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Journal

The Williams Institute

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Publication Date

2026-06-03

Data Availability

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RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

Current Challenges for Transgender Parents in an Increasingly Anti-Transgender Sociopolitical Climate

June 2026

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Executive Summary

Through a survey of 108 transgender and nonbinary parents with at least one minor child conducted in 2025, this study explores their parenting experiences, with a focus on understanding their routes and barriers to becoming parents and the impact of an increasingly anti-transgender legal, policy, and social climate on their families and their plans to parent children in the future.

Most of the 108 respondents identified as nonbinary (37%), transgender women (32%), or transgender men (22%), and one-third (33%) were people of color. Almost two-thirds of these parents (65%) were younger parents, aged 18-35. Most of these parents (86%) had one or two children, and half (50%) had at least one child aged five years or younger. Many of these parents faced significant financial and health challenges. For example, over the past year, more than one-third of respondents struggled to pay rent (34%), and over two-thirds reported depression (67%).

Key Findings

Some core aspects of becoming and being a transgender parent involve not only having children, but also navigating one's transgender identity with one's children and others; having one's parenting status a) legally recognized and b) socially supported; and feeling safe as a family. Transgender parents communicated that they face considerable barriers and challenges in each of these areas—difficulties that they strive to overcome for their children and themselves amid a challenging sociopolitical climate.

Routes and Barriers to Family Formation

“As a nonbinary and Black parent in U.S. ... I can say the rise in anti-trans and anti-Black sentiment, along with legal rollbacks, has made me more cautious about expanding my family.”

- The most common routes to parenthood for respondents were sexual intercourse (57%), donor-assisted methods (24%), and adoption (28%).
 - Over half of respondents reported having children through intercourse with their current partner (52%); in addition, 7% reported having children through intercourse with someone other than their current partner, for example, an ex-partner.
 - Over one-quarter (28%) reported having at least one child through adoption, including adopting from foster care (19%), private domestic adoption (9%), and international adoption (5%).
 - A similar number of participants were gestational and biological parents to a child conceived via donor insemination (13%) or non-gestational and non-biological parents to a child conceived via donor insemination (12%). Fewer had pursued reciprocal in vitro fertilization (RIVF).
 - Some respondents reported being a stepparent (7%), having a child through surrogacy (7%), or being a foster parent (3%)
- When asked about barriers to future parenting, respondents endorsed the increasingly hostile legal and social environment for LGBTQ people, the lack of support from other parents, worries

about their health and finances, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, the anti-trans policies of the Trump administration, and more general (non-LGBTQ-specific) considerations.

- Over half of respondents (52%) cited anti-LGBTQ legislation and climate as a barrier to future parenting.
- Almost one-third (31%) identified a lack of access to LGBTQ parenting supports (e.g., community centers, support groups) as a barrier, and one-fourth (25%) identified a lack of access to other LGBTQ parents in the community.
- Approximately half of respondents reported personal financial considerations (49%) and poor mental health (49%) as barriers to future parenthood.
- Over half of respondents (55%) indicated that the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* has affected their future parenting plans, with nearly 40% reporting that the decision led them to have fewer children than they originally intended.
- One-third of respondents (33%) indicated that, because of Trump's re-election and presidency, they were planning to have fewer children.
- Many respondents cited non-LGBTQ-specific considerations as barriers to future parenting, including concerns about the economy (51%), school shootings (40%), climate change (30%), and white supremacy or racism (28%)

Trans Visibility

"My kids deserve a parent that is living in their authentic self."

- **Openness with their children.** While most respondents were open with their children about their transgender identity, those with older children (13 and older) were more likely to be open than those with children 12 years old or younger.
 - The vast majority of transgender parents with children aged 13 years and older were willing to share their own transgender identities (83%) with them, talk more generally about the existence of different transgender identities (85%), discuss their fears and concerns as a transgender parent (83%), and discuss transgender rights in the United States (95%).
 - Although fewer, the majority of respondents were also open about discussing being transgender (64%) with their children 12 years old and younger, as well as open about discussing the existence of different transgender identities (77%), and transgender rights (69%). A smaller number of transgender parents (42%) were willing to discuss their fears and concerns as a transgender parent with their younger children.
- **Navigating visibility with their children.** One-quarter of respondents (25%) indicated that they intended to limit their children's speech around their transgender identity. For example, one parent explained: "I don't want my son accidentally outing us in a bad way, so I tell him not to talk about my identity." However, many respondents also emphasized that it was important for their children to see them as "showing up as [themselves], even in environments that are not fully affirming."

- **Impact of the Trump administration on visibility.** Due to the anti-trans policies of the Trump administration, about four in 10 respondents (39%) have limited the visibility of their own transgender identity or their family's visibility (e.g., on social media, in public spaces) out of safety concerns.

Legal Recognition

- While most respondents (93%) had legally recognized relationships with all of their children, 59% were concerned about challenges to the legal validity of their parenting rights.
 - The major factors driving these concerns were the recent rise in anti-LGBTQ legislation in general (69%), and anti-trans legislation more specifically (51%), and the lack of federal protections for LGBTQ parents (e.g., nondiscrimination protections) (49%). In addition, these concerns were driven by the Trump administration's stance on transgender rights (42%), the rise in anti-transgender sentiment/attitudes (38%), and discriminatory policies in schools, health care, and the legal system (35%).
- Survey participants also expressed fears that they would be reported to child welfare agencies just because of their gender identity or other marginalized identities, placing them at risk of surveillance and, possibly, child removals.
 - Approximately four in 10 respondents feared that schools/daycares (41%), neighbors (41%), or health care providers (38%) might report them to child welfare agencies because of their gender identity. Thirty percent feared such reporting by family members.
 - When including other characteristics beyond gender identity and sexual orientation, including race/ethnicity, economic status, religion, and disability, 63% were concerned about being reported to child welfare agencies by neighbors, 61% by their children's schools or daycares, 55% by health care providers (55%), and 47% by family members.
 - Some transgender parents reported shoring up legal recognition of their family relationships in response to the Trump administration. For example, 30% of respondents had secured additional legal safeguards to protect their legal relationship with their child, and 25% had pursued (additional) legal safeguards for their relationship with their partner.

Social Acceptance

Parents and Local Communities

"When I first moved here people weren't necessarily accepting, but they kept their opinions to themselves. Now people are openly hostile and will harass queer members of the town."

- Only half of respondents (50%) reported being somewhat (36%) or very (14%) accepted by other parents.
- Some respondents (24%) commented on how the election of President Trump and the increasingly anti-transgender climate nationally were impacting the support they received from other parents and from their local communities.

- For some respondents, living in a rural or suburban area meant they received less support, even if nearby cities or their state overall were more supportive of transgender people.

Support from Schools and Daycare Centers

“My children’s daycare providers and teachers are aware that I am trans. Our relationship is polite and professional, but there’s a noticeable distance that makes it feel less than fully welcoming.”

- Only one-quarter of respondents (24%) said that all of their children’s teachers and/or daycare providers knew they were transgender. A similar percentage (23%) reported that none of their children’s teachers and/or daycare providers knew they were transgender, 37% said that some knew and some did not, and 11% were not sure if teachers and/or daycare providers knew about their transgender identities.
- Although most respondents were not out as transgender to all of their children’s teachers and daycare providers, most reported that they had positive (54%) or neutral (23%) relationships with them. About one-fifth of respondents (18%) reported having both positive and negative relationships.
- Since the re-election of President Trump, 15% of respondents had decided to homeschool or change their child/ren’s school to ensure a safer/more affirming environment, and 16% planned on avoiding school events during the four years of the Trump administration.

Family Safety

Safety concerns can deter transgender people from becoming parents and present significant concerns while parenting.

“Safety feels like something I now have to plan for in every decision.”

Safety Concerns of Respondent’s Children

- Many respondents reported that their children had heightened concerns about safety as a result of the re-election of President Trump. While 45% of respondents felt that their children were too young to be sufficiently aware of current events to be affected by the Trump administration, among the remainder, two-thirds (66%) reported that their children were more anxious and/or fearful as a result of the Trump administration.
- Over half (56%) of parents with children old enough to be aware of current events said their children had expressed new worries or concerns since Trump’s re-election. For example, they voiced specific worries and concerns about their parents’ safety; whether their families will face discrimination, harassment, or violence; and whether their families will be split up or will have to move to a safer location.

- As with other topics related to gender identity, more transgender parents (88%) were willing to discuss safety and navigating public spaces with their older children than with their children who were 12 years old or younger (66%).

Safety Concerns of Family and Friends

- Many respondents reported that their friends (60%) and their family members (50%) had communicated a great deal or a moderate amount of concern about their safety as a transgender person.
- The dominant safety concerns of friends and family members were that respondents would be harassed in public spaces, risk physical violence or hate crimes, or be discriminated against in health care settings.
- About one-third of respondents reported that their friends (33%) and family members (38%) had expressed concerns about their safety when parenting or being out in public with their children.

Relative Safety

Recognizing the diversity of the transgender population based on various intersectional privileges, geography, and other factors, participants were asked how safe they felt compared to other transgender people in the U.S.

"I'm visibly nonbinary and parenting in a conservative region."

- Among the 43% of survey respondents who felt safer than other transgender people, most (91%) attributed this, in part, to their race (i.e., being white), 74% to living in a trans-affirming state, 71% to their financial and/or educational privilege, and 57% to their extensive social support network.
- Among the 36% of survey respondents who felt less safe, over half (56%) attributed this to being a person of color or a specific race/ethnicity, 46% to living in a state that is hostile towards transgender people, 44% to their lack of perceived safety at work, 44% to not having identity documents that reflect their gender identity, and 41% to their lack of an extensive social support network.

