

Appendix 1: Glossary^f

Birth-assigned sex – medical classification of sex at birth, based most often on genital anatomy. Occasionally, parameters such as chromosomal status are also considered. A small number of children cannot be easily assigned a male or female sex at birth, and may be considered intersex.

Cis/cisgender: describes children whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisgender is the counterpart to transgender.

Desistance: a term originating in the field of criminology, to refer to the cessation of offending behaviour; it has been used in research on gender diverse children to refer to the situation where a gender diverse child is assumed to develop a cisgender identity as a youth or adult.

Gender creative/gender diverse/ gender independent/ gender non-conforming/gender variant: terms to describe children whose gender expression differs from the gender expectations in their particular culture.

Gender dysphoria: the sense of distress experienced by some transgender people, related to a sense of mismatch between gender identity and birth-assigned sex (or external assumptions of gender based on birth-assigned sex). Gender dysphoria should not be used as a synonym for being transgender.

Gender expression: describes the way an individual expresses or presents their sense of culturally-defined masculinity, femininity, or androgyny, in terms of dress, hairstyle, activity preferences, etc. (e.g. “I like to wear my hair long.”) Gender expression is distinct from gender identity and may not “match” cultural expectations based on gender identity or sex assigned at birth.

Gender identity: the profound, personal sense of one’s own gender. (e.g. “I am a girl.”) Children begin to develop a sense of gender identity in toddlerhood, and most children generally have a stable sense of their own gender identity by the age of 4 years,⁸ while for some individuals, gender identity may be fluid throughout their lifetime. Awareness or understanding of oneself as transgender may develop at any age.

Trans/transgender: a term to describe individuals whose gender identity is not in synchrony with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Two-Spirit: A term chosen and used by some Indigenous people to describe the diverse roles and identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, trans, and/or gender-fluid Indigenous people in North America. It also reflects a long history of sexual and gender diversity within Indigenous cultures.⁴