

FCI Statement on Inclusive and Affirming Language

Family Connects International recognizes the full range of gender identities of those who bear children, raise children, and create families. It is not only cisgender women who become pregnant and give birth, but also people who identify as transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming. Newborns may have same-sex parents. Parents and caregivers may or may not be biologically related to the newborns they are lovingly raising. Regardless of gender identity or family composition, everyone deserves access to health services and parenting resources.

At the same time, we acknowledge that the fields that inform our work – maternal and child health, public health, and reproductive health – commonly use gendered terms, like “woman,” “mother,” “father,” etc. There will be circumstances in which FCI mirrors this language to adequately represent the body of work from these fields. Research studies, for example, may have been conducted exclusively on cisgender women so discussions of those outcomes would follow the language used in the study for accuracy. In addition, there will be times when our language will reflect and honor the gender identities of the individuals discussed.

Because Family Connects is available to all families with a newborn, FCI encourages the use of language that is inclusive and gender-neutral in order to welcome everyone’s participation and reflect our commitment to providing respectful, culturally sensitive care. Using gender-neutral language does not eliminate women, mothers, fathers, or men from the Family Connects model, nor from our vocabulary — it simply reflects the full range of genders and extends a welcome to all.

This work is new for us and we will take the time needed to get it right. We’ll seek input from external experts, develop a glossary of terms, and review existing materials for needed revisions. Our goal is to shift the way we talk about the experiences of birth and parenting so that the Family Connects model truly supports all families. Join us.