Avoidance Behaviors and Safety

- Many respondents reported planning to avoid certain settings and activities during the Trump administration.
 - Travel was one of the most frequently selected types of activity that participants intended to avoid—generally travel outside of the U.S. (39%)
 - The same percentage of participants (39%) planned to avoid public restrooms.
 - Approximately three in 10 respondents intended to avoid government agencies (32%) and social service agencies (29%).

- Approximately one-quarter of respondents indicated that they intended to avoid gender-affirming care providers (28%), OB/GYNs (25%), or gyms and fitness studios (22%).
- Some parents sought to avoid certain family-oriented contexts, including family gatherings (27%), playgrounds and parks (19%), pediatricians' offices (17%), and children's social events such as birthday parties (15%).

Across many responses to the open-ended questions on our survey, clear patterns emerged: the love and dedication these parents have for their children, their resilience in facing and overcoming obstacles, and the many ways they go above and beyond the already significant work of parenting to protect and nurture their families. Most of the challenges and barriers for transgender parents were exacerbated during the first year of the Trump administration. While policy progress at the federal level seems challenging in the short-term, there is much that LGBTQ and trans-led organizations, parenting organizations and networks, and local school districts can do now to address the barriers faced by transgender parents, in particular for those who live in states with hostile climates for transgender people and for transgender parents across the country who live in rural and suburban areas.

Findings

Sample Demographics

Most of the 108 respondents to the survey identified as nonbinary (37%), transgender women (32%), or transgender men (22%) (see Table 1). Most (92%) had changed their name, pronouns, gender marker, or appearance.

Two-thirds (67%) were white, and one-third (33%) were people of color. Most identified as bisexual (45%), queer (12%), or pansexual (12%).

The vast majority were employed (93%), and 78% had a college degree or more. In terms of income, over half (54%) reported annual family incomes of \$100,000 or less, with 14% reporting incomes of \$25,000 or less. Thirty-three percent reported family incomes of \$101,000–\$200,000, and 13% reported family incomes of over \$200,000. (For context, the median family income in the United States for 2024 was \$105,000.¹)

Almost one-fifth were young parents, aged 18 to 25 (18%). Almost half (47%) were ages 26 to 35, one third (33%) were 36 to 50, and just two (2%) were over 50.

The largest shares of participants were from Texas (16%), New York (7%), Virginia (7%), North Carolina (6%), and Florida (5%), with between one and four participants in an additional 29 states.

Over two-thirds were married (70%); an additional 18% were partnered but not married; 3% were dating; and 1% were separated. Of these participants, 22% had partners who were cisgender women, 20% had partners who were transgender women, 18% had partners who were transgender men, 17% had partners who were cisgender men, 11% had partners who were nonbinary, 7% said their partners were men of transgender experience, and 4% indicated that their partners identified another way (i.e., genderqueer, woman of transgender experience, multiple partners of different genders). Put differently, over half of these families included two transgender or nonbinary parents (55%), 35% included a transgender or nonbinary parent and a cisgender parent, and 10% included just one transgender or nonbinary parent with no partner.

The Methodology section at the end of this report provides further details on the study procedures and recruitment.

Table 1. Demographics (N = 108)

Variable	N	%
Gender Identity		
Trans woman	34	31.5%
Trans man/man of transgender experience ^a	24	22.2%
Nonbinary	40	37.0%

¹ *Median Family Income in the United States (MEFAINUSA646N)*, FED. RSRV. BANK ST. LOUIS, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEFAINUSA646N> (last visited Feb. 1, 2026).

Variable	N	%
Genderqueer	3	2.8%
Something else (e.g., genderfluid, genderflux)	7	6.5%
Gender Transition		
Changed my gender marker (e.g., on official IDs)	35	32.4%
Changed my legal name	27	25.0%
Use hormone therapy	42	38.9%
Use different pronouns	76	70.4%
Go by a different name	43	39.8%
Changed clothing, jewelry, or hairstyle to fit with gender identity	74	68.5%
Started or stopped wearing makeup	46	42.6%
Changed facial hair	39	36.1%
Have not done any of these	9	8.3%
Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	49	45.4%
Queer	13	12.0%
Pansexual	13	12.0%
Gay	11	10.2%
Lesbian	8	7.4%
Something else (e.g., asexual, asexual and lesbian, demisexual)	14	13.0%
Age		
18-25 years old	19	17.6%
26-30	25	23.1%
31-35	26	24.1%
36-40	23	21.3%
41-45	10	9.3%
46-50	3	2.8%
51+	2	1.8%
Race^b		
White	78	72.2%
Black	29	26.9%
Hispanic	4	3.7%
Asian	2	1.9%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.9%
Something else (i.e., self-identified as “mixed”)	1	0.9%
Racial Category		
White only	72	66.7%
Of color	36	33.3%

Variable	N	%
Education		
High school diploma	8	7.4%
Some college/an associate's degree	16	14.8%
Bachelor's degree	30	27.8%
Master's degree	39	36.1%
PhD/JD/MD	15	13.9%
Employment		
Employed	100	92.6%
Not employed	8	7.4%
Family Income		
0-\$12,500	8	7.4%
\$12,501-\$25,000	7	6.5%
\$25,001-\$50,000	14	13.0%
\$50,001-\$75,000	20	18.5%
\$75,001-\$100,000	9	8.3%
\$101,001-\$125,000	16	14.8%
\$125,001-\$150,000	9	8.3%
\$150,001-\$175,000	8	7.3%
\$175,001-\$200,000	3	2.8%
>\$200,000	14	13.0%

Note: ^a Twenty participants identified as transgender men, and four identified as men of transgender experience. No participants identified as women of transgender experience; all 34 participants in the parallel category identified as transgender women.

^b Numbers add up to more than 100 because individuals could endorse more than one response.

Financial and Health Pressures on Transgender Parents

Financial Insecurity and Reliance on Governmental Assistance

Respondents were asked about financial challenges they experienced over the past year (Table 2), with 68% reporting at least one type of financial challenge. Over the past year, 42% of respondents had struggled to pay basic household expenses, and one-third (34%) had struggled to pay their rent. Thirty percent had relied on family or friends to pay living expenses during that time period. Four percent reported sleeping outside, in a shelter, or in a place not intended for sleeping in the past year.

Regarding government assistance, over two-thirds (69%) reported currently interacting with, or receiving at least one type of assistance from, government programs. Forty-four percent of respondents reported current reliance on or interaction with federal or state health care (Medicare, Medicaid), 23% with government-subsidized mental health services, 22% with food assistance, 10% with financial/cash assistance, 8% with Head Start, and 5% with child welfare services. Just under one-third (31%) did not use or interface with any of these systems.

Overall, more than two-thirds of respondents experienced financial challenges in the past year and were currently relying on some form of governmental assistance or interacting with an agency that provides such support. Such experiences of financial precarity and governmental dependence may inform their approach to engaging with such services during the Trump administration.

Table 2a. Past-year financial challenges (N = 108)

Past-year experiences of financial challenge	N	%
Struggled to pay rent	37	34.3%
Struggled to pay basic household expenses	45	41.7%
Relied on family/friends to pay living expenses	32	29.6%
Slept outside, in a shelter, or in a place not meant for sleeping	4	3.7%
None of these	34	31.5%

Table 2b. Current reliance on governmental assistance (N = 108)

Do you currently interact with and/or receive support from these social service agencies?	N	%
Health insurance (e.g., Medicaid, Medicare)	47	43.5%
Mental health services	25	23.1%
Food assistance (e.g., SNAP, WIC)	24	22.2%
Financial assistance/cash assistance	11	10.2%
Child care (e.g., Head Start)	9	8.3%
Employment assistance	9	8.3%
Shelter and housing	8	7.4%
Utilities assistance	8	7.4%
Disability services	7	6.5%
Veterans' and military families' services	6	5.6%
Child welfare (e.g., DCF)	5	4.6%
None of these	33	30.6%

Mental Health Challenges and Coping

Over nine in 10 respondents (94%) reported one or more health challenges, with over three-fourths reporting anxiety (60% diagnosed by a provider, 19% self-diagnosed) and over two-thirds reporting depression (50% provider-diagnosed, 17% self-diagnosed). Over one-third of respondents reported ADHD (22% provider-diagnosed, 13% self-diagnosed) or PTSD (21% provider-diagnosed, 13% self-diagnosed). Only 7% reported no mental health challenges. The high rates of anxiety and depression, in particular,

are consistent with prior research, particularly recent work, showing high levels of distress among transgender adults,² with evidence that rates of distress are increasing in response to hostile legislation.³

When asked how they were addressing or coping with such challenges, the vast majority of respondents (95%) reported taking one or more steps (see Table 3). Approximately half of respondents (52%) were seeing a therapist and/or taking medication (47%). Approximately four in 10 were coping with mental health challenges by exercising (43%), engaging in hobbies (42%), or spending time with friends and family (37%).

Table 3a. Current mental health challenges (N = 108)

Current Mental Health Challenges	Diagnosed by provider		Self- diagnosed		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Depression	54	50.0%	18	16.7%	72	66.7%
Anxiety	65	60.2%	21	19.4%	86	79.6%
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	12	11.1%	6	5.6%	18	16.8%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	23	21.3%	14	13.0%	37	34.3%
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	24	22.2%	14	13.0%	38	35.2%
Bipolar Disorder	11	10.2%	2	1.9%	13	12.1%
Eating Disorder	5	4.6%	6	5.6%	11	10.2%
Something else					5	4.6%
Autism	1	0.9%	2	1.9%	3	2.8%
Dissociative identity disorder	2	1.9%	0	0%	2	1.9%
None of these/no mental health challenges					7	6.5%

Table 3b. Coping with mental health challenges (N = 108)

Coping with Mental Health Challenges	Yes	
	N	%
Seeing a therapist	56	51.9%
Seeing a psychiatrist	31	28.7%
Taking medication	51	47.2%
Attending a support group/group therapy	13	12.0%
Exercising	46	42.6%
Meditating	34	31.5%
Spending time with friends/family	40	37.0%

² Nessa Millet, Julia Longworth & Jon Arcelus, *Prevalence of anxiety symptoms and disorders in the transgender population: A systematic review of the literature*, 18 INT'L J. TRANSGENDERISM 27 (2017).

