Gender issue responses

There is a section through the PFLAG website geared towards transgender issues (IF that’s what we’re talking about here).  I didn’t dig real deep, but I saw that there are articles and other links with information.  There may be something there for dealing with such a young person.  You are right to worry about her going to an intermediate school with new kids.  I think she will have a tough time.  Here’s the link to the website <http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=380> .  Good luck!

This is a very tough issue.  I am not completely surprised that she is acting out in this way at age 10.  Most people who later in life identify as GLBT realized around ages 8-11 that they were different.  It sounds to me like this goes much deeper as you said and I would love to say that if you bring it up to the parents they will let her go her path and not try to force her to be feminine.   Since you are close enough to Indy, I would maybe contact IYG,  Indiana Youth Group.  It is a place for GLBT “kids” to hang out and have safe and positive experiences with other youth.  They may have other resources for you to give the parents and other ways for helping this student understand the reactions her behavior may cause at the intermediate school.  The director’s name is Gary Nelson and he is a friend of mine.

We cannot diagnose these things to the parents and if any psychologist did they would of course diagnose gender dysphoria.  But I think as counselors we have had enough training to realize that further steps need to be taken to help the student.

I have talked with the PFLAG (Parents'Families and Friend of Lesbians and Gays) representatives at the ISCA conferences (they have had booths there often).  You could ask them about resources on how to help with this issue.  Their website is [www.indypflag.org](http://www.indypflag.org)  or [info@indypflag.org](mailto:info@indypflag.org) if you don't want to talk directly with someone first.

JMCC (Jesus Metropolitan Church of Christ)...its the gay church on 56th, and they have a lot of literature there.

If you go to: <http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=194&srcid=-2> and then click on the link for "transgender at the top of the page. That page has information on TNET (Transgender network) that has information on support and other links. I didn't look very thoroughly but it might be a place for them to start.

Have you considered discussing the issue with the intermediate school counselor, so that person is aware and can try to assist however possible?

The Indiana Youth Group in Indianapolis has many materials and an active support staff for young kids who are coming out.

[www.indianayouthgroup.org](http://www.indianayouthgroup.org) This young person will be helped even if she only uses the telephone support line. You may also ask for materials to support her and other kids who are feeling more comfortable coming out at earlier ages. Parents will know when she tells them, and that is hers to tell. At some level, they know.

I encourage you to look at some of the sites for GLBT kids on your home computer as your school may have them blocked. Some tekkies do that to protect kids.

There is a community in your area that will take her under their wings.

The IYG group can give you the right, respectable people to connect with. I suggest you do some research on her behalf. And advise her to talk to her parents. IYG will also provide some scripts for this process, if she asks.

PFLAG is also a good place to go for info and support for the parents later on.

Some districts in northeast Indiana have formed behind the scenes support groups for these kids.

I have no expertise in gender identity. It’s just an interest of mine; therefore I read about it and watch programs that address this issue. My opinion is that communication with current and future resources for this young lady is critical (i.e. her intermediate counselor/nurse/administrator. Enlightening her parents and helping them with the reality of their daughters’ life is also critical. I would help connect her parents to the local (or closest) chapter of a GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender) organization. I would also strongly encourage this family to connect with a therapist who specializes in gender identity issues. You should be able to find these resources online.  The whole family will need support as they continue to raise their child. My hunch is that there may be more going on here than just “Tomboy” issues. In this day and age, girls have many outlets for doing just what the boys do so there isn’t this huge rebellion factor that you may have seen 20-30 years ago when girls couldn’t play basketball or be a part of the chess club, etc…I do believe some people are born in the wrong body and this young lady may very well be a boy, mentally. If she is made to live the life of a female (not her true self) then she may be in for a very unhappy life. If she were my child I would embrace her questions, struggles, and offer only support and love. No criticism or persuasion to change who she is trying to figure out she is. Just support! When she is old enough to make her own bodily decisions (potentially medically Tran gendering), that will be her decision only. It’s obviously too soon for that. She just needs support and love while she works through who she is exactly. Good Luck and my best wishes go out to this family as they deal with a very difficult, but not life-threatening, situation.