

Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Gender Identity Through the Reading of Picture Books (Primary)

Note:

The interest levels listed in this bibliography are those given by the publishers. Each teacher, however, needs to decide the age suitability for their own students.

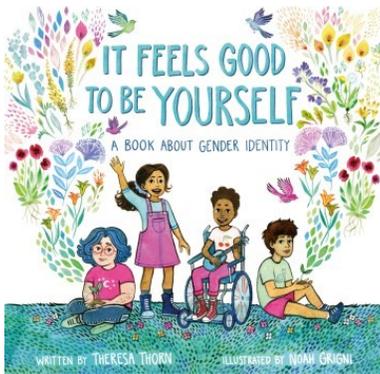
The summaries are from the publishers as well and have been included to give you a quick overview of the main themes of each title. In this way you can quickly select the titles that suit the particular social and emotional needs of your students. Some of the titles fit the theme loosely and others more tightly. The titles also range from "light-hearted" to more serious in tone.

Your school counsellor is an excellent source for suggestions on how to support students when teaching more sensitive subjects.

Joan Pearce, December 2020

Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Gender Identity (Primary)

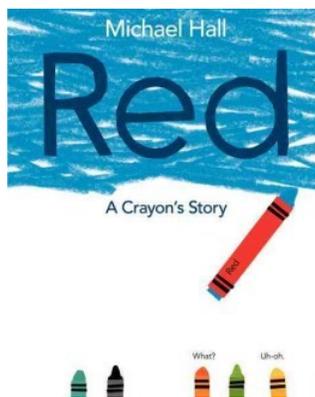
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Picture Book Format



It Feels Good to Be Yourself: A Book About Gender Identity

by Theresa Thorn, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.9)

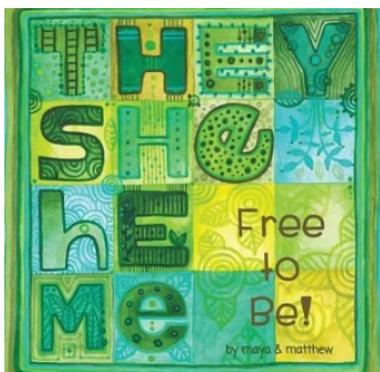
"Some people are boys. Some people are girls. Some people are both, neither, or somewhere in between. This sweet, straightforward exploration of gender identity will give children a fuller understanding of themselves and others." - Pub.



Red: A Crayon's Story

by Michael Hall, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.5)

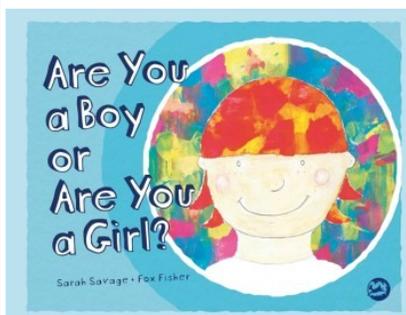
"Red has a bright red label, but he is, in fact, blue. His teacher tries to help him be red (let's draw strawberries!), his mother tries to help him be red by sending him out on a playdate with a yellow classmate (go draw a nice orange!), and the scissors try to help him be red by snipping his label so that he has room to breathe. But Red is miserable. He just can't be red, no matter how hard he tries! Finally, a brand-new friend offers a brand-new perspective..." - Pub.



They She He Me Free to Be!

by Maya & Matthew Smith-Gonzalez, c2017 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)

"They She He Me, Free to Be shows many gender presentations under each pronoun and invites even more. A go-to place to help keep the conversations alive, break down assumptions of who is "she" or "he" and expand beyond the binary to include "they" and more." - Amazon.ca



Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?

by Sarah Savage, c2015 (IL:K-3, RL: 2.8)

"Tiny loves costumes! Sometimes Tiny dresses up as an animal, or a doctor, or a butterfly. Tiny also prefers not to tell other children whether they are a boy or a girl, but when Tony starts a new school their new friends can't help asking one question: 'Tiny, are you a boy or are you a girl?'" - Pub.

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Picture Book Format

Would You Rather
be a Princess or
a Dragon?



