



GENDER EXPANSIVE CHILDREN: BOOKS TO HELP ADULTS UNDERSTAND

Gender Born, Gender Made: Raising Healthy Gender-Nonconforming Children, Diane Ehrensaft, The Experiment, 2011. A guidebook for the parents and therapists of children who do not identify with or behave according to their biological gender. Encourages caregivers to support gender-variant children as they explore their gender identities.

Trans Forming Families: Real Stories About Transgendered Loved Ones. Mary Boenke (Editor), Oak Knoll Press, 2003. Designed especially for families, friends and others interested in understanding and learning about transgender people. A quick read.

Transgender 101: A Simple Guide to a Complex Issue, Nicholas M. Teich, Columbia University Press, 2012. A readable and thorough primer on the history, terminology, types, politics, and medical and social realities of the transgender population. Written for students, professionals, friends, and family members.

The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals, Stephanie A. Brill & Rachel Pepper, Cleis Press, 2008. A comprehensive guidebook on gender variance from birth through college. What will happen when your preschool son insists on wearing a dress to school? Is this ever just a phase? How can parents advocate for their children in elementary schools? What are the current laws? What do doctors and therapists recommend?

Transgender Emergence: Therapeutic Guidelines for Working with Gender-Variant People and Their Families, Arlene Istar Lev, Haworth Press, 2004. A guide for therapists working with transgender clients and their families from a clinical and theoretical perspective.

Transgender Explained For Those Who Are Not, Joanne Herman, AuthorHouse, 2009. Easy-to-read, short explanations and stories by subject, designed for friends, family, colleagues, and journalists.

Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman, Leslie Feinberg, Beacon Press, 1997. In this personal journey through history, the author uncovers persuasive evidence that throughout history there have always been people who crossed the cultural boundaries of sex and gender.

Transitions of the Heart: Stories of Love, Struggle and Acceptance by Mothers of Transgender and Gender Variant Children, Rachel Pepper (Editor), Cleis Press, 2012. A collection by more than 30 mothers of diverse backgrounds and ages provides a window into what mothers of gender non-conforming children and adults really think and feel about their children and their own journey of change.

Transparent: Love, Family, and Living the T with Transgender Teenagers, Cris Beam, Mariner Books, 2008. While volunteering at a school for gay and transgender kids, Cris found herself drawn into a pained and powerful group of transgirls. Both funny and heartbreaking. The girls struggle valiantly to resolve the gap between the way they feel inside and the way the world sees them.

Your Transgender Teen: A Guide for Parents, Irwin Krieger, Helping Genderwise Press, 2011. Krieger, as a clinical social worker, has years of experience helping transgender teens. Although written for parents, this book is useful for pediatricians, therapists, educators and others who work with teenagers and young adults.

Resources

Teacher Resources

Imagine a World That is Free From Fear (ETFO)
Challenging Homophobia in Schools (GALE BC)
Social Justice Begins With Me (ETFO)
More Than a Play (ETFO)

Picture Books

10 000 Dresses
And Tango Makes Three
Asha's Mums
Daddy's Roommate
Heather Has Two Mommies
In Our Mothers' House (**book guide below**)
King and King (**book guide below**)
King and King and Family
My Princess Boy (**book guide below**)
The Different Dragon (**book guide below**)
The Family Book (**book guide below**)
The Sissy Duckling
Who's in a Family? (**book guide below**)

Websites

<http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>
www.aysp.ca
www.dayofpink.org
www.egale.ca
www.glsen.org
www.mygsa.ca
www.pflagcanada.ca
www.thinkb4youspeak.com
www.teachingtolerance.org
www.transparentcanada.ca
www.youthline.ca

The Family Book by Todd Parr

Synopsis: Represents a variety of families, some big and some small, some with only one parent and some with two moms or dads, some quiet and some noisy, but all alike in some ways and special no matter what.

Pre-read discussion: Discuss/engage students schema on all the ways we know we can be different. Tie into idea that what makes us different makes us special/differences are good. Families are another way that we are all different. Everyone's family is different in some ways and the same in some ways too – all families are special no matter what.

Post-read guiding questions

1. Tell me about your family. Who makes up your family?
2. How are some families different?
3. How are all families the same?
4. On this page here, the author talks about families that have two moms. Does it matter if both parents are Moms or Dads? Why? Why Not?
5. On this page, the two Dads love each other just like a Mom and a Dad do. That means that they are Gay. Gay means a different way to love each other. Have you ever heard that word before? Just like families different, but special no matter what, love can be different too and special no matter what.