³ Sharon G. Horne et al., *The Stench of Bathroom Bills and Anti-Transgender Legislation: Anxiety and Depression Among Transgender, Nonbinary, and Cisgender LGBTQ People During a State Referendum*, 69 J. COUNSELING PSYCH., 1 (2022); Michael Liu et al., *Health Status and Mental Health of Transgender and Gender-Diverse Adults*, 184 JAMA INTERN MED. 984 (2024); Arjee Restar et al., *Antitrans Policy Environment and Depression and Anxiety Symptoms in Transgender and Nonbinary Adults*, 7 JAMA NETWORK OPEN e2431306 (2024).

Coping with Mental Health Challenges	Yes	
	N	%
Engaging in hobbies	45	41.7%
Avoiding the news/media	25	23.1%
Spending time with pets	32	29.6%
Working	35	32.4%
Using alcohol or drugs	14	13.0%
N/A, none of these	5	4.6%

Children: Number, Age, Legal Status, and Gender Identity

Most parents had either one (43%) or two (43%) children, and most parents had legally recognized relationships with all of their children (93%). Half (50%) had at least one child who was five years old or younger, 60% had at least one child who was aged 6 to 12, and 36% had at least one child who was aged 13 to 18. See Table 4 for the number, age, and legal status of participants' children.

Table 4. Number, age, and legal status of children (N = 108)

Variable	N	%
Number of Children		
1	46	42.6%
2	46	42.6%
3	9	8.3%
4	4	3.7%
5+	3	2.8%
Age of Children		
Any child 0-5	54	50.0%
Any child 6-12	65	60.2%
Any child 13-18	39	36.1%
Any child over 18	1	0.9%
Legal Status of Children		
Legal parent to all children	100	92.6%
Legal parent to some children	3	2.8%
Legal parent to no children	5	4.6%

Sixty percent of participants reported having at least one cisgender boy, 55% reported having at least one cisgender girl, 4% reported having a transgender girl, 2% reported having a transgender boy, and 1% reported having a nonbinary child. In total, 94% of respondents reported only having cisgender children, and only 6% reported having at least one transgender or nonbinary child. See Table 5 for the gender identity of participants' children.

Table 5. Gender identity of children (N = 108)

Gender Identity of Children	N	%
At least one cisgender boy	65	60.2%
At least one cisgender girl	59	54.6%
At least one transgender boy	2	1.9%
At least one transgender girl	4	3.7%
At least one nonbinary child	1	0.9%
At least one transgender or nonbinary child	6	5.6%

Routes, Barriers, and Challenges to Parenthood

As Table 6 indicates, the most common routes to parenthood were intercourse with one's partner or someone else (57%), adoption (28%), and donor-assisted methods (24%). Fewer respondents reported being a stepparent (7%), having a child through surrogacy (7%), or currently fostering a child (3%).

In terms of over half of respondents (57%) who had any child or children through intercourse, more reported having any child through intercourse with their current partner (52%) than reported having any child through intercourse with someone who was not their current partner (7%).

In terms of the more than one quarter of respondents (28%) who had any child or children through adoption, more reported having a child adopted through foster care (19%) than through a private adoption (9%) or an international adoption (5%).

Among the 24% of respondents who reported having any child or children via donor-assisted methods, respondents were similarly likely to be gestational and genetic (13%) or non-gestational and non-genetic (12%) parents to children; a smaller number used reciprocal in vitro fertilization (IVF) for at least one child, wherein they were the gestational parent but not the genetic parent (8%) or the genetic but not the gestational parent (5%).

Table 6. Routes to parenthood (N = 108)

Route to Parenthood	N	%
Intercourse		
Any child via sexual intercourse, my partner	56	51.9%
Any child via sexual intercourse, not current partner	8	7.4%
Any child via any type of intercourse	61	56.5%
Donor-Assisted Methods		
Any child via donor insemination, gestational, and genetic parent	14	13.0%
Any child via donor insemination, non-gestational, and non-genetic parent	13	12.0%
Any child via donor insemination, reciprocal in vitro fertilization (RIVF), gestational parent	5	4.6%
Any child via donor insemination, RIVF, non-gestational parent	9	8.3%

Route to Parenthood	N	%
Any child via any type of donor-assisted method	26	24.1%
Surrogacy and adoption		
Any child via surrogacy	7	6.5%
Any child via adoption through foster care	21	19.4%
Any child via private adoption	10	9.3%
Any child via international adoption	5	4.6%
Any child via any type of adoption	30	27.8%
Fostering		
Any child, foster parent	3	2.8%
Stepparenthood		
Any child, stepparent	7	6.5%
Other		
Any child via some other route	3	2.8%

Barriers to Parenthood

Respondents indicated that LGBTQ-specific concerns, worries about their own health and finances, and more general (non-LGBTQ-specific) considerations were barriers to future parenting.

- **LGBTQ-focused concerns.** Over half of respondents cited anti-LGBTQ legislation and climate as a barrier (52%) to future parenting, and 43% more specifically noted anti-transgender legislation and climate. Further, almost one-third of respondents identified a lack of access to LGBTQ parenting supports (e.g., LGBTQ community centers and support groups) as a barrier (31%), and one-fourth (25%) identified a lack of access to other LGBTQ parents in the community. Over one-quarter identified a lack of access to LGBTQ-inclusive health care (29%), and almost one-fifth identified internalized transphobia, homophobia, and/or biphobia (19%) as a barrier to parenting.
- **Personal finances and health.** About half of respondents (49%) reported that personal financial considerations were a barrier to future parenthood. Further, approximately half of respondents (49%) cited their own poor mental health as a barrier, and 33% cited their own health concerns more generally.
- **More general concerns.** Many respondents cited non-LGBTQ-specific considerations as barriers to future parenting, including concerns about the economy (51%), school shootings (40%), climate change (30%), and white supremacy or racism (28%)

See Table 7 for all political-legal, economic, child well-being, health care access, and support-related considerations and barriers related to future parenthood.

Table 7. Barriers to parenthood as a transgender person (N = 108)

Barriers to Parenthood	N	%	Quotes (from 81 participants who said at least one of these concerns applied to future parenthood)
Political and legal considerations			
Anti-LGBTQ legislation, policies, and climate	56	51.9%	“Legal uncertainties, discrimination concerns, and lack of protections for LGBTQ families.” “Legal uncertainties related to parental rights as a trans person.” “If I adopt, my being trans means I could lose my children if someone challenged that. It would hurt them and us. If we adopt and the child [is LGBTQ] it could affect us.”
Anti-trans legislation, policies, and climate	46	42.6%	
Polarized political climate	26	24.1%	
White supremacy, racism	30	27.8%	
Economic considerations			
Financial considerations	53	49.1%	“The way our world is, and financially.”
The economy	55	50.9%	
Child safety and well-being considerations			
Climate change	32	29.6%	“Fear that my children may be discriminated against at school by others from straight families.” “The whole world is on fire.”
School shootings	43	39.8%	
Police brutality	18	16.7%	
Changes in public education	22	20.4%	
Personal health and well-being considerations			
Mental health concerns	55	49.1%	“Access to affirming healthcare.” “Parenting one child is already emotionally and financially challenging given current conditions.” “Health concerns, as I’m not sure I’d be capable of taking care of another child with my own health issues and caring for my elderly mother.” “Difficulty getting/staying pregnant without the use of medications, which would increase health risks.” “Ongoing health issues related to hormone therapy.”
Health concerns	36	33.3%	
Fertility concerns related to gender affirming care	14	13.0%	
Internalized trans/homo/biphobia	21	19.4%	
Lack of outness about my gender identity/sexuality in my life/networks	16	14.8%	
Health care access considerations			
Anti-choice (or anti-abortion) movement	26	24.1%	“Uncertainty and high cost of fertility modification care and services.” “Being transmasculine nonbinary, but not having male genitalia, means I can’t get my partner pregnant, and fertility is expensive though she wants to carry.”
Lack of access to LGBTQ inclusive health care	31	28.7%	
Desire to pursue gender transition	17	15.7%	

Barriers to Parenthood	N	%	Quotes (from 81 participants who said at least one of these concerns applied to future parenthood)
Support considerations			
Lack of access to LGBTQ inclusive parenting supports	33	30.6%	"Lack of support systems federally and from our families."
Lack of other LGBTQ parents in my community	27	25.0%	
Lack of support from family	30	27.8%	
Lack of support from friends	17	15.7%	
Lack of support from employer, supervisor, or colleagues	11	10.2%	
A partner who was unsupportive of or uninterested in parenthood	9	8.3%	

Barriers to Parenthood: The Role of *Dobbs*

In its 2022 decision, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*,⁴ the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, with implications for how safe, feasible, and desirable parenthood feels for transgender people. Although the majority opinion in *Dobbs* indicated that the decision was limited to abortion, in his concurrence, Justice Thomas argued that it had implications for the future of all rights protected by the Due Process Clause,⁵ which could include rights to use contraception; to marry (including same-sex and interracial marriage); to procreate; to parent; for parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children; and decisions regarding bodily integrity and medical care—which has implications for gender-affirming care.⁶ In fact, on different grounds, in its 2025 decision *United States v. Skrametti*,⁷ the U.S. Supreme Court held that state bans on gender-affirming care for minors did not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.

