

TDSB RESOURCE LIST: SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Books for Educators

Due, Linnea (1995) *Joining the Tribe: Growing Up Gay and Lesbian in the '90s*, New York: Anchor Books.

This book eloquently shatters the myths facing today's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.

Hausherr, Rosmarie (1997) *Celebrating Families*, New York: Scholastic Press.

With sensitively written text and photographs brimming with vitality, Rosmarie Hausherr presents fourteen brief descriptions of one-, two-, or same-sex parent families, adopted families, foster families, stepfamilies, extended families, and homeless families. An ideal resource for any unit on families aimed at primary students

Jenness, Aylette (date?) *Families: A Celebration of Diversity, Commitment and Love*, Houghton Mifflin.

A collection of heartwarming two page stories illustrated with family photos of young people living in a range of families including: divorced, same sex, foster families, interracial families, and religious communes. Good for use as a curriculum resource for children from age four.

Skutch, Robert (1995) *Who Is In A Family?*, Berkeley: Tricycle Press.

A brightly illustrated picture book, which looks at family diversity, including same sex families, single parent families, divorced families, and extended families. The book concludes that a family is the people who love you most and that chances are, your family is like no one else's and that's just fine.

Sonnie, Amy (2000) *Revolutionary Voices: A multicultural queer youth anthology*, Los Angeles: Alyson books.

Poems and articles by young people from a variety of backgrounds inspire and educate the readers with their experiences of isolation, harassment, encouragement, determination, and tenacity. An excellent resource list and glossary at the back of the book.

Smith, Miriam (1999) *Lesbian And Gay Rights In Canada: Social Movements And Equality-Seeking, 1971-1995*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

This resource book can be used for historical and political research on lesbian and gay movements in Canada.

Willhoite, Michael (1993) *Families*, Boston: Alyson Wonderland, Alyson Publications, Inc.

This engaging colouring book presents a wondrous assortment of families representing a diversity of races, generations, and cultural backgrounds, as well as gay and lesbian parents, in a straightforward, lively, and age-appropriate manner.

Primary/Junior

Arnold, Jeanne and Barbara Lindquist (1996) *Amy Asks a Question*, Racine, Wisconsin: Mother Courage Press.

The question that ten-year-old Amy asks is “What is a lesbian?” and Amy’s two grandmothers answer from the perspective of their own more than twenty-year lesbian relationship. Homosexuality, homophobia, “in the closet”, “coming out”, and gay pride are some of the concepts explored and explained in a straightforward and sensitive manner. The narrative is pleasantly augmented by realistic, black and white line drawings.

Elwin, Rosamund and Nichele Paulse (1990) *Asha’s Mums*, Toronto: Women’s Press.

In this well illustrated, Canadian-published book, the teacher thinks a mistake has been made when two women’s names appear on the parents’ signature part of the permission form for Asha’s trip to the Science Centre. Along with the classroom teacher, Asha’s classmates get to meet her two mums.

Greenberg, K. Elliot (1996) *Zack’s Story - Growing Up with Same-sex Parents* Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co..

In this picture book, illustrated with colour photographs, eleven-year-old Zack tells his real-life story of growing up with his mother and her same-sex

partner.

Hoffman, Eric (1999) *Best, Best Colors/Los Mejores Colores*, (bilingual - Spanish/English), Minnesota: Redleaf Press.

A young boy has trouble deciding which colour is his favourite until he sees his mother's rainbow flag and decides he can like all of them.

Newman, Leslea (1991) *Gloria Goes To Gay Pride*, Boston: Alyson Wonderland.

Gloria learns about different kinds of holidays, including: Valentine's Day, Halloween, Chanukah, Mothers' Day, and Gay Pride Day. She goes with her two mothers to Gay Pride and sees people she knows, including her music teacher as well as people with a sign that says, "Gays Go Away".

Newman, Leslea (1993) *Saturday is Pattyday*, Toronto: Women's Press.

Frankie's mom Allie and her partner Patty have decided to split up because they are fighting too much. Frankie misses Patty. He decides to visit Patty in her new apartment on Saturdays. Frankie is reassured to learn that Patty will always be his mom, even though Patty and Allie don't live together anymore.

Pendleton Jimenez, Karleen (2000) *Are You a Boy or a Girl?*, Toronto: Green Dragon Press.

A young girl keeps being asked if she is a boy or a girl because she doesn't like to dress or behave the way a girl "should". She finds reassurance from her mother who tells her she can do anything she wants to, even if people don't understand.

Quinlan, Patricia (1994) *Tiger Flowers*, Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited.

This book is about how young people cope with and come to understand the death of a loved one. The impact of this gentle but compelling story is heightened both by the charmingly simple and direct language and by a series of softly-textured, realistic, and quietly evocative illustrations.

Newman, Leslea (1991) *Belinda's Bouquet*, Boston: Alyson Wonderland.

Upon hearing a cruel comment about her weight, young Belinda decides she wants to go on a diet. But then her friend, Daniel's lesbian mom tells her, "Your body belongs to you, and that just as every flower has its own special kind of beauty, so does every person." Belinda quickly realizes she's fine just the way she is.

Valentine, Johnny (1993) *Two Moms, the Zark, and Me*, Boston: Alyson Wonderland.

A young child with two moms and a playful animal called a Zark run into some narrow-minded people in the park. In this rollicking story told in verse, one message is that “truly good families aren’t all one of a kind.”

Valentine, Johnny (1994) *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad, Blue Dads*, Boston: Alyson Wonderland.

