

# LGBTQ-Inclusive Resources for Children and Families

## KESHET RESOURCES

### THE PURIM SUPERHERO

Nate has a Purim dilemma. He loves aliens and really wants to wear an alien costume for Purim, but his friends are all dressing as superheroes and he wants to fit in. What will he do? With the help of his two dads he makes a surprising decision.

### THE FLOWER GIRL WORE CELERY

In *The Flower Girl Wore Celery*, flower girl Emma can't wait for her cousin Hannah's wedding. She'll wear a celery dress and walk down the aisle with the ring bear, leading the way for the happy bride and groom – or at least, that's what Emma assumes. But nothing turns out to be quite what she's expecting, as Hannah's new spouse turns out to be another bride!

### EDUCATOR COMES OUT AS TRANS TO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL: A SAMPLE LETTER

In this letter to the religious school where he works as an educator, Noa Bourke uses humor, wisdom, and honesty to help the parents and young children in his community better understand his journey to trans identity. This letter can be adapted for other educators who want to communicate about their transition to families and their kids, and by the educational leaders who want to support their staff in their transition.

### A SAMPLE LETTER ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

This letter about diversity and inclusion was sent from the Director and Associate Director of Camp JRF to the parents of all of their campers. It serves as a model for how to communicate with and educate parents about LGBT inclusion at camp and beyond.

### KESHET'S RESOURCE LIST (includes resources for all age groups)

This is a list of suggested resources for Jewish educators, parents, and youth program leaders. It includes books, film, and websites. The document features a focused list of key resources that we think may be most helpful to Jewish educators, as well as an expanded bibliography on the theme of LGBTQ Jews.

## BOOKS FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

*(Curation in part from **Being Jazz**, **Logo**, **Advocate.com** and **Bustle.com**)*

### I AM JAZZ by Jessica Herthel, Jazz Jennings and illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas

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 that way. Jazz's story is based on her real-life experience and she tells it in a simple, clear way that will be appreciated by picture book readers, their parents, and teachers.

### AND TANGO MAKES THREE by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson and illustrated by Henry Cole

At the penguin house at the Central Park Zoo, two penguins named Roy and Silo were a little bit different from the others. But their desire for a family was the same. And with the help of a kindly zookeeper, Roy and Silo got the chance to welcome a baby penguin of their very own.



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### **THIS DAY IN JUNE** by Gayle E. Pitman and illustrated by Kristyna Litten

In a wildly whimsical, validating, and exuberant reflection of the LGBT community, this title welcomes readers to experience a pride celebration and share in a day when we are all united. Also included is a reading guide chock-full of facts about LGBT history and culture, as well as a 'Note to Parents and Caregivers' with information on how to talk to children about sexual orientation and gender identity in age-appropriate ways.

### **RED: A CRAYON'S STORY** by Michael Hall

A blue crayon mistakenly labeled as "red" suffers an identity crisis in a picture book by the New York Times. Insightful, and colorful, *Red: A Crayon's Story* is about being true to your inner self and following your own path despite obstacles that may come your way.

### **ANNIE'S PLAID SHIRT** by Stacy B. Davids and illustrated by Rachael Balsaitis

Annie loves her plaid shirt and wears it everywhere. But one day her mom tells Annie that she must wear a dress to her uncle's wedding. Annie protests, but her mom insists and buys her a fancy new dress anyway. Annie is miserable. She feels weird in dresses. Why can't her mom understand? Then Annie has an idea. But will her mom agree? *Annie's Plaid Shirt* will inspire readers to be themselves and will touch the hearts of those who love them. Includes themes of gender norms, identity, individuality, tolerance, and self-esteem.

### **THE DIFFERENT DRAGON** by Jennifer Bryan and illustrated Danamarie Hosler

This bedtime story about bedtime stories shows how a lively, curious boy helps one of his moms create a magical tale. Together they weave a nighttime adventure that lands young Noah and his singing cat Diva deep in dragon territory. Join them as they make an unexpected discovery and help a new friend find his way.

### **10,000 DRESSES** by Marcus Ewert and illustrated by Rex Ray

Every night, Bailey dreams about magical dresses: dresses made of crystals and rainbows, dresses made of flowers, dresses made of windows... Unfortunately, when Bailey's awake, no one wants to hear about these beautiful dreams. Quite the contrary. "You're a BOY!" Mother and Father tell Bailey. "You shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all." Then Bailey meets Laurel, an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's imagination and courage. In friendship, the two of them begin making dresses together. And Bailey's dreams come true!