This survey, conducted after *Dobbs* but before the *Skrametti* decision, asked respondents about the impact of the *Roe v. Wade* reversal on their parenting plans. Over half of respondents (55%) indicated that the overturning of *Roe* had affected their future parenting plans, with nearly 40% reporting that the decision had led them to plan to have fewer children than they originally intended (see Table 8). As one participant said, "My husband and I discussed our concerns and mutually decided that he would get a vasectomy to avoid me experiencing a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy that could no longer be medically treated safely in Texas (our state of residence)." Other participants had their children in a different way than expected, and/or shifted the timing of parenthood (i.e., faster or slower) because of the *Dobbs* decision.

⁴ *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.*, 597 U.S. 215 (2022).

⁵ "For that reason, in future cases, we should reconsider all of this Court's substantive due process precedents, including *Griswold*, *Lawrence*, and *Obergefell*. Because any substantive due process decision is demonstrably erroneous, we have a duty to correct the error established in those precedents. *Id.* at 292 (Thomas, J., concurring) (internal citations omitted).

⁶ See generally, Nathan S. Chapman & Kenji Yoshino, *The Fourteenth Amendment Due Process Clause*, NAT'L CONST. CTR., <https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/articles/amendment-xiv/clauses/701> (last visited Feb. 2, 2026).

⁷ *United States v. Skrametti*, 605 U.S. 495 (2025).

Table 8. The influence of *Dobbs* on parenting choices and decisions (N = 108)

Because of the overturning of <i>Roe v. Wade</i> ...	N	%	Explanation/Elaboration
I decided to have fewer children	43	39.8%	"I have decided not to have a 3rd child as I originally planned due to the issues with <i>Roe v. Wade</i> . I had complications with my most recent pregnancy and may have them again."
I had children/became a parent in a different way than I expected	8	7.4%	"My partner and I decided to adopt a baby boy from foster care." "I chose to adopt a child." "The rollback of reproductive rights made me more cautious about future family planning."
I had children more slowly/slowed down my timeline	12	11.1%	
I had children more quickly/sped up the timing	8	7.4%	
I moved to a different state after I had children	4	3.7%	
I moved to a different state before I had children	2	1.9%	
Some other impact	4	3.7%	"I began documenting my legal and medical decisions more carefully to prepare for any future legal scrutiny regarding reproductive decisions and parental rights." "My partner pursued long-term birth control." "I got 5-year birth control implanted."
N/A, no changes or impact	49	45.4%	

Barriers to Parenthood: The Role of the Trump Presidency

With the re-election of President Trump, many transgender Americans reported experiencing significant fear, anxiety, and anger.⁸ One of President Trump's first executive orders aimed to erase the identities of transgender and nonbinary people for the purposes of federal law and policy, with sweeping implications for nondiscrimination protections, accurate federal identification documents, incarcerated transgender people, health care access for transgender youth, access to shelters and other services, and students' access to equal education, including access to restrooms and sports participation.⁹ Many transgender

⁸ ABBIE E. GOLDBERG & BRAD SEARS, WILLIAMS INST., PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSGENDER ADULTS PREPARING FOR A TRUMP PRESIDENCY (2025), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-election-perceptions/>; *New Survey Reveals Dramatic Changes for LGBTQ Adults Since November 2024*, MOVEMENT ADVANCEMENT PROJECT (Oct. 2025), www.mapresearch.org/2025-norc-survey-report.

⁹ ELANA REDFIELD & ISHANI CHOKSHI, WILLIAMS INST., IMPACT OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER REDEFINING SEX ON TRANSGENDER, NONBINARY, AND INTERSEX PEOPLE (2025), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/impact-eo-redefine-sex-tbi/>.

people have other identities that create additional vulnerabilities under Trump administration policies, such as having low income, being a person of color, being disabled, and being an immigrant.¹⁰

Considering the long history of legislative discrimination against transgender parents,¹¹ coupled with the Trump administration's anti-transgender rhetoric and policies,¹² transgender people who are parents are particularly vulnerable and may be experiencing heightened concerns in the current sociopolitical and legislative climate. In addition, the Trump administration has indicated that it will support religious exemptions that allow discrimination against LGBTQ people in health care, adoption, and foster care.¹³ Such exemptions may result in fewer agencies willing to work with transgender people, less predictability in whether or not they will be approved as foster or adoptive parents, and fear of discrimination by agencies and legal professionals after significant emotional and financial investment in parenthood.

Survey participants were also asked how Trump's re-election and presidency had affected various parenting choices and decisions. One-third of respondents (33%) indicated that, because of Trump's re-election and presidency, they were planning to have fewer children (see Table 9). As one participant shared, "As a nonbinary and black parent in the U.S. ... I can say the rise in anti-trans and anti-Black sentiment, along with legal rollbacks, has made me more cautious about expanding my family." Additionally, 13% indicated that their plans had changed in other ways (e.g., the timing or route to parenthood).

Table 9. Impact of Trump presidency on parenting choices and family planning (N = 108)

Because of Trump's re-election and presidency...	N	%
I plan to have fewer children	36	33.3%
I plan to have children in a different way than I expected	4	3.7%
I plan to have children more quickly/speed up the timing	5	4.6%
I plan to have children more slowly/slow down my timeline	5	4.6%

¹⁰ SANDY E. JAMES ET AL., NAT'L CTR. TRANSGENDER EQUAL., *EARLY INSIGHTS: A REPORT OF THE 2022 UNITED STATES TRANSGENDER SURVEY* (2024), https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

¹¹ Shannon Price Minter, *Legal Issue in Divorce for Transgender Individuals*, in *LGBTQ DIVORCE AND RELATIONSHIP DISSOLUTION: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE* 312-326 (Abbie E. Goldberg & Adam Romero eds., 2019).

¹² Yasemin Smallens, *Instead of Addressing Child Abuse Prevention, Trump Attacks Transgender Youth: US Officials Should Prioritize Protecting Children from Genuine Harms*, HUM. RTS. WATCH. (Apr. 10, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/04/10/instead-addressing-child-abuse-prevention-trump-attacks-trans-youth>.

¹³ See, e.g., *Fact Sheet: HHS Takes Comprehensive Action to Enforce Conscience Rights and Protect Human Life*, U.S. DEP'T HEALTH & HUM. SERVS. (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/fact-sheet-announcements-on-conscience-and-life.html>; *Statement from Dr. Dorothy Fink, Acting Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*, U.S. DEP'T HEALTH & HUM. SERVS. (Jan. 27, 2025), <https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/dr-fink-statement.html>; Exec. Order No. 14359, 90 Fed. Reg. 52227 (Nov. 19, 2025); Michael Fitzgerald, *Trump Appointee Demands States Roll Back Foster Parenting Rules That Aim to Protect LGBTQ Youth*, IMPRINT (Oct. 24, 2025, 2:39 PM), <https://imprintnews.org/top-stories/trump-appointee-demands-states-roll-back-foster-parenting-rules-that-aim-to-protect-lgbtq-youth/268231>.

Challenges to Parenting Rights

Concerns About Challenges to the Legal Validity of Parenthood

Amid rising societal scrutiny and surveillance of transgender identities and transgender parenthood, participants were asked about whether they were concerned about challenges to the legal validity of their parenting rights, as well as about contributors to those concerns (see Table 10). Almost six in 10 respondents (59%) were concerned about these challenges, with 27% very concerned and 32% somewhat concerned. Only 12% were “not at all concerned.”

The major factors driving these concerns were the increasing hostile legal environment for transgender people and parents, including the rise in anti-LGBTQ legislation in general (69%), anti-trans legislation specifically (51%), and the lack of federal protections for LGBTQ parents (e.g., nondiscrimination laws) (49%). In addition, these concerns were driven by the current presidential administration’s stance on transgender rights (42%), the rise in anti-trans sentiment/attitudes (38%), and discriminatory policies in schools, health care, and/or the legal system (35%).

Table 10a. Concerns about challenges to parenting rights (N = 108)

Concerns about potential challenges to the validity of parental rights	N	%
Very concerned	29	26.9%
Somewhat concerned	35	32.4%
Neutral	14	13.0%
Not very concerned	17	15.7%
Not at all concerned	13	12.0%

Table 10b. Contributors to concerns about challenges to parenting rights (N = 97: all but “no concerns”)

Contributors to concerns	N	%
Rise in anti-LGBTQ legislation	75	69.4%
Rise in anti-trans legislation	55	50.9%
Rise in anti-trans sentiment/attitudes	41	38.0%
The current presidential administration’s stance on transgender rights	45	41.7%
Lack of federal protections for LGBTQ parents	53	49.1%
Inconsistent recognition of non-biological/non-gestational parents	22	20.4%
Fear of a partner or ex-partner challenging my parental rights	21	19.4%
Negative experiences with family courts or child services	22	20.4%
Discriminatory policies in schools, health care, or the legal system	38	35.2%
Something else	1	0.9%
“My child is also autistic. I’m concerned about that being weaponized to target our parental rights if we are ever targeted for our political activism.”		
N/A, few concerns	11	10.2%

Concerns About Discriminatory Reports to Child Welfare Agencies

Participants also reported fearing that they would be reported in a discriminatory way to child welfare agencies because of their gender identity or other marginalized identities, placing them at risk of surveillance and, possibly, child removals. Approximately four in 10 feared that schools or daycares (41%), neighbors (41%), or health care providers (38%) might report them to child welfare agencies just because of their gender identity. Thirty percent feared such reporting by family members (see Table 11). Further, over one quarter feared that schools or daycares (30%), neighbors (32%), health care providers (26%), or family members (25%) might report them to child welfare agencies just because of their sexual orientation.

When including other characteristics beyond gender identity and sexual orientation, including race/ethnicity, economic status, religion, disability, mental health status, and political beliefs or orientation, approximately half or more were concerned of being reported to child welfare agencies by neighbors (63%), schools or daycares (61%), health care providers (55%), or family members (47%).

