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The Gender Creative Child: Pathways For Nurturing And Supporting Children Who Live Outside Gender Boxes



Synopsis

From a leading US authority on a subject more timely than ever—•an up-to-date, all-in-one resource on gender-nonconforming children and adolescents In her groundbreaking first book, *Gender Born, Gender Made*, Dr. Diane Ehrensaft coined the term gender creative to describe children whose unique gender expression or sense of identity is not defined by a checkbox on their birth certificate. Now, with *The Gender Creative Child*, she returns to guide parents and professionals through the rapidly changing cultural, medical, and legal landscape of gender and identity. • In this up-to-date, comprehensive resource, Dr. Ehrensaft explains the interconnected effects of biology, nurture, and culture to explore why gender can be fluid, rather than binary. As an advocate for the gender affirmative model and with the expertise she has gained over three decades of pioneering work with children and families, she encourages caregivers to listen to each child, learn their particular needs, and support their quest for a true gender self. *The Gender Creative Child* unlocks the door to a gender-expansive world, revealing pathways for positive change in our schools, our communities, and the world.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: The Experiment (April 5, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1615193065

ISBN-13: 978-1615193066

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.9 x 8.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #87,463 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in • Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > Transgender #39 in • Books > Gay & Lesbian > Parenting & Families #96 in • Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > LGBT Studies

Customer Reviews

“Insightful.” •Vox• “The *Gender Creative Child* is an invaluable resource for families and practitioners wanting to understand the complexity and beauty of gender development and the value of affirmative care. I’m struck that Dr. Ehrensaft’s most revolutionary idea is also her most straightforward—if we really learn how to listen to our children, they will tell us what they need.” •Aron Janssen, MD, director and

founder NYU Gender and Sexuality Service “The Gender Creative Child should be required reading for all therapists, pediatricians, and K-12 educators and for parents whose children express their gender differently from societal expectations. Diane Ehrensaft deftly shows that many trans and gender-nonconforming children can be identified from a young age and how critical it is to provide support to them.

• Genny Beemyn, PhD, trans educator and coauthor of *The Lives of Transgender People* “The Gender Creative Child is a must-read for parents of transgender and gender-expansive children and the professionals who work with them. Dr. Ehrensaft, a leading authority on gender development, uses an inviting, engaging, and humble style to present the gender affirmative model and provide insight into achieving gender health for all people. Dr. Ehrensaft’s concepts of gender webs, gender smoothies, gender ghosts, and gender angels, and her methods of distinguishing “apples,” “oranges,” and “fruit salads,” are illuminated by her use of multiple real-life stories of families with gender creative children. There is no other resource like *The Gender Creative Child* and I am thrilled to recommend it to my clients.

• Colt Keo-Meier, PhD, licensed psychologist and cofounder of Gender Infinity in Houston, Texas “This book offers an accessible, engaging, and informative guide for families and therapists supporting transgender and gender creative youth. Dr. Ehrensaft’s commitment to and empathy for the young people with whom she works as well as for their families is clear throughout the book.

• Heather Killelea McEntarfer, PhD, author of *Navigating Gender and Sexuality in the Classroom* “An amazing book! It is a must-read for anyone whose daily life involves children, from parents and pediatricians to mental health providers and family court judges. *The Gender Creative Child* is a comprehensive, thorough, and accessible resource written by the preeminent expert in the field. The book holds the reader’s hand along as it takes them through basic concepts and complex issues, answering common questions and concerns.

• Asaf Orr, Esq., Transgender Youth Project Staff Attorney, National Center for Lesbian Rights “Dr. Ehrensaft explains gender and children like no one can. She equips adults to understand and support gender-expansive children the way they deserve to be. This book is the newest must-have for every LGBTQ library and a must-read for every adult with a child in their life.

• Lori Duron, author of *Raising My Rainbow* “Dr. Ehrensaft has achieved the impossible: an easy to read, but hard to forget, handbook that speaks to parents, teachers, medical doctors, counselors, and policymakers alike. In an accessible and conversational manner, Ehrensaft tackles tough challenges such as how to help gender creative children who also struggle with autism; why some youth intentionally choose the middle of the gender spectrum

instead of the binary; how to navigate the legal and financial barriers to cross-sex hormone treatments; and why we must analyze traditional gender-based research studies with a critical eye and the wisdom of experience. This book urges us to abandon the fantasy that gender is a simple either/or proposition, and embrace the reality that there are infinite manifestations of a person's identity. If we allow children to blaze the trail, however, then their path to self-actualization becomes clearer. A must-have for any professional who works with youth.

• Jessica Herthel, coauthor of *I Am Jazz* "In *The Gender Creative Child*, Diane Ehrensaft illuminates the tremendous variation in gender identity and expression that we find in children. With a depth of understanding that comes from years of experience, she shows parents, professionals, and the culture at large how to foster authenticity and psychological health. Dr. Ehrensaft's emphasis on the uniqueness of each child reminds us to be thoughtful, keep an open mind, and listen carefully. I highly recommend this book!

• Irwin Krieger, author of *Helping Your Transgender Teen* "Finally a book that appropriately reflects the great spectrum of gender diversity that young children and teens embody and envision. Dr. Ehrensaft has, once again, moved beyond the challenges of identity politics and academic controversies and meets parents, families, and young people where they live—exploring the edges of gender expression in rapidly changing times.

• Arlene Istar Lev, LCSW-R, CASAC, family therapist, gender specialist, and founder of Choices Counseling and Consulting "The *Gender Creative Child* is a critical resource for anyone who loves or works with gender-nonconforming children and youth. In addition to providing an insightful overview of the medical and social context in which our misperceptions of gender have been passed down and the efforts underway to correct them, the author of *Gender Born, Gender Made* once again brings us into the room with a wide array of gender-nonconforming children to hear their struggles and wisdom as they communicate their experience of gender. True to her word as listener and translator, the author articulates what she has learned and faithfully guides families, professionals, educators, and communities to create safe, accepting environments that foster the full development of all.