### **BE WHO YOU ARE!** by Jennifer Carr and illustrated by Ben Rumback

Nick was born in a boy's body, but has always felt like a girl inside. Nick's family supports him when he says he no longer wants to be called a boy or dress like a boy; "Always remember to be who you are Nick. Remember that we love you, and we are so proud of you." (p. 17). Nick's parents find a group for families like theirs. With their support, Nick expresses a desire to be addressed as "she," and then to be named "Hope." Based on the author's experiences with her children.

### **IT'S OKAY TO BE DIFFERENT** by Todd Parr

Told with Todd Parr's signature wit and wisdom, *It's Okay to Be Different* cleverly delivers the important messages of acceptance, understanding, and confidence in an accessible, child-friendly format. The book features the bold, bright colors and silly scenes that made Todd a premiere voice for emotional discussions in children's literature. Targeted to young children first beginning to read, this book will inspire kids to celebrate their individuality through acceptance of others and self-confidence—and it's never too early to develop a healthy self-esteem. *It's Okay to be Different* is designed to encourage early literacy, enhance emotional development, celebrate multiculturalism and diversity, and promote character growth.

### **JACOB'S NEW DRESS** by Sarah and Ian Hoffman and illustrated by Chris Chase

Jacob loves playing dress-up, when he can be anything he wants to be. Some kids at school say he can't wear "girl" clothes, but Jacob wants to wear a dress to school. Can he convince his parents to let him wear what he wants? This heartwarming story speaks to the unique challenges faced by boys who don't identify with traditional gender roles.



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**MY PRINCESS BOY by Cheryl Kilodavis and illustrated by Suzanne DeSimone**

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. Inspired by the author's son, and by her own initial struggles to understand, this is a heart-warming book about unconditional love and one remarkable family. It is also a call for tolerance and an end to bullying and judgments. The world is a brighter place when we accept everyone for who they are.

**WHEN KAYLA WAS KYLE by Amy Fabrikant and illustrated by Jennifer Levine**

Kyle doesn't understand why the other kids at school call him names. He looks like other boys, but doesn't feel like them. Can Kyle find the words to share his feelings about his gender - and can his parents help him to transition into the girl he was born to be? *When Kayla Was Kyle* is a picture book children of all ages will want to read because it addresses the increasingly emerging ideas around gender diversity.

**SQUARE ZAIR PAIR by Jase Peeples and illustrated by Christine Knopp**

*Square Zair Pair* is a children's picture book about embracing our differences. The story takes place in the magical land of Hanamandoo, a place where square and round Zairs live. Zairs do all things in pairs, one round with one square. But one day when two square Zairs pair for the first time, the others reject them before realizing different pairs of Zairs make their village stronger.

**KING & KING by Linda de Haan and illustrated by Stern Nijland**

A contemporary tale of a lovelorn prince who begins his search for a mate after his mother, the queen, decrees he must marry by the end of the summer. On his search, he finds his perfect match—a prince named Lee. The two marry and live happily after as king & king in this barrier-breaking fairytale.

**KING AND KING AND FAMILY by Linda de Haan and illustrated by Stern Nijland**

This jubilant sequel to *King & King* follows newlyweds King Lee and King Bertie on a journey through the jungle where they soon discover there's no adventure more wonderful than starting a family of their own.

**WORM LOVES WORM by J.J. Austrian and illustrated by Mike Curato**

When a worm meets a special worm and they fall in love, you know what happens next: They get married! But their friends want to know—who will wear the dress? And who will wear the tux? The answer is: It doesn't matter. Because worm loves worm.

**A PEACOCK AMONG PIGEONS by Tyler Curry and illustrated by Clarione Gutierrez**

*A Peacock Among Pigeons* is an LGBT-themed hardback children's book that tells the tale of learning how to stand out when you can't fit in. This children's story teaches the importance of celebrating our differences and learning to love the feathers you live in.

**CALL ME TREE / LLAMAME ARBOL (English and Spanish Edition) by Maya Christina Gonzalez**

In this spare, lyrically written story, we join a child on a journey of self-discovery. Finding a way to grow from the inside out, just like a tree, the child develops as an individual comfortable in the natural world and in relationships with others.

**THE BOY WHO CRIED FABULOUS by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Peter Ferguson**

Roger is a boy who simply can't stop smelling the roses. Can you blame him? Through his eyes the world is a wonder not to be rushed by. But his parents have an entirely different view, and they expect Roger to see things the way they do. Paired with vibrant illustrations, this cheerful tale will have children rejoicing along with Roger at all the fabulous things that await him when he steps outside.