Table 11. Fears of reporting to the child welfare system (N = 108)

Fear of [entity] reporting me to child and family services (e.g., DCF, DSS, DCF) because of...	School or day care		Health care providers		Neighbors		Family members	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
My gender identity	44	40.7%	41	38.0%	45	41.7%	32	29.6%
My sexual orientation/same-sex relationship	32	29.6%	28	25.9%	35	32.4%	27	25.0%
My race/ethnicity	13	12.0%	17	15.7%	15	13.9%	12	11.1%
My socioeconomic status/low income	9	8.3%	7	6.5%	13	12.0%	4	3.7%
My religion	9	8.3%	5	4.6%	8	7.4%	7	6.5%
My immigration status	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.9%
My mental health status	12	11.1%	15	13.9%	9	8.3%	10	9.3%
My disability status	8	7.4%	5	4.6%	9	8.3%	6	5.6%
My political beliefs or orientation	8	7.4%	7	6.5%	12	11.1%	8	7.4%
I do not experience worry	42	38.9%	49	45.4%	40	37.0%	57	52.8%

Securing Legal Protections in Response to the Trump Administration

Some transgender parents reported shoring up legal recognition of their family relationships in response to Trump's re-election. For example, almost one-third (30%) of respondents had secured additional legal safeguards to protect their relationship with their child, and one-fourth had pursued (additional) legal safeguards to protect their relationship with their partner (25%).

Parents' Openness About Their Transgender Identities with Their Children

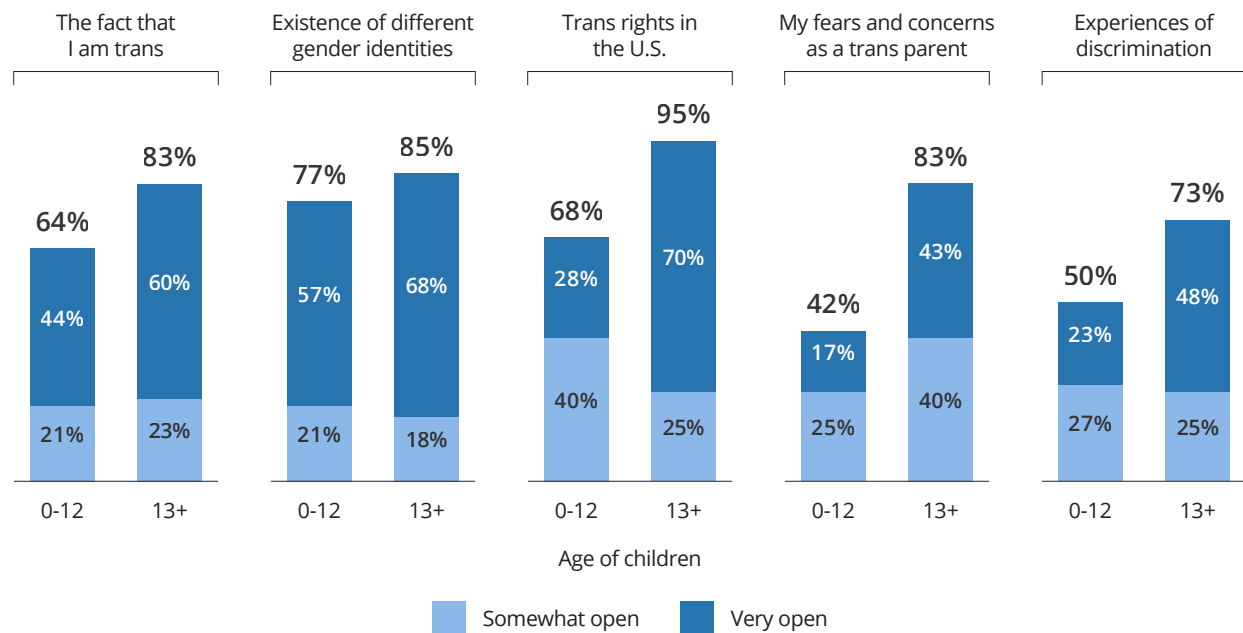
Over 80% of transgender parents with children 13 years and older were willing to share their own transgender identities, talk more generally about the existence of different transgender identities, discuss their personal challenges as transgender parents, and discuss transgender rights in the United States (see

Figure 1 and Table 12). Most transgender parents with children 13 years and older (83%) were somewhat (23%) or very (60%) open with their children about their transgender identity. None of these parents reported being “not at all open” about their transgender identity. Similarly, 85% of transgender parents reported being somewhat (18%) or very (68%) open in terms of discussing the existence of different gender identities more generally with their children 13 years and older. None of these parents reported being “not at all open” in terms of discussing the existence of transgender identities.

Most transgender parents were also willing to discuss their personal experiences with their older children: 83% were somewhat (40%) or very (43%) open with their children in terms of talking about their fears and concerns as a transgender parent, and 73% were somewhat (25%) or very (48%) open with their children about their personal experiences of discrimination. In terms of discussing transgender rights in the United States with their children, 95% of respondents reported being somewhat (25%) or very (70%) open about this topic with their children 13 years and older.

Although fewer, the majority of respondents also openly discussed being transgender, the existence of different transgender identities, and transgender rights with their children who were 12 years or younger (see Figure 1 and Table 12). Almost two-thirds (64%) were somewhat (21%) or very (44%) open about their transgender identity, and only 4% reported being “not at all open” about their transgender identity. Over three-fourths (77%) reported being somewhat (21%) or very open (57%) in discussing the existence of different gender identities more generally with their children 12 years and younger. Only 3% of these parents reported being “not at all open” in terms of discussing the existence of different transgender identities. In terms of discussing transgender rights in the United States with their children, 68% of respondents reported being somewhat (40%) or very (28%) open in discussions with their children who were 12 years or younger.

Fewer respondents were open about their personal experiences as transgender parents and people with their younger children: 42% were somewhat (25%) or very (17%) open in terms of talking about their fears and concerns as a transgender parent, and 50% were somewhat (27%) or very (23%) open in terms of talking about their personal experiences of discrimination.

Figure 1. Openness with children about transgender identities, experiences, and rights (N =108)**Table 12a. Openness with children aged 0-12 about transgender identities and rights (N =92)**

Topic	Not at all open		Not very open		Neutral		Somewhat open		Very open		Missing	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The fact that I am trans	4	4.3%	17	18.5%	11	12.0%	19	20.7%	40	43.5%	1	1.1%
Existence of different gender identities	3	3.3%	8	8.7%	9	9.8%	19	20.7%	52	56.5%	1	1.1%
Trans rights in the U.S.	4	4.3%	9	9.8%	15	16.3%	37	40.2%	26	28.3%	1	1.1%
My fears and concerns as a transgender parent	16	17.4%	17	18.5%	19	20.7%	23	25.0%	16	17.3%	1	1.1%
My own experiences of discrimination	9	9.8%	16	17.4%	19	20.7%	25	27.2%	21	22.8%	2	2.2%

Table 12b. Openness with children aged 13+ about transgender identities and rights (N =40)

Topic	Not at all open		Not very open		Neutral		Somewhat open		Very open	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The fact that I am trans	0	0%	4	10.0%	3	7.5%	9	22.5%	24	60.0%
Existence of different gender identities	0	0%	3	7.5%	3	7.5%	7	17.5%	27	67.5%

Topic	Not at all open		Not very open		Neutral		Somewhat open		Very open	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Trans rights in the U.S.	1	2.5%	1	2.5%	1	2.5%	10	25.0%	28	70.0%
My fears and concerns as a transgender parent	0	0%	6	15.0%	1	2.5%	16	40.0%	17	42.5%
My own experiences of discrimination	0	0%	5	12.5%	6	15.0%	10	25.0%	19	47.5%

Transgender parents also limit their visibility to others, and this can involve asking their children not to share their transgender identities with others. One quarter of survey respondents (25%) indicated that they intend to limit their children's speech around their transgender identity. Some explained, saying, for example: "I do not want my kids to suffer for my being transgender; yes, I want them to have free speech, but around transgender issues, [this] is a no-go zone." Another parent said, "I don't want my son accidentally outing us in a bad way, so I tell him not to talk about my identity."

Parents indicated that they tried to talk to their children about this choice in a way that normalized the selective disclosure. For example, one parent said, "There are home rules and school rules." As another parent said, "I have told my children that there are some topics we don't discuss in public for safety and privacy reasons." In some cases, participants reported seeking to restrict their children's speech or disclosure only in certain settings, such as school or church. Said one, "Only at church. I also encourage him not to talk about it too much in public. At this point in his life, when he does decide he wants to share my identity, which is rare, he doesn't think about it much, but when he does want to, he asks permission."

Parents who did not seek to restrict their children's speech sometimes explained that they did not want their children to feel that their families had anything to hide. As one parent said, "I want my children to feel safe and proud of their family. I encourage them to speak about our life openly if they feel comfortable, and I help them navigate when to speak and when it may not be safe—but I don't restrict them out of shame." Another parent shared, "I don't want my child to be afraid of anything he wants/needs to say. He knows I am transgender, but it is not a topic that comes up regularly and not something he seems to think about." Still another parent said, "I want my child to feel they can speak openly and proudly about who their parent is. We've talked about context and safety, but I'm not asking them to censor who I am."

Many of these parents also emphasized that it was important for their children to see them as "showing up as [themselves], even in environments that are not fully affirming." Said one, "I believe it's important for my kids to see me being authentic, even in potentially difficult environments." Another parent said, "While I'm aware of judgment in school settings, I refuse to erase myself. I maintain a presentable, professional, and affirming appearance that reflects my identity. My kids deserve a parent who is living in their authentic self."