Some suggested activities

1. Venn Diagrams on families
2. Pictures/Drawings of families, followed by gallery walk.
3. Posters depicting different families with caption e.g., All families are different – All Families are special!

Who's in a Family? By Robert Skutch

Synopsis: Family is important, but who's in a family? Why, the people who love you the most of course! This equal opportunity, open-minded picture highlights all kinds of families, even some favourite animal families.

The same questions and activities listed above can be used for this book as well.

And Tango Makes Three by Peter Parnell & Justin Richardson

Synopsis: In the zoo there are all kinds of animal families. But Tango's family is not like any of the others. Based on the true story of two male penguins at the Central Park Zoo who built a nest and hatched a chick together, this book tells a heart warming story for all families.

Pre-read discussion: Discuss/engage students schema on all the ways we know we can be different. Tie into idea that what makes us different makes us special/differences are good. Families are another way that we are all different. Animals have families too.

Post-read guiding questions:

1. Tell me about your family. Who makes up your family?
2. Are Roy, Silo, and Tango a family? How do you know if they are or are not?
3. Can you tell me what kinds of things make up a family?
4. How do you know when a group of people is a family?
5. What makes Ray and Silo different from the other penguins?
6. Why do Roy and Silo want to have an egg?
7. Like Roy and Silo some human couples are both boys or both girls. Does it matter if both parents are boys or girls? Why or why not?
8. Do you know what the proper name is for human couples that are both boys or both girls? Have you ever heard this word used in another way before?

The Different Dragon by Jennifer Bryan

Synopsis: A story of Noah, a young boy with two mothers, and his fantastic encounter with a dragon, who wants to be different –he does not want to be fierce. A wonderful platform for deconstructing static gender roles, in age appropriate ways. Rather than focus on the composition of Noah’s family, the book uses it as background information, which teachers can choose to pause and discuss, or have it remain just part of the story.

Post read guiding questions

1. How was the dragon in the story different?
2. On page 26, the dragon says that it is a lot of pressure to be the kind of dragon people want him to be. Why do you think he feels this way? Do you think it is fair for people to expect him to be like everyone else? Why? Why not? He says there is only one way to be a dragon. Is this true?
3. Where else, in your life, do you feel these stereotypes exist?
4. Noah has two Mom’s in the story. Do you think having two Mom’s would make Noah more aware that being different is a good thing? Why? How?

Some suggested activities:

1. Invite students to create ‘bumper stickers’ with slogans that challenge stereotypes. Serious ones and/or fun ones. Show students examples of bumper stickers on-line. Some examples: Dragons can be kind! Football players can be ballerina’s! Mom’s can be firefighters! Post bumper stickers in the halls around the school.

My Princess Boy by Cheryl Kilodavis

Synopsis: This little boy loves the colour pink, and sparkly things. Sometimes he wears dresses and sometimes he wears jeans. He likes to wear his princess tiara, even when climbing trees. He’s a Princess Boy, and his family loves him exactly the way he is.

Post read guiding questions

1. Why do you think author Cheryl Kilodavis decided to write *My Princess Boy*? What do you think she hopes to accomplish by writing this book?
2. Princess Boy is unique in many ways. What does it mean to be unique? How is everyone in your class or your family unique? How does Princess Boy teach us to

understand and celebrate his uniqueness?

3. Define the word "acceptance". How can you accept someone for who he or she is? Is this easy to do, or hard to do?

4. Why do you think people laugh at Princess Boy when he wants to buy something that is pink and sparkly, or when he dresses up in a princess dress for Halloween?

5. Discuss the illustrations in *My Princess Boy*. Why do you think illustrator Suzanne DeSimone chose not to put faces on the figures in this book?

6. Princess Boy expresses himself by dressing up in girly dresses and dancing like a ballerina. How do you choose to express yourself?

7. Ultimately, Princess Boy is happy because he is loved for who he is by his family and his friends. What is unconditional love? How does your family show you unconditional love? Would Princess Boy feel differently if he was not unconditionally accepted? How?

8. What message does this book share with you as a reader? Will you act differently as a person and a friend now that you've read this book? Why or why not? Would you be friends with a Princess Boy?

Some suggested activities:

Create an accepting classroom environment by celebrating the uniqueness of your students. Based on the age of your students, have each child create a drawing or poster showing how they are unique. Students can draw themselves, their families, their interests, their favourite things, and pictures depicting their culture or background. Display all of the pictures or posters in your classroom.