**DONOVAN'S BIG DAY by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Mike Dutton**

Donovan's two moms are getting married, and he can't wait for the celebration to begin. After all, as ringbearer, he has a very important job to do. Any boy or girl with same-sex parents—or who knows a same-



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sex couple—will appreciate this picture book about love, family, and marriage. The story captures the joy and excitement of a wedding day while the illustrations show the happy occasion from a child's point of view.

### **SPARKLE BOY by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Maria Mola**

Casey loves to play with his blocks, puzzles, and dump truck, but he also loves things that sparkle, shimmer, and glitter. When his older sister, Jessie, shows off her new shimmery skirt, Casey wants to wear a shimmery skirt too. Then, when older boys at the library tease Casey for wearing “girl” things, Jessie realizes that Casey has the right to be himself and wear whatever he wants. Why can't both she and Casey love all things shimmery, glittery, and sparkly? Here is a sweet, heartwarming story about acceptance, respect, and the freedom to be yourself in a world where any gender expression should be celebrated.

### **HEATHER HAS TWO MOMMIES by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Laura Cornell**

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 “the most important thing about a family is that all the people in it love one another.”

### **MOMMY, MAMA, AND ME by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Carol Thompson**

Rhythmic text and illustrations with universal appeal show a toddler spending the day with its mommies. From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together. Share the loving bond between same-sex parents and their children.

### **DADDY, PAPA, AND ME by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Carol Thompson**

Rhythmic text and illustrations with universal appeal show a toddler spending the day with its daddies. From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together. Share the loving bond between same-sex parents and their children.

### **A TALE OF TWO DADDIES by Vanita Oelschlager and illustrated by Kristin Blackwood**

*A Tale of Two Daddies* is a playground conversation between two children. The boy says he heard that the girl has two dads. The girl says that is right. She has Daddy and Poppa. True to a child's curiosity, practical questions follow. “Which dad helps when your team needs a coach? / Which dad cooks you eggs and toast?” To which she answers: “Daddy is my soccer coach. / Poppa cooks me eggs and toast.”

### **A TALE OF TWO MOMMIES by Vanita Oelschlager and illustrated by Mike Blanc**

*A Tale of Two Mommies* is a beach conversation among three children. One boy asks another boy about having two mommies. A young girl listening in asks some questions too. True to a child's curiosity, practical questions follow. “Which mom is there when you want to go fishing? / Which mom helps out when Kitty goes missing?” To which he answers: “Mommy helps when I want to go fishing. / Both Mommies help when Kitty goes missing.”

### **WHAT MAKES A BABY by Cory Silverburg and illustrated by Fiona Smyth**

Geared to readers from preschool to age eight, *What Makes a Baby* is a book for every kind of family and every kind of kid. It is a twenty-first century children's picture book about conception, gestation, and birth, which reflects the reality of our modern time by being inclusive of all kinds of kids, adults, and families, regardless of how many people were involved, their orientation, gender and other identity, or family composition. Just as important, the story doesn't gender people or body parts, so most parents and families will find that it leaves room for them to educate their child without having to erase their own experience.

### **FAMILIES, FAMILIES, FAMILIES! by Suzanne Lang and illustrated by Max Lang**

Moms, dads, sisters, brothers—and even Great Aunt Sue—appear in dozens of combinations, demonstrating all kinds of nontraditional families! Silly animals are cleverly depicted in framed portraits, and offer a warm celebration of family love.



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### **IN OUR MOTHER'S HOUSE by Patricia Polacco**

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. Here is a true Polacco story of a family, living by their own rules, and the strength they gain by the love they feel.

### **ALL I WANT TO BE IS ME by Phyllis Rothblatt**

*All I Want To Be Is Me* is a beautifully illustrated children's book reflecting the diverse ways that young children experience and express their gender. The book gives voice to the feelings of children who don't fit into narrow gender stereotypes, and who just want to be free to be themselves. *All I Want To Be Is Me* offers a wonderful way for all children to learn about gender diversity, embracing different ways to be, and being a true friend. Visit [www.alliwanttobeisme.com](http://www.alliwanttobeisme.com) to learn more about how this book can be used by parents and teachers, and to hear the original song, "All I Want To Be Is Me," that goes along with the book.

### **THE GREAT BIG BOOK OF FAMILIES by Mary Hoffman and illustrated by Ros Asquith**

This fun and fascinating treasury 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. Ros Asquith's humorous illustrations perfectly complement a charming text from the acclaimed Mary Hoffman; kids will love poring over these pages again and again. A celebration of the diverse fabric of kith and kin the world over, *The Great Big Book of Families* is a great big treat for every family to share.