BARNEY SALTZBERG

Would You Rather Be a Princess or a Dragon?

by Barney Saltzberg, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.6)

"Some little ones want to be princesses; others want to be dragons. The message of this book is that you can actually be both! There are lots of things you can be: a little wild, a little sweet. A little polite, a little troublesome. A little dainty, a little dragony. There's nothing stopping you from being just what you want to be..." - Pub.

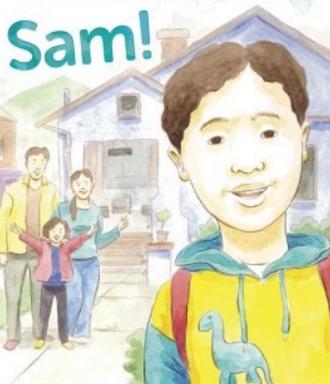


Written by Patricia Toht · Illustrated by Lorian Tu-Dean

Dress Like a Girl!

by Patricia Toht, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

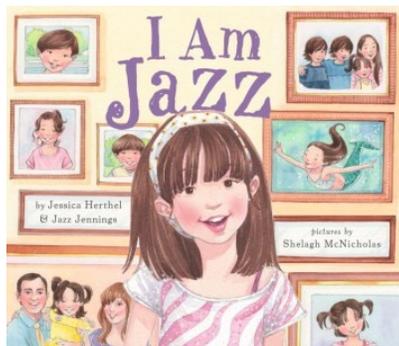
"What does it mean to dress like a girl? Many will tell you in this big, wide world that there are strict rules that must be addressed, rules you will need when looking your best. But when you are given these rules to obey, the secret is heeding them—in your own way." - Pub.



Sam!

by Dani Gabriel, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

"Sam loves riding his bike and learning about the American Revolution. He is full of laughter and joy. There's just one problem: Sam's family knows him as a girl named Isabel. Sam feels a sense of relief when he finally confides in his annoying but caring sister Maggie, and then his parents, even though it takes them a while to feel comfortable with it." - Pub.



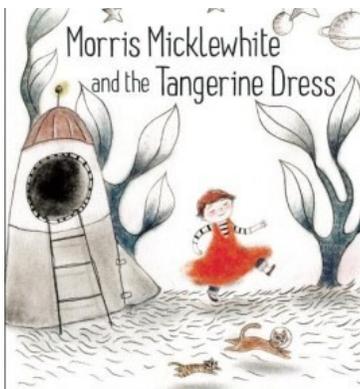
I am Jazz

by Jessica Herthel & Jazz Jennings,
c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)

"From the time she was two years old, Jazz knew that she had a girl's brain in a boy's body. She loved pink and dressing up as a mermaid and didn't feel like herself in boys' clothing. This confused her family, until they took her to a doctor who said that Jazz was transgender and that she was born this way. Jazz's story is based on her real-life experience." - Pub.

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Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress

by Christine Baldacchino, c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

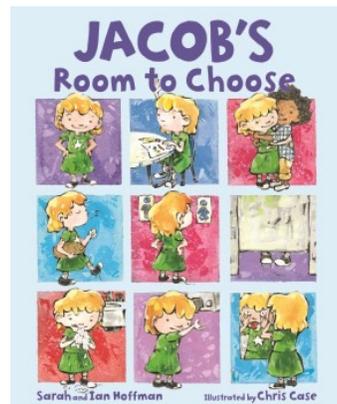
"Morris is a little boy who loves using his imagination. He dreams about having space adventures, paints beautiful pictures and sings the loudest during circle time. But most of all, Morris loves his classroom's dress-up—he loves wearing the tangerine dress. But the children in Morris's class don't understand. Dresses, they say, are for girls. And Morris certainly isn't welcome in the spaceship." - Pub.