King and King by Linda de Haan & Stern Nijland

Synopsis: The story begins not so atypical, of a young prince who, under the pressures from his Queen Mother, is looking to marry. He is introduced to many Princesses from around the world, but no of them are his match. Until he meets one of the Princess' brothers!

Post read guiding questions

1. Were you surprised when the Prince fell in love with the Prince? Why? Why not?
2. Were you surprised when the two Princes got married? Why? Why not?
3. Why do you think the authors wrote this story? What was their message?
4. Now that we have read this story, how does it change how you think and feel? What are your thoughts?

In Our Mothers' House by Patricia Polacco

Synopsis: Marmee, Meema, and the kids are just like any other family on the block. In their beautiful house, they cook dinner together, they laugh together, and they dance together. But some of the other families don't accept them. They say they are different. How can a family have two moms and no dad? But Marmee and Meema's house is full of love. And they teach their children that different doesn't mean wrong. And no matter how many moms or dads they have, they are everything a family is meant to be.

Post read guiding questions

1. How is this family similar to yours? · How is this family different from yours?

2. Why do you think Mrs. Lockner acted meanly to this family?
3. How did Marmee and Meema react when Mrs. Lockner was mean to the family?
4. What was it like to be a child in this family?
5. Why do you think the author chose to write this book?
6. Would you recommend this book to others? Why or why not?

Some suggested activities

Teacher presents students with two scenarios. Have students discuss and/or role play each scenario.

1. Marmee, Meema, and the kids move into your neighborhood. How would you react to your new neighbors?
2. Millie is a student in your class. At lunch, you overhear one of the students making fun of her because she has two moms and does not have a dad. What would you do in this situation?

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Resources for secondary students

Websites:

- Egale Canada – www.egale.ca
- My GSA - www.mygsa.ca
- Resource for Students, Educators, Parents
- Youth Beyond Barriers - www.aysp.ca
 - Found under Programs and Groups – Community Based Groups – Child and Youth Groups
- GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) – www.glsen.org
- PFLAG (Parents, Friends of Lesbians and Gays) – www.pflagcanada.ca
- Day of Pink – www.dayofpink.org

Books:

Fiction:

- Happy Endings Are All Alike – S. Scoppettone ISBN 1-55583-177-X
- Being Emily – Rachel Gold ISBN
- A Secret Edge – Robin Reardon ISBN 978-0-7582-1927-5
- Absolutely, Positively Not – David LaRochelle ISBN 0-439-59109-0
- Chance to Dance For You – Gail Sidonie Sobat ISBN 978192653113
- Defying Gay Gravity- Greg Kentris 978-0-9919891-0-2

Non-Fiction:

- Becoming Visible – K. Jennings ISBN 1-55583-254-7
- The Gay 100 – P. Russell ISBN 07582-01001
- Queers in History – Keith Stern – Benbella Books ISBN 978-193377187-8
- What If Someone I Know is Gay? – Eric Marcus – Penguin Putnam Books - ISBN0-8431-7611-3
- When the Drama Club Is Not Enough – Jeff Perrotti and Kim Westheimer – Beacon Press ISBN 0-8070-3131-3
- Is It A Choice? – Eric Marcus – Harper Collins ISBN 0-06-083280-0
- The Letter Q – Queer Writers' Notes To Their Younger Selves – Edited by Sarah Moon – Arthur A. Levine Books – ISBN 978-0-545-39932-6



LOOKING AT GENDER IDENTITY WITH BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

10,000 Dresses, Marcus Ewert, Seven Stories Press, 2008. (1 – 3)

A modern fairy tale about becoming the person you feel you are inside. While Bailey dreams of beautiful dresses, no one wants to hear about it because he is a boy. Then an older girl comes along who is inspired by Bailey and they make beautiful dresses together.

The Adventures of Tulip, Birthday Wish Fairy, S. Bear Bergman, Flamingo Rampant, 2012. (Pre-K – 3)

Follow Tulip as he deals with the birthday wishes of all the nine-year-olds in North America. Tulip receives a wish from a child known as David who wishes to live as Daniela. He doesn't understand how to help, so he seeks the wise counsel of the Wish Fairy Captain.

All I Want To Be Is Me, Phyllis Rothblatt, 2009. (Pre-K – 3)

Gives voice to the feelings of children who don't fit typical gender stereotypes, and who just want to be free to be themselves. Includes children who are fluid in their gender identity, as well as those that feel that their body doesn't match who they really are.