### **SOMETIMES THE SPOON RUNS AWAY WITH ANOTHER SPOON COLORING BOOK**

by Jacinta Bunnell and illustrated by Nat Kusinitz

Re-creating nursery rhymes and fairy tales, this radical activity book takes anecdotes from the lives of real kids and mixes them with classic tales to create true-to-life characters, situations, and resolutions. Featuring massive beasts who enjoy dainty, pretty jewelry and princesses who build rocket ships, this fun-for-all-ages coloring book celebrates those who do not fit into disempowering gender categorizations, from sensitive boys to tough girls.

### **MOLLY'S FAMILY by Nancy Garden and illustrated by Sharon Wooding**

The members of Ms. Marston's kindergarten class are cleaning and decorating their room for the upcoming Open School Night. Molly and Tommy work on drawing pictures to put on the walls. Molly draws her family: Mommy, Mama Lu, and her puppy, Sam. But when Tommy looks at her picture, he tells her it's not of a family. "You can't have a mommy and a mama," he says. Molly doesn't know what to think; no one else in her class has two mothers. She isn't sure she wants her picture to be on the wall for Open School Night. Molly's dilemma, sensitively explored in words and art, shows readers that even if a family is different from others, it can still be happy, loving, and real.

### **THE SKULL OF TRUTH by Bruce Coville and illustrated by Gary A. Lippincott**

Bruce Coville is a beloved children's book for many reasons, one of which is his mastery of storytelling. In a subplot of Coville's fourth Magic Shop book, Charlie's Uncle Bennie explains that he is gay. The two are able to have an open conversation about love, honesty, and respect, and the takeaway message is a beautiful one: "Love is nothing to be ashamed of."

### **PROMISED LAND by Adam Reynolds and Chaz Harris and illustrated by Christine Luiten and Bo Moore**

*Promised Land* offers the traditional tropes of the genre—star-crossed lovers, enchanted forests, wicked royals, and the like—with one major difference: The young couple at its heart are both boys (which, delightfully, no one in their world finds unusual).



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### **FROM THE STARS IN THE SKY TO THE FISHES IN THE SEA**

by Kai Cheng Thom and illustrated by Kai Yun Ching and Wai-Yant Li

Miu Lan can change their body into anything anything they want. But when they can't decide whether to be a boy or a girl—or a fish, or a flower or a shooting star, for that matter—they run into trouble at school. This book introduces children to concepts like gender fluidity and underscores the importance of celebrating our differences.

### **PRIDE: THE STORY OF HARVEY MILK AND THE RAINBOW FLAG**

by Rob Sanders and illustrated by Steven Salernom

*Pride* introduces kids to Gilbert Baker, who created the iconic rainbow flag in 1978, and Harvey Milk, tracking his childhood in suburban New York, his role as one of the country's first openly gay elected officials, and even his assassination.

### **PINK IS FOR BOYS** by Robb Pearlman and illustrated by Eda Kaban

*Pink is For Boys* helps children learn their colors, from the green of the grass to the orange of a tasty popsicle, in a unique and refreshing way. The book reframes the stereotypical “pink is for girls/blue is for boys” binary by showing a diverse group of kids enjoying all the colors and activities they love most—whether that's racing cars and playing baseball, or loving unicorns and playing dress-up

### **WHEN YOU LOOK OUT THE WINDOW** by Gayle E. Pitman and illustrated by Christopher Lyles

This book brings us the amazing history of lesbian activists (and longtime couple) Phyllis Martin and Del Lyon, who founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first political and social organization for lesbians in the U.S. They also worked to make churches more inclusive of gay parishioners, pushed for the decriminalization of homosexuality in the late 1960s, and became the first same-sex couple to legally wed in California in 2008. Phyllis and Del take us on a tour of San Francisco, pointing out landmarks that illuminate their role in LGBT history.

### **JULIÁN IS A MERMAID** by Jessica Love

After being entranced by three women he sees dressed as mermaids on the subway, little Julián secretly creates his own mermaid costume. He's worried his *abuela* will be upset if she sees him dressed like a girl, but instead she rejoices in Julián's creativity and takes him to the Coney Island Mermaid Parade, where he finally finds his tribe.