Support from Other Parents, Schools, and Local Communities

As indicated above, transgender parents identified the increasing anti-transgender climate in the United States, the lack of access to LGBTQ-inclusive parenting supports, and the lack of access to other LGBTQ parents in their communities as barriers to future parenting (see Table 7 above). For those concerned about being reported to child welfare because of their gender identity, many were worried about such discriminatory reporting from their neighbors, their school, or daycares. When including other characteristics beyond gender identity, including sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and disability, even higher percentages were concerned about being reported in a discriminatory way to child welfare agencies by neighbors and schools or daycares (see Table 11 above). Given the threats that these varied contexts pose to transgender parents, we asked survey respondents to elaborate on their personal experiences with other parents, their local communities, and their children's schools and daycare centers.

Acceptance from Other Parents and Local Communities

When asked how included and accepted they felt by the other parents in their community, only 14% of transgender parents felt they were very accepted by other parents. Only half (50%) said that they were either somewhat (36%) or very (14%) accepted.

A number of respondents (24%) commented on how the re-election of President Trump and the increasingly anti-transgender climate nationally were impacting the support they received from other parents and from their local communities. A few noted that their experiences with other parents were mixed, such that "in more progressive or diverse circles, I feel welcomed and supported, but there are also moments where I feel like I'm not openly rejected, but not fully embraced either." Another participant summarized, "There's a visible split between those who are doubling down on inclusive values, and those are emboldened to express hostility."

For some respondents, the mixed reaction from their communities varied by geography, reflecting an urban-rural divide. In the words of one parent: "My state is very inclusive and has established protections for trans/LGBTQ people, but my suburb is still pretty red, and our mayor is MAGA, so I feel pushback within my community against the protective actions by my state." Another parent shared, "In Missouri, I've observed a mixed shift in how inclusive the community feels. In cities, there are more inclusive events, friendly businesses, and some protective local policies. In rural towns, it feels less safe and less accepting than before."

A few participants said their communities had always been hostile. ("Our community is about as bigoted and alienating as it has always been.") More often, though, participants described their environment as becoming increasingly hostile. ("People are less kind since Trump regained office;" "It's considerably worse and more exclusionary;" "Other parents avoid my company.") In the words of one respondent: "When I first moved here, people weren't necessarily accepting, but they kept their opinions to themselves. Now people are openly hostile and will harass queer members of the town."

A few parents gave specific examples of how the community climate had shifted towards increased hostility ("The bible thumpers are more willing to shout from the hilltops how evil anyone not like them is"), manifesting in the form of canceled or planned local community events, discussions on local online forums, and flags/yard signs:

Our county library canceled a family-friendly Pride event on a Monday at the main library, like three days before the event, because the Board of Supervisors ruled against it. It sucks.

Some people on locally based social media pages are more vocally anti-LGBTQ.

There has been a noticeable shift since 2024—more flags and slogans promoting “parental rights,” but also more pushback against anything queer. The environment feels more polarized, and that makes daily social interactions more delicate.

A few said that they “didn’t get out much” or did not have relationships with many other parents, so they did not notice major changes. As one parent said, “It feels about the same. But I have always been a loner and asocial, so I think that plays a huge part.”

Finally, a few reported living in very accepting, inclusive, and diverse communities where “everyone supports each other.” Said one, “I live in quite a progressive neighborhood, so I haven’t noticed any changes.” A few said their progressive communities felt even more supportive, perhaps as a show of resistance to the broader climate. “More inclusive after the election—at least at our secular co-op, there was much more of a feeling of solidarity,” said one. Another shared, “My community has always been supportive, even more so after Trump became president again.” Another said:

The town in Texas we live in has always leaned more liberal (for Texas), and it has amped up protests, drag shows, and other types of support within the community. That [same dynamic] doesn’t necessarily [apply to] the mayor, unfortunately.

A few parents noted how hard it was to make parent friends in the current climate, given how challenging it was to know people’s politics and attitudes outright. Said one, “It definitely feels harder to reach out and try to make parent friends or other community connections because unless I risk making the conversation unsafe for myself and my family by bringing up certain topics first, I have no way of knowing if the other person is MAGA or not.”

Support from Schools and Daycare Centers

Given the concerns that transgender parents have about schools and daycare centers, it is not surprising that only one-quarter of respondents (24%) said that all of their children’s teachers and daycare providers knew they were transgender. Almost one-quarter (23%) said that none of their children’s teachers and daycare providers knew they were transgender; one-third (37%) said that some knew and some did not; and 11% were not sure.¹⁴ Taking into account that most respondents were not out as transgender to some or all of their children’s teachers and daycare providers, most reported that they had positive (54%) or neutral (23%) relationships with them. Most of the remainder reported having both positive and negative relationships (18%).¹⁵

Some participants reported being friendly toward teachers and staff and doing their best to be good citizens of the school (“I actively engage with the school, participate in events, and communicate regularly”), with some noting that their children’s schools were progressive or diverse. One participant

¹⁴ Three respondents homeschooled and two had children who were not yet in school or day care.

¹⁵ Three respondents homeschooled and two had children who were not yet in school or day care.

said, “Quite a number of teachers and day care providers of my child are broadminded and respectful. Communication has allowed a healthy atmosphere for my child.” Another participant shared, “Their teachers are more concerned about parents who take no part in their kids’ education, so the fact that I am involved and show up is more important than gender.” Yet another participant said:

Some of my child's day care providers and teachers do know I'm trans, and I've been fortunate to have a positive relationship with them. They've been respectful, communicative, and focused on creating a supportive environment for my child. While I don't always disclose my identity to everyone, the ones who do know have treated me with kindness and professionalism, which has helped build trust. It's reassuring to know that my child is in a space where our family feels seen and respected. That kind of support makes a real difference.

A few parents said they were uncertain of teachers’ feelings about transgender identities since they were not “out” (“I just look like a ‘weird girl,’ and I’m not outing myself to strangers;” “I keep my gender identity private”), and a few noted it was none of their business. A few parents shared that they were closeted to protect their children and maintain harmonious relationships (“I normally avoid sharing too much about myself to protect the kids from being discriminated or viewed in a certain way;” “My relationship with them is positive since I did not disclose to them about my identity”). A few suspected that the teachers might know but did not describe any mistreatment on this basis (“No one asks me specifics, and I don’t tell them specifics. I am pretty positive they speculate. Everyone treats me based on my character. I do the same with them.”)

A minority of parents described negative interactions with teachers based on their gender identity. One parent indicated that some teachers viewed being transgender as equivalent to being in a “cult” and “not acceptable.” One parent said that some teachers exhibited “discomfort and avoidance” when interacting with them. A few parents shared that staff had shown a “lack of understanding,” causing them to remain “cautious about full disclosure depending on who I’m interacting with.” One parent said, “My children’s daycare providers and teachers are aware that I am trans. Our relationship is polite and professional, but there’s a noticeable distance that makes it feel less than fully welcoming.” At times, the larger school culture was implicated in the cool or avoidant response that parents described. As one parent shared, “the broader school environment and climate ... sometimes feels less affirming for our family.”

Family Safety

Concerns about safety can deter transgender people from becoming parents and present significant concerns while parenting. Issues around family safety were measured in the survey in a several ways, including 1) the safety concerns of respondents’ children in response to the Trump administration, 2) the safety concerns communicated to transgender parents by their friends and family members, 3) transgender parents’ safety concerns relative to other transgender people, and 4) actions that respondents had taken or were planning to take in light of the Trump administration, including avoiding public places, building self-defense skills, and moving.

Safety Concerns of Respondents’ Children

Many respondents reported that their children had heightened concerns about safety as a result of the re-election of President Trump or due to the actions of the Trump administration. While 45% of

respondents felt that their children were too young to be sufficiently aware of current events to be affected by the Trump administration, among the remainder, two-thirds (66%) reported that their children were more anxious and/or fearful due to the Trump administration. Further, over half (56%) said their children had expressed new worries or concerns since Trump's re-election. Some specific worries and concerns included:

- **Parents' safety and health:** Concerns about their parents' safety and whether their parents will lose their gender-affirming care.
- **Family safety:** Concerns about whether their families will face discrimination, harassment, or violence, and questions about why people don't like their parents or their families.
- **Family stability:** Concerns about whether their families will be split up, whether they will be taken away from their parents, and whether their families will have to move to a safer location.

As with other transgender-related topics, most transgender parents openly discussed safety issues and navigating public spaces with their older children: 88% were somewhat (30%) or very (58%) open about these issues with their children aged 13 years and older (see Table 13). In terms of discussing their children's experiences of discrimination and bullying, 98% of respondents reported being somewhat (38%) or very (60%) open in their discussions with their children 13 years and older.

Fewer transgender parents discussed safety and navigating public spaces with their younger children: 66% were somewhat (27%) or very (39%) open about safety issues and navigating public spaces, and 71% were somewhat (23%) or very (48%) open in talking about their children's experiences of discrimination and bullying.

Table 13a. Openness with children aged 0-12 about safety concerns (N = 92)

Concern	Not at all open		Not very open		Neutral		Somewhat open		Very open		Missing	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Safety and navigating public spaces	3	3.3%	10	10.9%	15	16.3%	25	27.2%	36	39.1%	3	3.3%
My children's experiences of discrimination and bullying	4	4.3%	7	7.6%	14	15.2%	21	22.8%	44	47.8%	2	2.2%

Table 13b. Openness with children aged 13+ about safety concerns (N = 40)

Concern	Not at all open		Not very open		Neutral		Somewhat open		Very open		Missing	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Safety and navigating public spaces	0	0%	3	7.5%	1	2.5%	12	30.0%	23	57.5%	1	2.5%
My children's experiences of discrimination and bullying	0	0%	0	0%	1	2.5%	15	37.5%	24	60.0%	0	0%

In conversations with their children about safety, many respondents emphasized three key messages to mitigate their children's fears: acknowledging, validating, and processing their children's concerns; providing reassurances that their families were safe; and promising to advocate for their children and families. Other responses about mitigating and coping strategies focused on providing information to their children, building up their children's self-esteem, cultivating open communication, and providing a historical perspective on what was happening in the United States.

