

I am a parent of a trans teen who transitioned in elementary school despite everyone telling them they didn't know who they were and to wait. After threatening suicide and years of therapy they were still adamant they were transgender. They weren't saying they were trans to sneak into a locker room or so they could run faster than the other 3rd grade girls in soccer.

Please do not ban transgender athletes from school sports. Trans kids need to feel they belong and sports provide a way for youth to be social, work together, learn to celebrate and support differences, and provide physical enjoyment. Without access to sports, trans kids will be even more isolated and their mental health will suffer greatly.

Transgender people have a right to play sports and they will not play sports on a gendered team that doesn't match their identity. Imagine a child who has transitioned from male to female showing up to soccer practice as the girl they are to play on a boys soccer team. Will the team treat them as an equal? Will the coach? Will the trans girl feel like they are with their peers and that they belong as "one of the boys"? The answer is no! Will they go into the boys locker room after the game and put on their pink skirt and sandals to change to go home and not get push back from other kids and parents? Will they instead hide at home, not develop their social and athletic skills, and feel marginalized, angry at the world, and suicidal? Probably. Forcing a kid to identify with who they are not will not solve anything for trans or cis kids.

The argument that they will take a spot on the team away from a real girl is ridiculous. All people vary in their athletic abilities, school sports are not for proving you are the best at a sport. They are learning tools to build camaraderie while playing a game. Don't exclude trans kids from having a happy childhood and playing sports with the peers they feel most match themselves.

Sincerely,
Serena Luna