

GROWING UP TRANS

INSIDE THE STRUGGLES AND CHOICES FACING TRANSGENDER KIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES

1 x 82 HD



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Just a generation ago, it was adults, not kids, who changed genders. But today, many children are transitioning, too—with new medical options, and at younger and younger ages. In *Growing Up Trans*, FRONTLINE takes viewers on an intimate and eye-opening journey inside this new frontier—where it's now possible for kids who feel they were born in the wrong body to never have to go through the puberty of their biological sex.

Told from the perspective of parents, doctors, and, most revealing of all, the kids themselves, the documentary takes a powerful look at this new generation, exploring the medical possibilities, struggles and choices transgender kids and their families face today. Eight transgender kids, ranging in ages from 9 to 19, speak with striking candor and remarkable insight about their deeply personal experiences.

"I had thoughts of hurting myself, cutting myself, killing myself even. I got very close, very close, twice," Kyle Catrambone, age 13, tells FRONTLINE. "I was just thinking, 'I can't do it anymore. I can't live like this. I can't live in this body. It's not going to work.'"

Kids like Kyle now have more medical options than ever before. FRONTLINE gained extraordinary access to the gender program at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, and in *Growing Up Trans*, they examine the complicated and often controversial treatments now available to gender non-conforming and transgender kids.

"This is a field of medicine that is rapidly changing, and the age that kids can start taking puberty blockers and cross sex hormones—estrogen or testosterone—is younger than it was even a few years ago," says O'Connor.

"Early intervention has changed everything for these kids," Navasky says. "But because the medical treatment of transgender kids is so new, there's very little research, which can make treatment decisions even more difficult for parents." And for doctors, too.

"We're asking families to take some leaps of faith, based upon the child that they have in front of them, and really what we don't know with regard to some of the long-term consequences of these medications," Dr. Robert Garofalo, director of the gender program at Lurie Children's Hospital, tells FRONTLINE.

Growing Up Trans explores the complicated emotional issues many of those parents and families face: "I feel, in a sense, like something's been robbed . . . my daughter's gone, it seems, and is morphing into this other person," Burt Blanchard tells FRONTLINE.

The film also talks with older teenagers who were among the first wave of kids in the U.S. to medically transition from one gender to another with puberty blockers, hormones and surgery—like 19-year old Isaac. He made the transition in middle school, and he tells FRONTLINE that since then, his perspective on gender has been gradually shifting: "I started realizing at around 16, 17 how complicated it really was, and kind of what a huge, huge decision I had made to embrace this masculine part of myself so deeply," he says.

As a new generation of kids and their parents navigate the changing and complicated world of gender and identity, this FRONTLINE special is an unforgettable inside look at what it really means to be growing up trans today.

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CREDITS

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