

JAZZ JENNINGS

b. October 6, 2000

TRANSGENDER YOUTH ACTIVIST

“No matter what your differences are, you have to embrace them and be proud of the way you are.”

Her public childhood and lifelong activism provide a model of trans pride for youth worldwide.

One of the youngest publicly documented transgender children, Jazz Jennings is a television star, a social media personality, an author and a lifelong LGBTQ activist. She made her groundbreaking television debut at the age of 6 and continues to generate global awareness and acceptance of trans youth.

Assigned male at birth, Jennings was raised in South Florida. She was diagnosed with gender dysphoria at age 4 and began her transition at 5. “Ever since I could form coherent thoughts, I knew I was a girl trapped inside a boy’s body,” she says. Her parents supported her unconditionally.

As a child, Jennings attended Camp Aranu’itiq, the first summer camp for transgender youth. She completed her high school education in 2019 and was accepted to Harvard University but deferred her admission.

In 2006 Jennings appeared for the first time on television in an interview with Barbara Walters on “20/20.” She subsequently guested on the “The Rosie Show.” At age 11, Jennings sat down with Oprah Winfrey for the television documentary, “I Am Jazz: A Family in Transition.”

Jennings’s public childhood highlighted the triumphs and challenges of growing up transgender. She and her parents fought for her right to play on the girls’ soccer team, eventually securing a rule change from the U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF) that made it possible for her and other trans athletes to play on the team matching their gender identity. The Jenningses founded the Transkids Purple Rainbow Foundation to help transgender children around the world, and later, Jazz founded Rainbow Purple Tails, a fundraising organization for trans youth.

At age 13, Jennings co-wrote an educational children’s book about trans childhood. The following year, she became a spokesperson for the skincare company Clean & Clear and began modeling. When she turned 15, Jennings was given her own TLC reality television series, “I Am Jazz” (2015-present). The same year, she published a book aimed at adults, “Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen.”

Jennings has been honored by numerous publications and organizations. Among them, TIME magazine named her one of the 25 Most Influential Teens of 2014, the Advocate named her to its list of 40 Under 40, and she became the youngest person ever to appear on OUT magazine’s Out 100 list. In 2017 a collectible Jazz doll was created.

Beyond reality TV, Jennings has voiced multiple cartoon characters, starred in the short film “Denim” and pursued other acting opportunities. She was readmitted to Harvard University in 2022.



© GETTY IMAGES

lgbt[™]
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright © 2022 – A Project of Equality Forum