Safety Concerns of Family and Friends

The vast majority of respondents reported that their friends (89%) and family (82%) had communicated to them concerns or fears about their safety (see Table 14). In terms of their friends, 60% of respondents reported that their friends had communicated a great deal (19%) or a moderate (41%) amount of concern about their safety as a transgender person. Friends' dominant concerns, as reported by respondents, were that they would be harassed in public spaces (66%), risk physical violence or hate crimes (56%), or be discriminated against in health care settings (44%). One-third of respondents (33%) reported that their friends had communicated concerns about their safety when parenting or being out in public with their children.

In terms of family members, 50% of respondents reported that their family members communicated a great deal (21%) or a moderate (29%) amount of concern about their safety as a transgender person. Family members' dominant concerns, as reported by respondents, were that they would risk physical violence or hate crimes (63%), be discriminated against in health care settings (63%), or be harassed in public spaces (56%). Nearly 40% of respondents (38%) reported that family members communicated concerns about their safety when parenting or being out in public with their children.

Table 14a. Extent of safety concerns from family and friends (N = 108)

To what extent have they communicated concerns or fears about your safety as a transgender person?	Family members		Friends	
	N	%	N	%
A great deal	23	21.3%	21	19.4%
A moderate amount	31	28.7%	44	40.7%
A slight amount	35	32.4%	31	28.7%
Not at all	16	14.8%	8	7.4%
Not applicable (explain):	3	2.8%	4	3.7%
"I am not out to most friends and family."				
"I am not out to my family."				
"I am not publicly 'out'."				

Table 14b. Specific safety concerns of family (N = 89) and friends (N = 96) excluding those who answered “not at all” or “not applicable”

What concerns or fears have they communicated about you/your safety?	Family members		Friends	
	N	%	N	%
Risk of physical violence or hate crimes	56	62.9%	54	56.3%
Risk of facing discrimination in healthcare settings	56	62.9%	42	43.8%
Facing discrimination in employment or housing	41	46.1%	35	36.5%
Being harassed in public spaces	50	56.2%	63	65.6%
Being targeted by law enforcement	32	35.9%	36	37.5%
Being unable to access gender-affirming care	31	34.8%	36	37.5%
Legal vulnerability (e.g., ID documents not matching gender)	34	38.2%	29	30.2%
Facing obstacles or mistreatment while traveling	30	33.7%	28	29.2%
Lack of safety when parenting or being out in public with children	34	38.2%	32	33.3%
Compromised mental health or emotional well-being	41	46.1%	39	40.6%
Something else/explain:	5	5.6%	4	4.2%
“Not many friends/family have expressed such things to me precisely because I don’t have much of either left—due to ostracization due to my sexuality and gender in the first place.”				
“It hasn’t been discussed.”				
“Selected all of the above as my friends are mostly transgender as well and are aware of how bad things can become.”				

As one participant shared, summing up their loved ones’ concerns:

My family has expressed deep concern, especially about my safety when traveling or accessing health care. They worry that I could face discrimination, harassment, or even violence, just for being visible or seeking basic services. Friends have echoed these fears. Some have warned me to avoid certain areas or events, and others have encouraged me to always share my location when traveling alone.

Relative Safety

Recognizing the diversity within the transgender population based on various intersectional privileges, geography, and other factors, respondents were asked how safe they felt compared to other transgender people in the U.S. This, to our knowledge, represents a rarely-investigated feature of perceived safety for transgender people, and sheds light onto how transgender people may situate themselves *vis-a-vis* other transgender people in terms of their perceptions of risk as well as feelings about their relative safety (e.g., if they view themselves as privileged in relation to other transgender people). Among respondents, 43% felt that they were safer than other transgender people, with 12% feeling much safer and 31% feeling somewhat safer. A total of 21% felt the same as other transgender people in terms of safety, and 36% felt less safe, with 27% feeling somewhat less safe and 9% feeling much less safe (see Table 15).

Among those who felt that they were more safe than other transgender people, 91% attributed this to their race (i.e., being white), 74% explained this in terms of where they lived (i.e., in a trans-affirming

state), 71% pointed to their financial and/or educational privilege, 57% pointed to their extensive social support network, and over one-third highlighted passing privilege, working in a setting that was safe for them as a transgender person, and being able bodied (see Table 15).

Among those who felt that they were more safe than other transgender people, almost all (93%) endorsed feeling motivated to engage in advocacy and activism on behalf of the transgender community, 72% endorsed feeling motivated to be a vocal and visible transgender person, 63% endorsed feeling afraid that they could be a target if they were too visible, 41% endorsed feelings of guilt (i.e., “why me and not them?”), 41% endorsed feeling helpless (i.e., unable to help other transgender people), and 30% endorsed feeling disconnected from the struggles of the larger transgender community. Two indicated some other feelings (“I feel my voice doesn’t carry as much weight, as a nonbinary person;” “I’m in between, feeling motivated to be vocal and being afraid I could be a target if I am too visible”).

Among those who felt that they were less safe than other transgender people, over half (56%) attributed this to being a person of color or a specific race/ethnicity. Additionally, 46% said they lived in a state hostile toward transgender people, 44% attributed their lack of perceived safety to their work setting, 44% said their identity documents did not reflect their gender identity, and 41% lacked an extensive social support network (see Table 15).

Table 15a. Relative “safety” compared to other transgender people (N = 108)

How safe do you feel, compared to other transgender people in the US?	N	%
Much safer	13	12.0%
Somewhat safer	33	30.6%
The same	23	21.3%
Somewhat less safe	29	26.9%
Much less safe	10	9.3%

Table 15b. Reasons for feeling safer among those who responded “somewhat” or “much” safer (N = 46)

Reasons for feeling safer	N	%
I am white	42	91.3%
I live in a relatively trans-affirming state	34	73.9%
I have financial and/or educational privilege	33	71.7%
I have an extensive network of supportive family/friends	26	56.5%
I work in a setting that feels relatively safe for me as a trans person	17	37.0%
I am able-bodied	17	37.0%
I “pass” as my affirmed gender	16	34.8%
Most or all of my identity documents accurately reflect my gender identity	9	19.6%
Something else/explain:	14	30.4%

Reasons for feeling safer	N	%
Lack of visibility concerns		
"I 'pass' as cisgender, and I work in a profession where people are somewhat more accepting of differences."		
"I am not out in many spaces, and as a nonbinary person, I have chosen to keep my born gender markers on legal documents. To many outsiders, I read as a 'tomboy' or a masculine female. I do not face discrimination in the way that other trans people do."		
"I can fall back on my biological gender pretty easily if needed. It's very invalidating to have to do, but I've always been able to if I deem a space unsafe for LGBT people."		
"I don't look very transgender, even when wearing masculine or androgynous clothing."		
"I haven't undergone any legal or medical transitions and still appear cis femme much of the time, so there aren't a lot of ways for someone to "point me out." And to be honest, I don't think a lot of my family members outside of my husband and friends understand my gender."		
"I pass as a woman most of the time, though I'm nonbinary, so things like bathrooms aren't currently a problem."		
"I look cis."		
"I look like a cis person and am not publicly "out".		
"I am still in the closet, and many people outside of close family and friends don't know my identity."		
"Passing as cis, currently."		
Do not spend time in public		
"Not just because I pass but mostly because I stay home 99 percent of the time, due to working at home, and homeschooling, etc."		
Feel capable of defending myself		
"I have 15 years of training in martial arts and feel secure defending myself."		

Table 15c. Reasons for feeling less safe among those who responded "somewhat" or "much" less safe (N = 39)

Reasons for feeling less safe	N	%
I am of color/am of a specific race/ethnicity	22	56.4%
I live in a relatively trans-hostile state	18	46.2%
I work in a setting that feels relatively unsafe for me as a trans person	17	43.6%
Most or all of my identity documents do not accurately reflect my gender identity	17	43.6%
I do not have an extensive network of supportive family/friends	16	41.0%
I am low-income/lack educational privilege	14	35.9%
I do not "pass" as my affirmed gender	14	35.9%
I am disabled	12	30.8%
Something else/explain:	4	10.3%

Reasons for feeling less safe	N	%
"My birth certificate doesn't match my other documents, so I worry about discrimination and outing."		
"I feel both privileged because I have a Master's degree, but am also low-income & in danger of losing my SNAP & Medicaid benefits. I'm physically doing pretty well, can work on my feet, but am Autistic & ADHDer, so also disabled."		
"I'm visibly nonbinary and parenting in a conservative region."		
"[I am a] transwoman with children and multiple partners in a polyamorous relationship."		

Avoidance Behaviors and Safety

Respondents were asked whether they planned to avoid certain settings and activities during the Trump administration due to their safety concerns. Most respondents (over three-quarters) intended to continue seeing all their health care providers. However, one-quarter indicated that they intended to avoid OB/GYNs (25%) (see Table 16). Similarly, most respondents intended to continue engaging with retail (85%) and self-care settings (84%), though 23% intended to avoid gyms and fitness studios. Travel was frequently selected as a type of activity participants intended to avoid—most frequently travel outside the U.S. (39%), along with avoidance of public restrooms (39%). Approximately three in 10 intended to avoid government agencies (32%) and social service agencies (30%).