Sparkle Boy

by Lesléa Newman, c2017 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

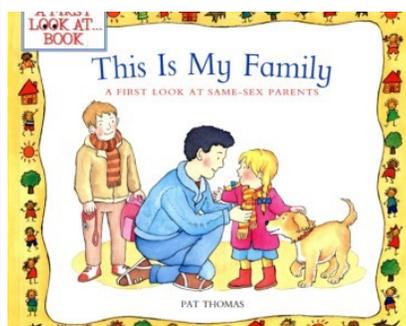
"Three-year-old Casey wants what his older sister, Jessie, has—a shimmery skirt, glittery painted nails, and a sparkly bracelet—but Jessie does not approve. After two boys tease Casey about his appearance, Jessie evolves to a place of acceptance and celebration of her gender creative younger brother." - Follett



Jacob's Room to Choose

by Sarah and Ian Hoffman, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

"When Jacob goes to the boys' bathroom he is chased out because the boys think he looks like a girl because of the way he is dressed. His classmate, Sophie, has a similar experience when she tries to go to the girls' bathroom. When their teacher finds out what happened, Jacob and Sophie, with the support of administration, lead change at their school " - Pub.



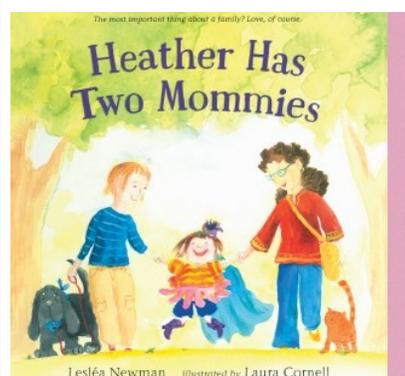
This is My Family: A First Look at Same-Sex Parents

by Pat Thomas, c2012 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.4)

"This is My Family takes a child's point of view in its discussion of same-sex marriage. Its message is intended both for children of gay or lesbian parents, as well as for the kids and parents of the children's friends and play-mates." - Pub. (Written by an experienced psychotherapist and a counselor, with a section for parents and teachers on how to use the book.)

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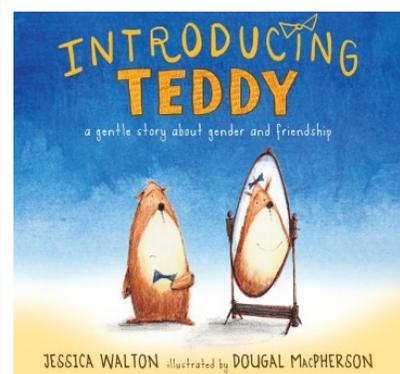


Heather Has Two Mommies

by Lesléa Newman, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.4)

"Heather's favorite number is two. She has two arms, two legs, and two pets. And she also has two mommies. When Heather goes to school for the first time, someone asks her about her daddy, but Heather doesn't have a daddy. Then something interesting happens. When Heather and her classmates all draw pictures of their families, not one drawing is the same. It doesn't matter who makes up a family, the teacher says, because..."

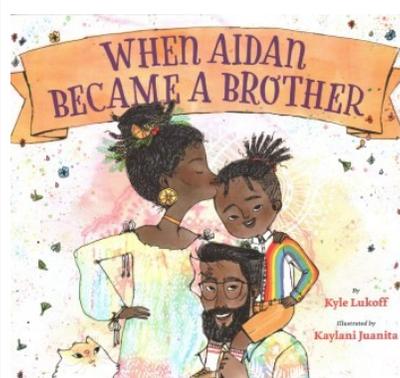
- Follett



Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story About Gender and Friendship

by Jessica Walton, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)

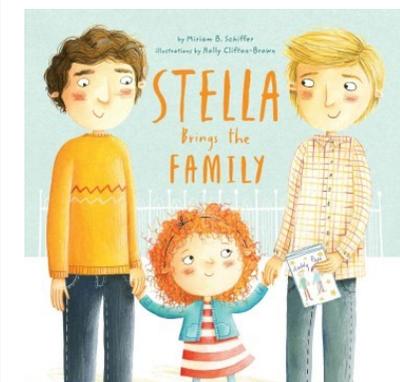
"Errol and his teddy, Thomas, are best friends who do everything together. Whether it's riding a bike, playing in the tree house, having a tea party, or all of the above, every day holds something fun to do. One sunny day, Errol finds that Thomas is sad, even when they are playing in their favorite ways. Errol can't figure out why, until Thomas finally tells Errol what the teddy has been afraid to say: "In my heart, I've always known that I'm a girl teddy, not a boy teddy." - Pub.