Be Who You Are, Jennifer Carr. (1 – 4)

An elementary school age child called Nick feels like a girl inside. Nick starts school as a boy but draws a self-portrait as a girl. Nick's family shows love and understanding. The child works with a gender counselor and meets other children who have similar feelings. Nick decides to be called Hope and Hope's parents work with the school to help with the adjustment.

The Boy in the Dress. David Williams and Quentin Blake (Illustrator), Razorbill, 2009. (5 – 7)

Dennis's Dad is depressed since his Mom left and his brother is a bully. But at least he has soccer. Then he discovers he enjoys wearing a dress. Told with humor and respect.

Gender Now Activity Book: School Edition, Maya Christina Gonzalez, Reflection Press, 2011. (K – 3)

A coloring and activity book that explores gender in its many forms. Looks at gender expression in history, nature and other cultures.

Play Free, McNall Mason and Max Suarez, MaxNme Studio, 2013. (Pre-K – 1)

Journey in to the life and mind of a young gender variant boy who wants to be treated fairly and accepted for who he is. Colorful illustrations of assorted beings.

My Princess Boy, Cheryl Kilodavis, Aladdin, 2010. (Pre-K – 1)

Dyson loves pink, sparkly things. Sometimes he wears dresses. Sometimes he wears jeans. He likes to wear his princess tiara, even when climbing trees. He's a Princess Boy.

Riding Freedom, Pam Muñoz Ryan, Blue Sky Press, 2002. (4 – 6)

A fictionalized account of the true story of Charley (Charlotte) Parkhurst who ran away from an orphanage, lived as a boy, moved to California, and became a stagecoach driver.

Wandering Son Series, Shimura Takako, Fantagraphics, 2011. (6 and up)

Shuichi and his new friend Yoshino have happy homes, loving families, and are well-liked. But they share a secret Shuichi is a boy who wants to be a girl, and Yoshino is a girl who wants to be a boy. Sensitive treatment of the topic. Manga. Translated from Japanese. Some explicit language.





BOOKS FOR STUDENTS INCLUSIVE OF GAY FAMILY MEMBERS AND CHARACTERS: A SHORT LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

ALL KINDS OF FAMILIES

All Families Are Special, Norma Simon. (2 – 3). Goes beyond other books in portraying different kinds of families and shows both what can be hard in a family, as well as what is good and special. Includes two-mom, blended, adoptive, and international families.

Dear Child, John Farrell, (Pre-K – K). Features three families, a two-mom adoptive family, a single father and a mom and dad family expressing their wonder and joy of having a young child.

Families, Susan Kuklin. (4 – 5). Combining interviews and engaging color photos, this shows the diversity of families in America. Includes mixed-race, immigrant, two-dad, two-mom and single-parent families and families for whom religion is a focal point.

The Family Book, Todd Parr. (Pre-K – K). All kinds of families are celebrated in a funny, silly and reassuring way. Includes adoptive families, stepfamilies, single-parent families, two-mom and two-dad families and families with a mom and a dad. Quirky humor and bright, childlike illustrations.

The Great Big Book of Families, Mary Hoffman. (Pre-K – 3) Features all kinds of families and their lives together. Each spread showcases one aspect of home life - from houses and holidays, to schools and pets, to feelings and family trees.

Who's in a Family? Robert Skutch. (Pre-K – 1). A picture book showing multicultural contemporary family units, including those with single parents, two moms or two dads, mixed-race couples, grandparents and divorced parents.

PICTURE BOOKS WITH GAY FAMILY MEMBERS

And Tango Makes Three, Justin Richardson & Peter Parnell. (1-3). Penguins Roy and Silo at New York's Central Park Zoo, keep putting a rock in their nest and try to hatch it. The zookeeper gives them a real egg that needs care. The penguins take turns sitting on it until it hatches, and Tango is born.

Antonio's Card / La Tarjeta de Antonio, Rigoberto Gonzales. (1 – 4). As Mother's Day approaches, Antonio must choose whether — or how — to express his connection and love for his mother and her partner, Leslie.

The Different Dragon, Jennifer Bryan. (K – 1). Shows how the wonderful curiosity and care of a little boy, with some help from his two moms, can lead to magical places with a dragon who is tired of being tough.

Donovan's Big Day, Lesléa Newman, (Pre-K – 2). Captures the excitement of a young boy as he and his extended family prepare for the boy's two moms' wedding. A picture book about love, family, and marriage.