This light-hearted, easy-to-read, rhyming, illustrated storybook looks at some of the questions that might be asked of children who have two (blue) dads by peers from more traditional families.

Vigna, Judith (1995) *My Two Uncles*, Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman and Co..

It’s hard for Elly to understand when her grandfather refuses to invite uncle Phil and his same-sex partner to his 50th wedding anniversary. This lovely picture book for all ages offers a positive message about the power of understanding and the possibilities for change.

Willhoite, Michael (1993) *Uncle What-Is-It Is Coming to Visit*, Boston: Alyson Wonderland.

Uncle Brett is coming to visit and he’s gay; eight-year-old Tiffany and nine-year-old Igor don’t know what that means. As they wander their neighbourhood looking for answers, they encounter language, such as “fag” and “queer”, and stories of men in drag and leather. When Uncle Brett arrives, however, he turns out to be someone totally unexpected. With colourful, lively drawings and a straightforward, wry, and fast-moving text, this picture book is an ideal resource just waiting for that “teachable moment” when questions need to be answered and stereotypes need to be dispelled.

Wickens, E (1994) *Anna Day and the O-ring*, Boston: Alyson Wonderland.

Evan, who lives with his two moms is missing an important piece of his new birthday tent. It turns out the piece has been hidden by the family dog, Anna Day. This cheerful book for young children is illustrated by bright colour photos of family life including Evan having sleepovers, taking his dog for a walk, and having his fourth birthday party at school.

Zolotow, Charlotte (1972) *William's Doll*, New York: Harper Collins Pub..

William wants a doll but his father thinks he should play sports. William plays sports, but still wants a doll. The only person who understands is his grandmother, who buys him a baby doll with a white dress and tells his parents William might be a father one day, so he needs to practice taking care of a baby. This is a rather sweet story that looks at gender roles but doesn't deal with why fatherhood is the only excuse for a boy to play with dolls.

Intermediate/Senior

Coville, Bruce (1997) *The Skull of Truth*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company.

In this novel, Charlie, a sixth-grader with a compulsion to tell lies, acquires a mysterious skull that forces its owner to tell only the truth. Young readers will be attracted to the magical elements, the humour, the focus on the responsibilities of friendship, and the ways in which Charlie confronts and overcomes his personal demons. They may also be gently informed and enlightened by Charlie's candid struggle to accept the news that his uncle, Bennie, is gay and that Bennie and his "roommate", Dave, are a loving couple. A small but significant thread in the tapestry of relationships, comprised of family, friends, and community, is the gay-positive theme that is frankly and honestly portrayed in an age-appropriate manner.

Bauer, Marion Dane (Editor) (1995) *Am I Blue? Coming Out From the Silence*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers .

A useful collection of stories featuring a variety of gay characters and dealing with the range of issues faced by lesbian and gay youth.

dePaola., Tomie (1979) *Oliver Button is a Sissy*, New York: Voyager Books.

Oliver Button doesn't like to do things boys "are supposed to do". He likes to play with dolls, read, draw, dress up in costumes, and dance. His father tells him not to be "such a sissy", and to "go out and play baseball or football or basketball". But Oliver doesn't want to play any kind of ball. He just wants dancing classes. Although the ending is positive and the book is a good way to get students talking about this issue, there is no real solution to the bullying of kids who don't fit into "the frame".

Durant, P Raife. (1992) *When Heroes Die*, New York: Macmillan Publishing.

In this novel for late junior or early intermediate students, twelve-year-old Gary Boyden's hero is his Uncle Rob. Gary's world turns upside-down when he discovers, first, that his uncle has AIDS and, subsequently, that he is gay. With continuing research into the source and nature of the virus and the swift and often unexpected advances in AIDS treatment, fictionalized accounts of AIDS victims become quickly dated. Nevertheless, although this novel belongs to the "AIDS equals death" period, the novel remains affecting and true-to-life. The novel is especially insightful when dealing with the uncertain and tentative world of adolescents.

Kaye, Marilyn (1993) *Real Heroes*, New York: Avon Books.

When it becomes known that the popular physical education teacher at West Greendale Elementary School is infected with HIV, the small, Georgia town is bitterly divided. In the middle of the homophobic hysteria whipped up by the adults he knows, eleven-year-old Kevin finds his whole world turning upside down. Told from Kevin's perspective, the story rings true throughout and easy and simplistic answers are avoided.

Salat, Christina (1993) *Living In Secret*, New York: Skylark Books.

Amelia's parents are divorced and the court has awarded custody to Amelia's father. Finally, Amelia's wish comes true and she and her mother steal away to start a new life together with her mother's partner, Janey. Amelia must change her name and be careful about what she tells her new friends as she tries to live in secret and put her old life behind her.

Velasquez, Gloria (1995) *Tommy Stands Alone: The Roosevelt High School Series*, Texas: Pinata Books.

Tommy stands alone is the third novel in author's *Roosevelt High School* series which features a group of students who must individually face troubling personal and social worries that are inescapable for many young adults today. A high school student and a member of a Mexican-American family, Tom struggles with his sexual identity and finally learns that he will not have to stand-alone anymore.

Woodson, Jacqueline (1995) *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*, New York: Scholastic.

Melanin Sun lives with his mother and they have always been close. When he finds out she is gay, and having a relationship with a white woman, he has some trouble coping. This easy-to-read novel illustrates a young man's struggle with the complexities of mother-son, same sex, and interracial relationships.