When Aidan Became a Brother

by Kyle Lukoff, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)

"When Aidan was born, everyone thought he was a girl. His parents gave him a pretty name, his room looked like a girl's room, and he wore clothes that other girls liked wearing. After he realized he was a trans boy, Aidan and his parents fixed the parts of life that didn't fit anymore, and he settled happily into his new life. Then Mom and Dad announce that they're going to have another baby, and Aidan wants to do everything he can to make things right for his new sibling from the beginning..." - Pub.



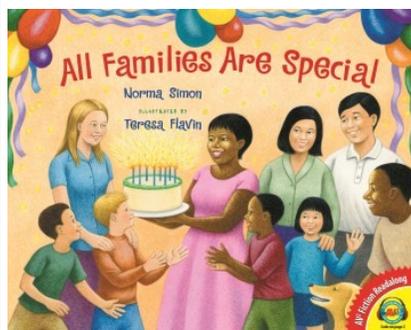
Stella Brings the Family

by Miriam Schiffer, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.2)

"Stella's class is having a Mother's Day celebration, but what's a girl with two daddies to do? It's not that she doesn't have someone who helps her with her homework, or tucks her in at night. Stella has her Papa and Daddy who take care of her, and a whole gaggle of other loved ones who make her feel special and supported every day. She just doesn't have a mom to invite to the party. Fortunately, Stella finds a unique solution to her party problem in this sweet story about love, acceptance, and the true meaning of family." - Pub.

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All Families are Special

by Norma Simon, c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

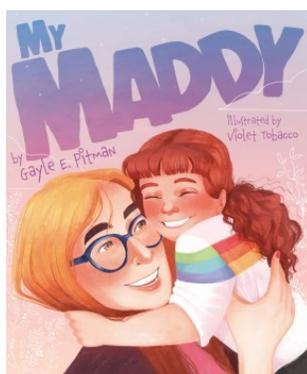
"Students in Mrs. Mack's class describe their families—big or small, living together or apart, with two moms or none—and learn why every family is special and important." - Pub.



The Princess in Black

by Shannon Hale, c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.2)
(early chapter book)

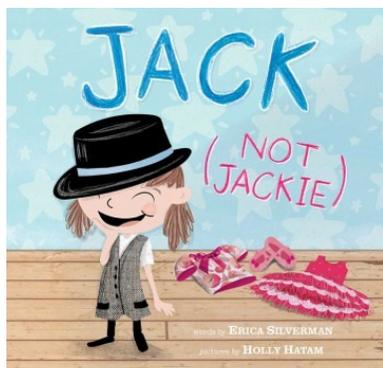
"Who says princesses don't wear black? When trouble raises its blue monster head, Princess Magnolia ditches her flouncy dresses and becomes the Princess in Black!" - Pub.



My Maddy

by Gail E Pitman, c2020 (IL: K-3)

"Most mommies are girls. Most daddies are boys. But lots of parents are like my Maddy. My Maddy has hazel eyes which are not brown or green. And my Maddy likes sporks because they are not quite a spoon or a fork. The best things in the world are not one thing or the other. They are something in between and entirely their own." - Pub.



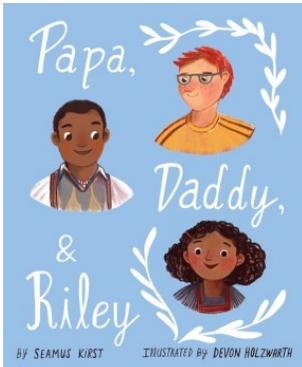
Jack (not Jackie)

by Erica Silverman, c2018 (IL:K-3, RL: 2.0)

"Susan thinks her little sister Jackie has the best giggle! She can't wait for Jackie to get older so they can do all sorts of things like play forest fairies and be explorers together. But as Jackie grows, she doesn't want to play those games. She wants to play with mud and be a super bug! Jackie also doesn't like dresses or her long hair, and she would rather be called Jack." - Pub.

