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## All in the Family: How Extended Family Relationships Are Influenced by Children's Gender Diverse and Transgender Identities

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Researchers have begun to build on the observational work of clinicians (Coolhart, 2012; Lev, 2004) to further investigate how children's transgender identities and gender nonconformity influence families (Hill & Menvielle, 2009; Kuvalanka, Weiner, & Mahan, 2014; Rahilly, 2015; Sansfaçon, Robichaud, & Dumais-Michaud, 2015). Parents of transgender and gender diverse youth often struggle, at least initially, to understand their children's gender identities and expressions while simultaneously facing blame from family members, friends, neighbors, even health-care professionals for causing gender "confusion" in their children (Johnson & Benson, 2014; Sansfaçon et al., 2015). While parents may undergo a profound transition—from uneducated novices to ardent advocates (Brill & Pepper, 2008; Rahilly, 2015; Sansfaçon et al., 2015)—siblings of these children, especially those who are school-age, may face secondary social stigma from peers (Menvielle, 2012). Like their parents, they, too, may grow into allies who have greater appreciation for transgender issues in particular and diversity in general (Kuvalanka et al., 2014; Norwood, 2013b). Although there is still much to learn about how parents and siblings are influenced by and respond to children's transgender identities and gender nonconformity, even less is known about how other family members are affected, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, who may play significant roles in the lives of these youth.

Family researchers and clinicians increasingly understand that *family acceptance*—often thought of as parental acceptance—has important implications for the well-being of sexual- and gender-minority (i.e., LGBTQ) youth. Studies coming out of the Family Acceptance Project report that both acceptance and rejection have a strong influence on their emotional and behavioral health, affecting the possibility of substance use, the presence of suicidality, and their capacity for self-esteem regulation (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009; Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010). These findings were underscored by

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