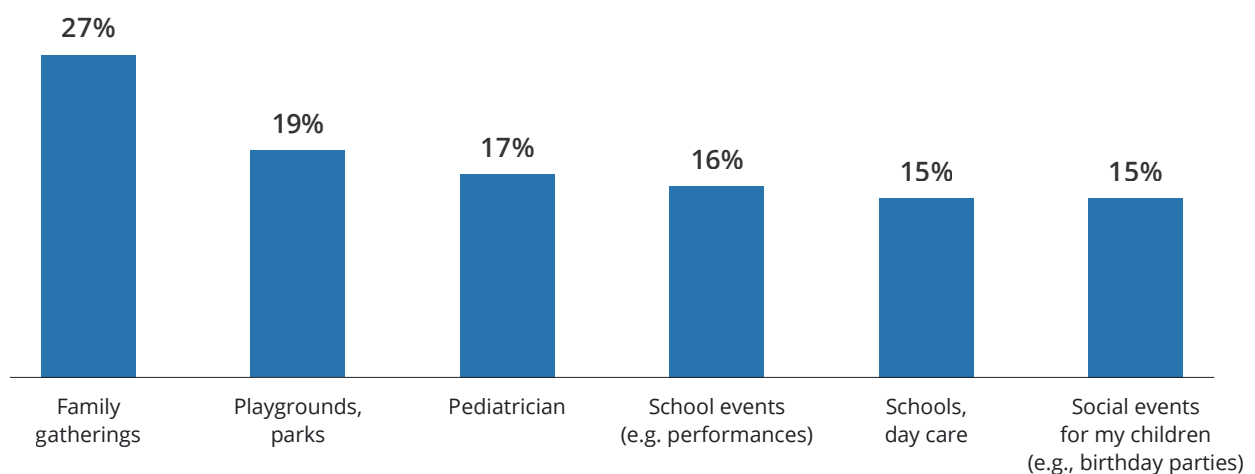
Table 16. Anticipated avoidance behaviors (N = 108)

Do you intend to avoid any of the following during the next 4 years of the Trump administration?	I intend to avoid		I do not intend to avoid		N/A
	N	%	N	%	N
Health Care					
Gender-affirming care providers	27	28.4%	68	78.6%	13
Primary care physician/health care provider/s	12	11.7%	91	88.3%	5
OB/GYN	22	25.0%	66	75.0%	20
Dentist	12	12.1%	87	87.9%	9
Emergency medicine	12	11.9%	89	88.1%	7
Therapist	16	16.7%	80	88.3%	12
Psychiatrist	14	14.9%	80	85.1%	14
Retail and Self-Care					
Stores	16	15.5%	87	84.5%	5
Routine self-care (e.g., nails, hair)	14	15.1%	79	84.0%	15
Gym, fitness studios, yoga	20	22.5%	69	77.5%	19
Children and Family					
Playgrounds, parks	20	19.0%	85	81.0%	3
Schools, day care	15	15.2%	84	84.8%	9
School events (e.g., performances)	15	16.0%	79	84.0%	14

Do you intend to avoid any of the following during the next 4 years of the Trump administration?	I intend to avoid		I do not intend to avoid		N/A
	N	%	N	%	N
Social events for my children (e.g., birthday parties)	16	15.4%	88	84.6%	4
Pediatrician	17	17.0%	83	83.0%	8
Family gatherings	28	27.2%	75	72.8%	5
Travel					
Travel within the U.S.	26	25.5%	76	74.5%	6
Travel outside of the U.S.	36	38.7%	57	61.3%	15
Rest stops	33	30.6%	71	68.3%	4
Public Settings					
Public transportation	30	31.6%	65	68.4%	13
Public restrooms	39	38.6%	62	61.4%	7
Public Agencies					
Social service agencies	29	29.6%	69	70.4%	10
Government agencies	30	31.6%	65	68.4%	13

Some parents sought to fully avoid certain family-oriented contexts such as family gatherings (27%), playgrounds and parks (19%), pediatricians' offices (17%), school events (16%), schools or daycare (15%), and social events for children such as birthday parties (15%), with 45% of parents seeking to avoid at least one of these contexts (see Table 16).

Figure 2. Percent of respondents intending to avoid certain family/child contexts during the Trump administration



Other Actions Transgender Parents Have Taken to Protect Their Children and Families

Most respondents (87%) reported at least one change in how they approached protecting their children's safety and well-being since Trump's re-election. Almost four in 10 respondents (39%) limited their

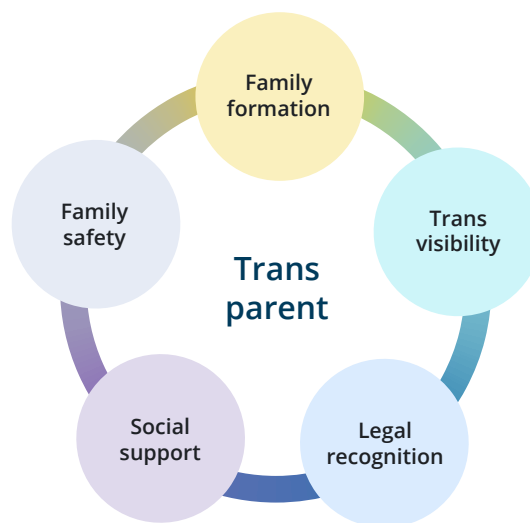
own transgender identity or their family's visibility (e.g., on social media, in public spaces) out of safety concerns. Almost one in five (19%) were considering moving to a different state or country to protect their family's safety or for legal protections. Fifteen percent (15%) had decided to homeschool or change their child/children's school to ensure a safer or more affirming environment. Transgender parents also reported learning more about self-defense and taking actions to defend themselves and their families as a result of the Trump presidency:

- Almost three-fourths (73%) had already pursued self-defense classes (19%) or were considering doing so (54%).
- Almost two-thirds (64%) had already bought pepper spray, a personal alarm, or a safety device (38%), or were considering doing so (26%).

Conclusion

Some core aspects of becoming and being a transgender parent involve not only having children, but also navigating one's transgender identity with one's children and others; having one's parenting status a) legally recognized and b) socially supported; and feeling safe as a family (see Figure 3). These components of transgender parenthood interact with one another. For example, threats to the family from challenges to the legal validity of parenting status, lack of social acceptance and support, and risks to safety can deter transgender people from having children. Greater social and local community support can encourage visibility as well as a sense of relative safety among transgender parents.

Figure 3. Core aspects of becoming and being a transgender parent



In responding to our survey, transgender parents communicated that they face considerable barriers and challenges in each of these five areas—difficulties that they strive to overcome for their children and themselves. Most of these barriers to and challenges of parenting for transgender parents have been exacerbated by the Trump administration and the increasingly hostile legal and social environment for transgender parents.

While policy progress at the federal level seems challenging in the short term, there is much that social service organizations, government agencies, and policymakers at the state and local levels can do to support transgender parents. In particular, LGBTQ and trans-led organizations, parenting organizations and networks, and local school districts have the ability to address many of the challenges faced by transgender parents, in particular those who live in states with hostile climates for transgender people and those who live in rural and suburban areas. For example, social service organizations and policy makers can support transgender parents by taking the following actions:

- Making sure that foster and adoption services do not discriminate on the basis of gender identity and are inclusive of transgender parents, through efforts at both policy and practice (e.g., training, education) levels.

- Making sure that donor-assisted methods for reproduction are affordable and available to transgender parents.
- Providing research-backed, affirming, and practical guidance for transgender parents on navigating discussions about their identities and transgender-related issues with their children, in particular with younger children.
- Ensuring that transgender people have access to marriage and other legal protections with respect to their partners; have relationships with their children legally recognized; and have access to identity documents with the appropriate gender.
- Ensuring that child welfare agencies are educated about transgender parents and families and do not intervene in transgender families—as well as families including people of color, people living with disabilities, those with lower incomes, and other marginalized populations—in a discriminatory manner.
- Creating and increasing programs that facilitate transgender parents meeting, networking, and supporting each other, as well as increasing parenting support for transgender parents and making sure they are included in programs and networks of LGBTQ parents, as well as those geared toward all parents. For those who live in suburban or rural areas, this may require additional in-person or online programs and supports.
- Supporting policies, programs, and benefits that address the higher rates of poverty and mental health concerns for all transgender people and for transgender parents more specifically.
- Working locally to make sure that local communities and schools have policies in place that are supportive of transgender people and parents, including in suburban and rural areas.
- Recognizing that financial, health, support, and safety disparities are often intersectional, and making sure that programs and policies address the needs of transgender people and parents who are people of color, disabled, and have lower incomes.
- Offering transgender-inclusive programs in family-friendly environments, including parks, athletics, schools, and daycare programs.
- Facilitating transgender people and parents in learning about safety, self-defense, and the legal, safe, and appropriate use of protective devices.

Across many responses to open-ended questions on our survey, clear patterns emerged: the love and dedication transgender parents have for their children, their resilience in facing and overcoming obstacles, and the many ways they go above and beyond the already significant work of parenting to protect and nurture their families.

Methodology

Participants (N = 108)—all transgender and/or nonbinary identified parents—were recruited via Prolific, an online recruitment platform that uses specialized targeting techniques to share surveys to pre-registered respondents. Respondents who a) designated their gender as “transgender woman”, “transgender man”, “transgender”, or “nonbinary”, b) lived in the U.S., and c) were the parent of at least one child under 18, were invited to participate in an anonymous survey between June 19 and July 14,

2025. All respondents underwent an identity check by Prolific to ensure they were valid participants. The survey was hosted on the online platform Qualtrics and took an average of 43 minutes to complete (SD = 19.4 minutes).

The survey questions, which included closed- and open-ended items, were informed by the authors' knowledge of the relevant literature and our prior research on related topics, as well as input from colleagues with relevant expertise. Closed-ended items were often accompanied by requests for elaboration and explanation. In addition, a number of free-standing open-ended items were included. Data analysis involved basic descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis, involving the careful exploration of themes or patterns in the data, and systematic organization of these themes to form a coherent, organized, and structured narrative that best accounts for the data. Two research assistants coded portions of the open-ended data in order to provide validation checks for basic themes and theme counts.

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Acknowledgments

The authors acknowledge Elana Redfield, Christy Mallory, Genny Beemyn, and Elizabeth Boskey for their input on the current project.

Suggested Citation

Goldberg, A. E., & Sears, B. (2026). *Current Challenges for Transgender Parents in an Increasingly Anti-Transgender Sociopolitical Climate*. Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

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