### **ARE YOU A BOY OR ARE YOU A GIRL?** by Sarah Savage and illustrated by Fox Fisher

*Are You A Boy Or Are You A Girl?* follows Tiny, a gender-nonconforming child who prefers gender-neutral pronouns and loves dressing up. All's well for Tiny at home, but when they start school, the other kids begin asking, “Are you a boy or are you a girl?” Tiny's graceful answer playfully introduces kids (and adults) to gender diversity and respecting those around you.

### **JEROME BY HEART** by Thomas Scotto and illustrated by Olivier Tallec

*Jerome By Heart* follows Raphael, whose devotion to his BFF Jerome runs deep. As the boys play games, share snacks and plan adventures together, Raphael's affection for his friend grows. When his parents ask why he talks about Jerome so much, Raphael's quick to explain that it's because he loves him, of course.

### **THE ADVENTURES OF HONEY AND LEON** by Alan Cumming and illustrated by Grant Shaffer

*The Adventures of Honey and Leon* imagines what would happen if the pair's beloved dogs secretly followed them on one of their big travel adventures. While most of the story focuses on Honey and Leon's adorable antics, same-sex love is proudly visible throughout.



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## BOOKS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

(Curation in part from *Being Jazz*, *Logo*, *Advocate.com* and *Bustle.com*)

### **TWO WEEKS WITH THE QUEEN** by Morris Gleitzman

In this sentimental book about love and loss, a young Colin tries to save his sick brother anyway he can. In the process, he meets Ted who is also determined to save the life of someone he loves—his partner, Giff, who is dying of AIDS. The book deals with heavier topics of homophobia, harassment, and violence in a frank and unpatronizing way middle-grade readers can appreciate. Sad yet hopeful, *Two Weeks With The Queen* is an honest look the hardships that the LGBTQIA community faces every day.

### **TOTALLY JOE (THE MISFITS)** by James Howe

The second installment of the hit Misfits series, *Totally Joe* focuses on the trials and tribulations of gay 7th grader Joe Bunch. Not only does Joe have to deal with the normal headaches and heartaches of middle school, but he also has to face homophobia and bullying. Luckily, he has a tight-knit group of friends who assure him he has every right to kiss whom he wants to. A great tale of tolerance, diversity, and, ultimately, acceptance.

### **GRACEFULLY GRAYSON** by Ami Polonsky

To everyone else, Grayson is a boy, but on the inside, Grayson knows her true identity is a girl. Through the support and help of her friends, Grayson is able to find the strength to become who she was meant to be. A beautiful, courageous tale *Gracefully Grayson* is a story every middle grader, transgender or not, needs to read.

### **MY MIXED-UP BERRY BLUE SUMMER** by Jenifer Gennari

Twelve-year-old June Farrell is sure of one thing—she's great at making pies—and she plans to prove it by winning a blue ribbon in the Champlain Valley Fair pie competition. But a backlash against Vermont's civil union law threatens her family's security and their business. Even when faced with bullying, June won't give up on winning the blue ribbon; more importantly, she won't give up on her family.

### **BETTER NATE THAN EVER** by Tim Federle

The only thing bigger than Nate's personality is his dream to star in a Broadway show, where boys can dance with other boys without fear of being harassed. *Better Nate Than Ever* and the follow-up *Five, Six, Seven Nate*, which just won this year's Lambda Literary Award in the LGBT Children's/Young Adult category, are hilarious and triumphant coming of age stories. Complete with a lovable hero worth cheering for, this series is perfect for any young reader questioning his or her own sexuality.

### **NEWSGIRL** by Liza Ketchum

This historical fiction novel may be set in the late 19th century, but the topics it deals with are more timely than ever. After Amelia, her mother, and her mother's partner, Estelle, move to San Francisco to start a new, independent life, they find that their new home is far less hospitable women than they had hoped. In order to survive, Amelia has to disguise herself as a boy and her mother and Estelle are forced to leave dressmaking behind in favor of men's clothing. Both fascinating and well researched, *Newsgirl* takes a close, important look at gender nonconformity, gender roles, and alternate family structures.

## OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES

### **40 LGBTQ-FRIENDLY PICTURE BOOKS FOR AGES 0-5** curated by Autostraddle

### **RESOURCES FOR YOUR SCHOOL** curated by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC)

Contains resources, guides to answering challenging questions, books, lesson plans, etc.

### **RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR LGBTQ YOUTH** curated by gsanetwork

An extensive list of suggested book and movie titles for LGBTQ youth and their allies, teachers, and parents.



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## **TEACHING TOLERANCE**

Discover and develop world-class materials with a community of educators committed to diversity, equity and justice

## **TRANS STUDENT EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

Trans Student Educational Resources is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment.



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