## Gender Development in Children

| Ages 2-3 years old | • Gender Identity begins to form  
|                     | • Begins to seek out same-sex models to identify with  
|                     | • Gender variant children may seek models to identify with that are opposite sex of their assigned birth sex  
|                     | • At this stage children are concrete and want to label things into nice, neat categories |
| Ages 3-4 years old | • Gender Identity has been established  
|                     | A strong desire/need to incorporate gender identity into their world  
|                     | • Very aware of gender differences in others  
|                     | • Starts to develop gender schemas (basic “ideas” for how males/females look, act, etc)  
|                     | • Gender roles/stereotypes are refined  
|                     | • Trans children struggle to express their differences in their feelings about their own gender from their peers |
| Ages 4-6 years old | • Gender Scripts form (girls wear makeup, dresses and men shave, wear pants, etc)  
|                     | • Children may have ideas that are rigid about gender or may think that their gender may magically change when they grow up  
|                     | • Schools have a profound effect on children’s ideas of gender and acceptance  
|                     | • Trans children at this stage have been insistent about their gender identity and may have been for a couple years. They are adamant that they are a “boy” or “girl” even though their biological sex states otherwise |
| Ages 5-7 years old | • Gender Consistency  
|                     | • Gender Stability  
|                     | • If a trans child is forced to limit their gender expression  
|                     | • Behavioral problems  
|                     | • Suicidal Ideation |
| Ages 9-12 years old | • For trans children/adolescents as puberty changes develop gender dysphoria may significantly increase |
| Ages 12-18 years old | • Gender Identity becomes even more stable  
|                     | • Specific behaviors of trans teens  
|                     | • Binding breasts  
|                     | • Cutting/Growing out hair  
|                     | • Experimenting with clothing, makeup, etc |

(from Gender Identity and Sexuality Development in Children, Brad Stepp)