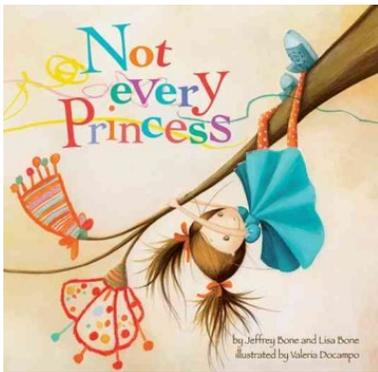
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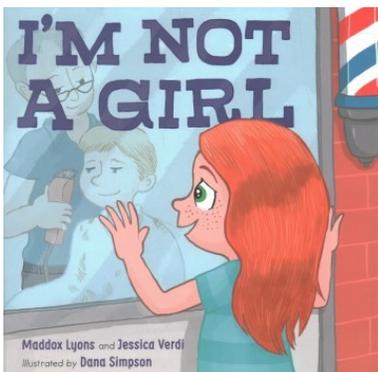
Papa, Daddy & Riley by Seamus Krist, c2020 (IL:K-3)

"Riley is Papa's princess and Daddy's dragon. She loves her two fathers. When Riley's classmate asks her which dad is her real one, Riley is confused. She doesn't want to have to pick one or the other. Families are made of love in this heartwarming story that shows there are lots of ways to be part of one."
- Pub.



Not Every Princess by Jeffrey Bone, c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.6)

"After listing activities that are stereotypically, but not always, attributed to princesses, fairies, pirates, superheroes, and more, encourages the reader to imagine what one could be, despite others' expectations. Includes note to parents." - Follett



I'm Not a Girl by Maddox Lyons, c2020 (IL:K-3, RL 1.6)

"Based on a true transgender identity journey, the picture book...is a...story...about a boy who is determined to be himself. Nobody seems to understand that Hannah is not a girl. His parents ask why he won't wear the cute outfits they pick out. His friend thinks he must be a tomboy. His teacher insists he should be proud to be a girl. But a birthday wish, a new word, and a stroke of courage might be just what Hannah needs to finally show the world who he really is." - Follett

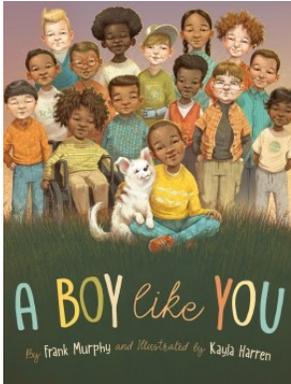


As a Boy by Plan International, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

"Boys around the world are treated differently than girls just because of their gender. They are given an education and choices, but are also expected to be men, to work, to fight, to be brave. Amazing photographs of children are paired with simple text showing that these boys wish for the same choices and freedoms they have to be given to the girls and women in their lives. *As a Boy* is a valiant call for all children's voices to be heard." - Pub.

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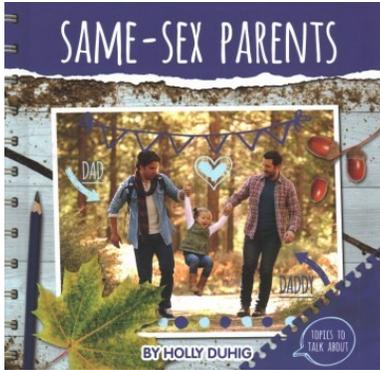


A Boy Like You
by Frank Murphy, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.5)

"...encourages every boy to embrace all the things that make him unique, to be brave and ask for help, to tell his own story and listen to the stories of those around him. In an age when boys are expected to fit into a particular mold, this book celebrates all the wonderful ways to be a boy." - Pub.

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Non-fiction



Same-Sex Parents

by Holly Duhig, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.1)

"The experience of having same-sex parents is highlighted in this age-appropriate book. Readers will be exposed to what it's like to live with either two moms or two dads, and readers who live with same-sex parents will enjoy seeing a relatable narrative about their family dynamic. This inside look at the loving families anchored by same-sex parents gives young readers the understanding needed to fight intolerant attitudes." - Pub.