

Always My Child

by Kevin Jennings and Pat Shapiro, M.S.W.

Skylight Press Fireside Books

Simon & Schuster, 2003

Kevin Jennings, Executive Director of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network) has co-authored the definitive book on guiding, understanding, and – hopefully – accepting in love your GLBTQ child. It is primarily targeted toward parents struggling to help and deal with their questioning or coming out teenage child.

This book is not specifically about dealing with transgender children, although there are about 30 pages devoted to dealing with issues and problems of Trans teens. It also talks to people of color and includes young peoples' input to parents. Cultural messages of gender and sexuality are discussed and techniques of dealing with these messages are offered for consideration.

Many of the popular myths about homosexuality and transgenderism are analyzed, with facts presented to aid in accepting and understanding. Suggestions are provided for dealing with friends, your teen's friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Signs of trouble are discussed, along with suggestions for helping your teen deal with them.

While the advice is directed toward sexual and gender diversity, the advice applies to dealing with any youth. The principles of dealing with children apply globally.

So what is the secret? The title says it best – “Always My Child.” Your child's needs come first, no matter what. Love your child; don't pressure them, but encourage them to discuss their feelings, fears, and problems.

Listen.

Always.

Reviewed by Dave Parker