

Fertility and Family Building Desires of Trans Teens

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Background

- There are many ways to build a future family, including (but not limited to!): having biological children, adopting children, and finding family in community.
- Trans teens and their families face medical decisions that can impact their fertility and limit their options to have biologically related children in the future.
- Our research explored the concerns and desires trans youth have regarding their fertility and future family building.

In our final two interviews with the 30 families participating in the Trans Teens and Family Narratives Project, we asked trans teens and their families about their fertility and family building desires. They also answered survey questions from the Transgender Youth Fertility Attitudes Questionnaire (TYFAQ).

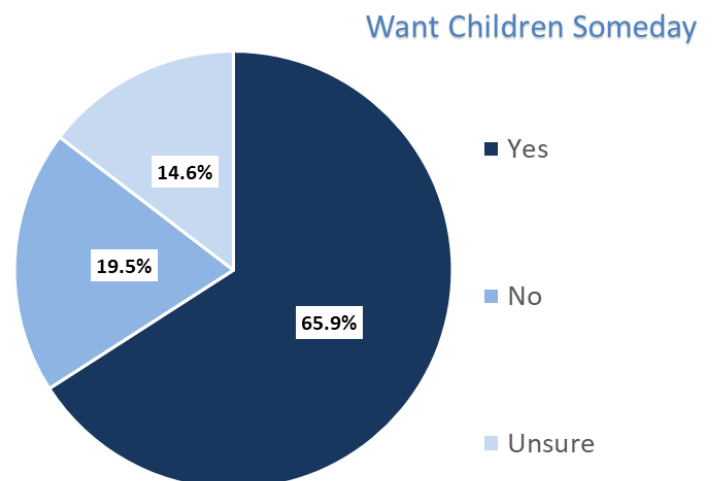
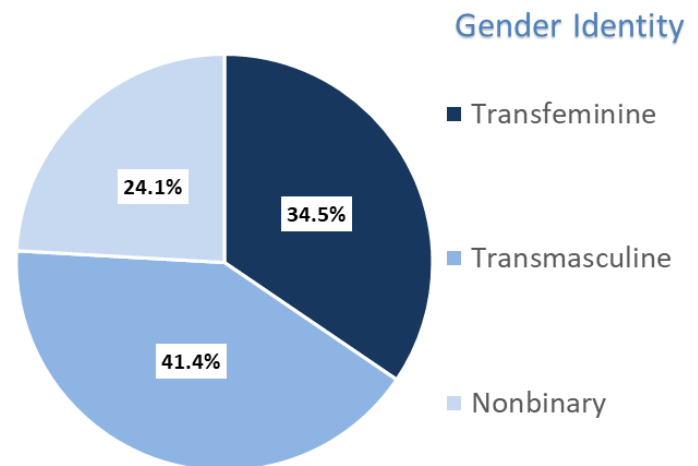
THEME 1: Trans youth have more complex decisions to make about future parenthood than cisgender youth.

- Trans teens and their siblings expressed similar concerns and values about having kids:
 - Prioritizing education/career before kids
 - Being responsible and mature enough to raise kids
 - Having a supportive partner or co-parent
- But trans teens also had concerns that were unique to their experience as trans people:
 - Fearing that fertility preservation or pregnancy could worsen their gender dysphoria
 - Believing that having biologically related children is not possible for them
 - Seeking out support and protected trans spaces (support groups, camps, health providers, etc.)
- Trans teens are more likely to consider adoption as a parenthood strategy than their cisgender siblings.

Trans Youth Demographics

Average Age: 17.2 years

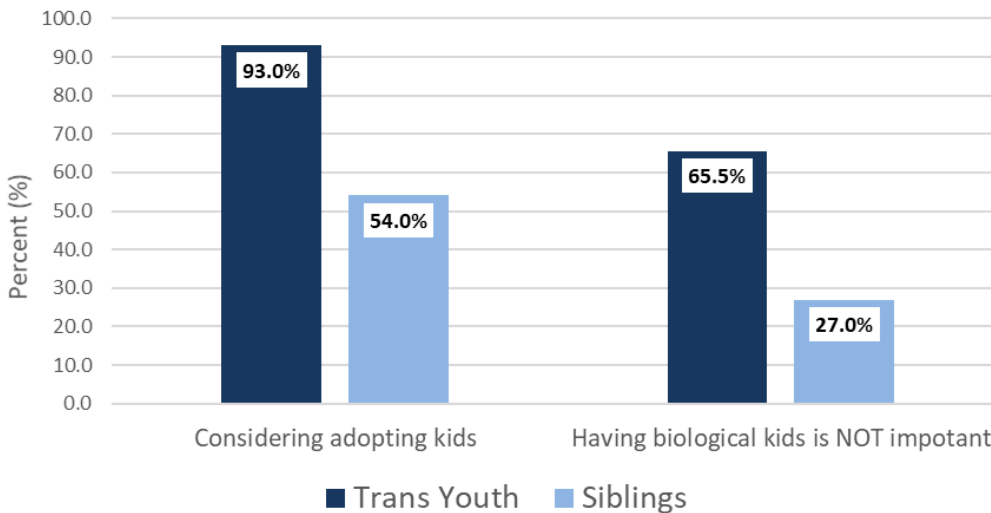
Age Range: 15-20 years



"I think being transgender has changed the way I thought about having children. Like when I was younger, I saw myself going through pregnancy. And even if I waited to see if I could harvest anything, I knew that was not going to be a reality, that I technically could never be pregnant."

- Trans Teen Participant

Parenting Desires of Trans Youth and Their Siblings



Comparing Trans Youth

- Trans teens using hormones were less likely to think their feelings about children might change in the future.
- Those with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria were more likely to want kids someday.
- Trans teens participating in a trans support group were more likely to say their parents would not be disappointed if they did not have biological children.

THEME 2: Support and communication between family members and medical providers is critical to making decisions about future parenthood.

- These factors influenced decisions about future parenthood:
 - Conversations with family, friends, and medical providers
 - Seeking medical, online, and community resources
 - Perceiving agreement between family members regarding the trans teen's family building plans
 - Respecting the trans teen's autonomy and choices

"I can give you training, I can give you resources, and give you all the rest, but the decisions are yours... So to me, I think that it's more important that [Trans Teen] know that I support their decisions."
 - Caregiver Participant

THEME 3: Fertility preservation is a challenging decision for trans teens and their families.

- These factors were important to families deciding whether or not to pursue fertility preservation:
 - Cost of procedures and storing frozen eggs or sperm
 - Invasiveness of fertility preserving procedures (pain, time, side effects, emotional burdens, etc.)
 - Prioritization of gender affirming treatment over fertility
 - Concerns that the process may worsen gender dysphoria
- Only 2 participants underwent fertility preservation. Both were trans girls who banked sperm.

"I made the decision to not be able to have biological children a while ago and my logic was: Do I either want the possibility to have children that aren't biologically related to me, or do I want to risk ruining my life by going through irreversible changes and never even live to the age where I'd be able to have children?"
 - Trans Teen Participant

"We decided against it because we don't have the time and money."
 - Trans Teen Participant

Conclusions

- Trans youth have diverse experiences and desires regarding fertility and family building.
- Families and medical providers should have conversations early and regularly with the trans youth to explore their unique needs and desires regarding future parenthood.
- It is important for medical researchers to continue developing future technologies to make fertility preservation more accessible for trans youth and their families.
- Advocate for protecting LGBTQ parents' rights to adopt children to help trans youth achieve their future parenthood goals.