and physical activity.

Letting parents and carers, as well as the wider community, know that you have an LGBTQ+ inclusive approach will **reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings**, and will **reassure parents or carers** concerned for the welfare of their LGBTQ+ children and young people that they are entering a supportive and welcoming environment.

It can also be widely beneficial to include them where possible so that you can work together to support their children.

From working with academy footballers, as well as with U9s and U10s players in Lacrosse, Erin has regularly received feedback that parents are grateful for the **opportunity to discuss inclusion** with their children and how they can support them.

But where parents or carers are not supportive, it's vital to **provide extra support** for those children or young people, working in conjunction with schools, colleges, charities, and youth groups where applicable.

Have pressing questions about working with and managing parents and carers of LGBTQ+ children and young people?

You may find the answer in our following FAQs.

1) How can I manage unsupportive parents and carers?

Erin recommends simply talking to them about why inclusion is important. Reiterate that inclusivity benefits and strengthens teams, and that the ethos of your club is to provide opportunities for everyone to enjoy sport and physical activity and develop their skills.

Check out the following resources for more on this:

- [Game Plan for Coaches: Creating Safe and Inclusive Teams for LGBTTQ+ Athletes.](#)
- [Together Active: Why Inclusion in Sports is More Important Than Ever.](#)
- [Kick it Out: Resources.](#)

Then: **check in** with your participants. Make it clear that you're ready to listen to **their views** and wishes, and don't assume that they share their parents'

beliefs or opinions. Make ensuring that they feel heard one of your top priorities.

If they're heterosexual, it might also be a good idea to check that they're getting an **inclusive education** where possible, and opportunities to socialise with a diverse range of people. This will help to facilitate their development and growth beyond achievements on the pitch.

Finally, if you have noticed something that could be a **safeguarding issue**, follow your organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures accordingly.

2) A parent or carer wants to withdraw their child from my inclusive sessions. What do I do?

The most important thing is not to panic or to take it personally.

Erin again recommends reminding them of the **club values**, and that inclusion is an indispensable part of your club's identity.

Erin adds that it may be helpful to have a **statement** prepared for this eventuality that you can keep referring to and that you can point parents or carers towards.

If you do write one, keep it simple, stating that you believe that diversity and inclusion strengthen team building and that **you want to support everybody** in your sessions.

3) How can I tackle concerns about sessions not being age-appropriate?

Be clear about what you're doing, Erin says. "It's not sex-ed; it's inclusive sessions."

She recalls an issue where parents were uncomfortable about a former professional women's footballer coming to speak to a girls' team. She simply intended to discuss her route to being a pro footballer!

To **circumvent concerns** of that nature, be clear about why a talk like that is taking place, and how your participants will get the chance to hear from an amazing person about their career.

If any concerns come up relating to **faith or culture**, the Human Rights Campaign has [resources](#) available to support parents of faith. It may also be worth getting in touch with local LGBTQ+ groups about the support available for LGBTQ+ children and young people of faith in their area.

4) Parents or carers are worried that my sessions are inclusive of trans children and young people. What should I do?

Explain that your club policy follows your national governing body's policy and guidance on inclusion, and that safeguarding is your most important priority.

You could also explain that your ambition is to include everyone, and that trans people are welcome at your sessions.

It could also help to share that inclusion can be especially beneficial in the younger age groups, and many NGBs have policies that apply up until the age of 11.

5) Personal information about an LGBTQ+ child or young person has been shared online. Can I do anything?

Remember that you're a key part of that young person's **support system**. Check in with them and their parents if applicable to find out how they're doing.

If they were **outed** by someone from the club or team, then take appropriate action to restrict the spread of that information where possible and protect their privacy.

About the contributor

Alongside playing internationally, Wales Women's Lacrosse Senior Team Manager Erin Williams has coached since the age of 15. Notable highlights include running Lacrosse camps for young people and coaching the Wales U19 and U20 teams before moving to her current role with the Senior Team.

Erin is also an inclusive sport educator, supporting organisations to work effectively with LGBTQ+ young people and to create safe spaces that enable ongoing and enjoyable participation in sport.