In Our Mothers' House, Patricia Polacco. (3 – 5). Marmee, Meema, and their kids cook, laugh, and dance together. But some families don't accept them, saying they are different. Yet Marmee and Meema's house is full of love. They teach their children that different doesn't mean wrong. Good if issues have come up in class.

A Tale of Two Daddies, Vanita Oelschlager. (Pre-K – 1). A young girl answers a friend's questions about what it is like to have two fathers. The boy asks straightforward questions. The story ends with simply, "Who is your dad when you're sad and need some love?" Both, of course.

Uncle Bobby's Wedding, Sarah S. Brannen (Pre-K – 2). Looks at the fears that a young girl has of losing her favorite uncle when he plans to get married. Everyone in the family is happy, but her. Finally, she sees that she is not losing an uncle but gaining another uncle. The characters are depicted with animals.

CHAPTER BOOKS WITH GAY FAMILY MEMBERS OR CHARACTERS

Drama, Raina Telgemeier. (5 – 8). Graphic novel through drama – a play – and drama between characters explores middle school feelings with boyfriends and girlfriends, and boyfriends and boyfriends.

Hit the Road, Manny: A Manny Files Novel, Christian Burch. (4 – 6). In a sequel to *The Manny Files*, the family heads off on a road trip with Mom, Dad, four kids and their male nanny or “manny.” Looks directly at gay put-downs, parental acceptance, celebrating commitment and pride.

Keeper, Kathi Appelt. (4 – 7). To ten-year-old Keeper, this moon is her chance to fix all that has gone wrong. Her mermaid mother swam away when she was three. When the riptide pulls at her boat, panic sets in, and the fairy tales that lured her out there go tumbling into the waves. Includes a tender romance between two teenaged boys years earlier. One turns out to be a merboy.

Luv Ya Bunches, Lauren Myracle, (4 – 6). A funny, honest depiction of the shifting alliances and rivalries between girls that shape school days. Written with a mix of instant messages, blog posts, and straight narrative. Four diverse 5th grade girls come together in friendship. One of the girls has two moms. First in a series of Flower Power books.

The Manny Files, Christian Burch. (3 – 6). Shy Keats Dalinger learns from his unconventional male “nanny” to be more self-confident and out-going while the “manny” becomes more and more a part of the family.

The Mysterious Edge of the Heroic World, E. L. Konigsburg. (5 – 7). Two boys find themselves caught up in a story that links a sketch, a young boy's life, an old man's reminiscence, and a painful secret dating back to the outrages of Nazi Germany. Includes revelations about the victimization of artists and gays during the Holocaust.

No Castles Here, A.C.E. Bauer. (5 – 7). Augie knows how to get by – be invisible. Then, a book of fairy tales, participation in a school chorus, and a gay Big Brother combine to give 11-year-old Augie the confidence he needs to handle bullies and become an activist.

Playground: A Mostly True Story of a Former Bully, Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson, Laura Moser. (6 – 9).

A realistic look at bullying from the perspective of an urban young teen boy in middle school. Looks at the boys feelings as both a target and perpetrator of bullying. Also deals with divorce and gay parenting. Some explicit language.

The Popularity Papers: Research for the Social Improvement and General Betterment of Lydia

Goldblatt and Julie Graham-Chang, Amy Ignatow. (4 – 6). Two fifth-grade best friends are determined to uncover the secrets of popularity by observing, recording, discussing, and replicating the behaviors of the “cool” girls. Notebook format with a lot of illustrations. Julie has two dads. Series continues with four more books as of 2013. The second book in series specifically looks at bullying.

The Revealers, Doug Wilhelm. (5 – 7). At Parkland Middle School, three bullied seventh graders start an unofficial e-mail forum in which they publicize their experiences. Unexpectedly, lots of other kids come forward to confess their similar troubles, and it becomes clear that the problem at their school is bigger than anyone knew. In one email, a student tells his troubles of being called gay.

Riding Freedom, Pam Muñoz Ryan. (4 – 6). A fictionalized account of the true story of Charley (Charlotte) Parkhurst who ran away from an orphanage, posed as a boy, moved to California, drove stagecoaches and continued to pass as a man her whole life.

The Trouble with Babies, Martha Freeman. (2 – 4). Holly has just moved to San Francisco. Her new friend Xavier, who lives with his two dads, has a crush on Annie, who is Jewish and Chinese. Xavier hopes to win Annie over by putting her “yucky” baby sister in his de-yuckification machine.