• Candace Waldron, author of *My Daughter He: Transitioning With Our Transgender Children*, trans-parent coach, and speaker. "Diane Ehrensaft's new book is a timely treatise on the ways families can best support the journeys of their gender creative children. As a pioneer in the care of transgender and gender-nonconforming kids, Dr. Ehrensaft continues to teach us important new concepts in the ever-evolving gender landscape. Parents, teachers, therapists, and medical practitioners, sit up and take note! Although society may still be riddled with the outdated gender ghosts of times past, Dr. Ehrensaft is here to safely steer us toward

a day when all children will feel safe and assured in their authentic, affirmed gender. — Rachel Pepper, LMFT, author of *Transitions of the Heart* “This exciting book from the author of *Gender Born, Gender Made* is an essential guide for any parent whose child goes against the grain of society’s expectations about gender. Diane Ehrensaft has delved deeply into the hearts and minds of gender-nonconforming and transgender children and adolescents to bust a multitude of myths. In simple language, *The Gender Creative Child* explores and explains new ways of thinking about gender-nonconformity. It’s an invaluable handbook, providing sensitive wisdom, helpful messages, and constructive advice for confused or anxious parents challenged by their child’s gender creativity and complexity. It’s a must for all parents, teachers, and pediatricians and should be in every public library. Riding the crest of the sea change of gender she describes, Dr. Ehrensaft is indeed a transgender angel. I only wish I’d had this book when my son was a toddler in the early 90s.” — Julie Tarney, author of *My Son Wears Heels* “Diane Ehrensaft’s timely book offers parents, practitioners, and community members an invaluable roadmap for supporting children who are transgender or gender-nonconforming. Highly accessible, Dr. Ehrensaft offers the adults in the lives of transgender children a compelling analysis of the dangers of trying to change a child’s gender expression and/or identity. Dr. Ehrensaft draws on her vast clinical experience and an emerging body of research to argue that we should instead strive to cultivate a child’s gender health by listening and acting. The *Gender Creative Child* should be required reading for anyone wanting to support the well-being of transgender and gender-nonconforming children.” — Kimberley EnsManning, founding board member Gender Creative Kids Canada, principal The Simone de Beauvoir Institute Concordia University 2016 Foreword INDIES Honorable Mention

Diane Ehrensaft, PhD, is a developmental and clinical psychologist. At the University of California, San Francisco, she is the cofounder and director of mental health at the Child and Adolescent Gender Center, an associate professor of pediatrics, and an attending psychologist at the Benioff Children’s Hospital Child and Adolescent Gender Clinic. Her work with and advocacy for gender creative children has been widely covered, including by The New York Times, the Huffington Post, and NPR. She has been featured on the Los Angeles Times online, Wired online, and has appeared on Anderson, The Oprah Winfrey Show, and The Today Show. Norman Spack, MD, is the director and cofounder of the Gender Management Service clinic at Boston Children’s Hospital, the first US clinic to medically treat transgender

children. Dr. Spack has helped pioneer the use of hormone blockers to delay puberty and of hormone replacement therapy in teens. He has received national attention for his 2014 TEDx Talk "How I Help Transgender Teens Become Who They Want to Be" (over one million views) and was featured in Diane Sawyer's landmark interview with Bruce (now Caitlyn) Jenner. Dr. Spack is associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School.

I thought since I read Diane Ehrensaft's "Gender Born, Gender Made" that there wouldn't be much new information in "The Gender Creative Child." Wrong -- a lot has happened in 5 years! This delves into everything from the barrage of microaggressions gender-creative children face from the people around them, even from their own well-meaning, educated and supportive parents, to Ehrensaft's argument that gender dysphoria shouldn't be included in the DSM. There's an entire meaty chapter devoted to parents of gender-creative children and recognizing the Herculean job we do trying to protect our children and create a safer world for them in the face of so much hostility; trans* kids in the media; the changing role of gender therapists; the closing of Zucker's reparative therapy clinic; the newest research on possible biological causes of gender nonconformity; protogay children vs. transgender children and so much more. This is the new handbook for parents, teachers and medical professionals who have gender-creative children in their lives. If everyone read this book, as they should, the world would change overnight into a much more welcoming place for children like mine.

A surprisingly balanced exploration of issues of gender identity and gender expression! Most work in this field seems split between "gender affirming" and pathologizing everything about gender variance. This book does neither, instead treading a path sensitive to the children, their families, and the deep issues raised by their lives.

I love this update by Diane Ehrensaft. So informative, nuanced, and useful for providers, parents and others who care for trans/gender-creative youth.

Great book full of very helpful and relevant information!

This book provides insight and most importantly, language to describe the complexity of gender. Very helpful.

Dr. Ehrensaft is an amazing clinician. She is so very insightful and full of empathy and love. It is a book that I recommend to my clients as well as to other therapists who work with gender creative folks.

The Gender Creative Child by Diane Ehrensaft is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in early March. Being highly interested in the concept and lifestyle of gender fluidity, I looked forward to learning about the study of this taking place from birth and early childhood. Ehrensaft creates dynamic, 'take from them as you may' chapters out of personal stories, observations, social critique, medical studies, and self-proclaimed criteria (i.e. the concept of apples, oranges, and fruit salad). They each and altogether are a little overwhelming, considering that, at the center of each personal story, is a child or teenager educating their peer on how their view of gender (or lack thereof) is.

did not use this book and gave it to a friend.

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