

SERVING LGBT YOUTH  
IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

# CWLA Best Practice Guidelines

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CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

The Child Welfare League of America is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization. We are committed to engaging people everywhere in promoting the well-being of children, youth, and their families, and protecting every child from harm.

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b> . . . . .	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	<b>ix</b>
The Model Standards: A Historical Framework . . . . .	x
The Scope of the Guidelines . . . . .	xiii
<b>1 LGBT Youth in Out-of-Home Care</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
Self-Awareness of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity . . . . .	1
Pathways of LGBT Youth into State Care . . . . .	3
Mistreatment of LGBT Youth in Out-of-Home Care . . . . .	6
<b>2 Creating an Inclusive Organizational Culture</b> . . . . .	<b>9</b>
Adopting Written Nondiscrimination Policies . . . . .	10
Providing Training on the Application of the Nondiscrimination Policy . . . . .	11
<b>3 A Family-Centered Approach to Serving LGBT Youth</b> . . . . .	<b>15</b>
Contemporary LGBT Youth and Their Families . . . . .	16
Supporting Family Acceptance and Reconciliation. . . . .	18
<i>Prevention Services</i> . . . . .	19
<i>Intensive Home-Based Services</i> . . . . .	19
<i>Educational Services</i> . . . . .	20
<i>Reunification Services</i> . . . . .	21
Permanent Connections for LGBT Youth. . . . .	21
<i>Developing a Strong Agency Focus on Permanence</i> . . . . .	23
<i>Working Closely with LGBT Youth</i> . . . . .	23
<i>Reducing Reliance on Group Care for LGBT Youth</i> . . . . .	24
<i>Providing Training and Ongoing Support to Permanent Families</i> . . . . .	25

<b>4 Promoting Positive Adolescent Development . . .</b>	<b>27</b>
Supporting the Positive Development and Expression of Sexual Orientation . . . . .	27
Supporting the Positive Development and Expression of Gender Identity . . . . .	29
Prohibiting Practices That Pathologize, Punish, or Criminalize LGBT Youth . . . . .	30
Providing Positive Social and Recreational Outlets. . . . .	31
<b>5 Collecting and Managing Confidential Information . . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>
Providing a Safe Space for LGBT Youth to Come Out . . . . .	35
Managing Confidential Information Appropriately . . . . .	37
<b>6 Ensuring Appropriate Homes for LGBT Youth . . .</b>	<b>41</b>
Making Individualized Placement Decisions . . . . .	42
Increasing and Diversifying Placement Options. . . . .	43
Supporting Caregivers of LGBT Youth. . . . .	43
<b>7 LGBT Youth in Institutional Settings . . . . .</b>	<b>47</b>
Housing and Classification of LGBT Youth . . . . .	47
Protecting the Safety and Well-Being of Transgender Youth . . . . .	49
Programmatic Protections . . . . .	50
<b>8 Providing Appropriate Health, Mental Health, and Education Services to LGBT Youth . . . . .</b>	<b>53</b>
Providing Inclusive, Nondiscriminatory Health Care to LGBT Youth . .	53
Providing Inclusive, Nondiscriminatory Mental Health Care to LGBT Youth . . . . .	55
Providing Transgender Youth with Appropriate Health and Mental Health Care . . . . .	56
Ensuring Safe and Nondiscriminatory Educational Opportunities for LGBT Youth . . . . .	59

**Glossary . . . . . 63**

**References . . . . . 67**

**Appendix A: Model Standards Project Staff. . . . . 73**

**Appendix B: Model Standards Project  
Advisory Committee . . . . . 75**

- Child welfare personnel repeatedly move a lesbian youth from one inappropriate placement to another, subjecting her to constant rejection and discrimination and depriving her of a permanent home or family.
- Detention facility staff place a gay youth in isolation “for his own protection,” depriving him of education, recreation, companionship, or other programming and services.
- Line staff in a group home fail to intervene when residents harass and abuse a transgender youth because they believe he “asked for it” by being open about his gender identity.

These disturbingly common practices illustrate the serious problems in the care of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The lack of professional guidance related to youths’ sexual identities has left a vacuum that is often filled by harmful, discriminatory practices based on personal biases rather than informed, evidence-based policies. The best practice guidelines in this book will improve outcomes for youth with accurate, up-to-date information about the best practices for providing competent services to youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

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