

## Picture Books on Gender/Sexuality

(\*denotes series)

### General

*ABC of Gender Identity* by Devika Dalal

Gender identity is an important part of who we are, and how we express ourselves in the world. This bright and playful A - Z book is an introduction to 26 different genders, accompanying young readers as they explore and discover their authentic selves.

*The Gender Wheel* by Maya Christian Gonzalez (305.3 GON)

This body positive book is a powerful opportunity for a supportive adult and child to see a wide range of bodies, understand the origins of the current binary gender system, how we can learn from nature to see the truth that has always existed and revision a new story that includes room for all bodies and genders.

*What Are Your Words?: A Book About Pronouns* by Katherine Locke

Whenever Ari's Uncle Lior comes to visit, they ask Ari one question: "What are your words?" Some days Ari uses she/her. Other days Ari uses he/him. But on the day of the neighborhood's big summer bash, Ari doesn't know what words to use. On the way to the party, Ari and Lior meet lots of neighbors and learn the words each of them use to describe themselves, including pronouns like she/her, he/him, they/them, ey/em, and ze/zir. As Ari tries on different pronouns, they discover that it's okay to not know your words right away—sometimes you have to wait for your words to find you.

*Being You: A First Conversation About Gender* by Megan Madison (JBO)\*

Based on the research that race, gender, consent, and body positivity should be discussed with toddlers on up, this read-aloud board book series offers adults the opportunity to begin important conversations with young children in an informed, safe, and supported way.

*It Feels Good to Be Yourself: A Book About Gender Identity* by Theresa Thorn

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. With child-friendly language and vibrant art, this book provides young readers and parents alike with the vocabulary to discuss this important topic with sensitivity.

### Disrupting Gender Stereotypes

*I Love My Colorful Nails* by Alicia Acosta

Ben is a little boy, and he likes painting his nails. There's no big reason to it, he just loves all the amazing colors on the tips of his fingers. Until one day, some of his schoolmates start laughing at him because of it. He suddenly feels sad, helpless, and doesn't want to paint his nails anymore. Even when his father starts

painting his nails to support Ben, the helplessness doesn't go away. Why can't boys paint their nails? A tale to understand that a kid's joy has no boundaries.

*What Riley Wore* by Elana Arnold

Riley wears whatever clothes feel right each day. On Monday, Riley feels shy and wears a bunny costume to school. On Tuesday, a scary trip to the dentist calls for a super hero cape. For a trip out with Otto and Oma, a ball gown is the perfect outfit.

*Our Shed: A Father-Daughter Building Story*

This lovely story is about a father teaching his daughter how to build a backyard shed for storing the necessities of family life--a lawn mower, sprinkler, sleds, kid toys. For each practical element the dad brings to the project, his daughter adds her own imaginative creative spin. In the end, they are both happy with their collaboration. And, just as dad passes building skills on to his daughter, so does his daughter eventually pass those skills on to her own son when they fix up the peeling shed at the end of the story.

*Dazzling Travis* by Hannah Carmona

Dresses and armor one day, ballet and basketball the next. Travis sets no limits on what he enjoys doing. But when some of the kids on the playground begin to pick on him, will Travis dull his shine or decide to truly dazzle?

*She Persisted* by Chelsea Clinton\* (JPN 920.72 CLI)

This book is for everyone who has ever wanted to speak up but has been told to quiet down, for everyone who has ever tried to reach for the stars but was told to sit down, and for everyone who has ever been made to feel unworthy or unimportant or small.

*When Grandma Gives You a Lemon Tree* by Jamie Deenihan

In this imaginative take on the popular saying, a child is surprised (and disappointed) to receive a lemon tree from Grandma for her birthday. After all, she DID ask for a new gadget! But when she follows the narrator's careful — and funny — instructions, she discovers that the tree might be exactly what she wanted after all.

*When Grandpa Gives You a Toolbox* by Jamie Deenihan

You asked for a special house for your dolls; but instead Grandpa gives you a toolbox! What do you do? Launching it into outer space is a bad idea. So is feeding it to a T. rex! Instead, be patient, pay attention, and you might find that you're pretty handy. And just maybe, with grandpa's help, you'll get that dollhouse after all.

*Frog Boots* by Jill Esbaum

School shopping is no fun for Dylan—until he spots a pair of boots decorated with poison-dart frogs. They're so cool that he even wears them to bed, where he discovers they glow in the dark! He can't wait to wear them to class. But before he can show them off in circle time, a kid exclaims: "Ms. Kory, that boy's wearing girl boots." And, suddenly, when everyone's laughing at him, the boots don't seem so wonderful anymore. Will he ever want to wear them again?

*Princess Kevin* by Michael Escoffier

This year, Kevin is going to the school fancy dress show as a princess. Wearing his sister's dress and his mom's lipstick, Kevin knows he looks good. His costume is perfect but he knows that the best costumes are authentic. So he is outraged that none of the knights will partner with him and complete the look.

*Hand Over Hand* by Alma Fullerton

Nina can't convince her Lolo to take her fishing with him on his old banca boat. Lolo's reply is the same as always: "A boat is no place for a girl." When Nina promises to bait her own hook and remove her own catch, her grandfather finally relents "just for today." Much to the amusement of the other fishermen in their village, lolo shows Nina how to jig the lines, to set the hook, and to pull in a fish, hand over hand. But no one is laughing when Nina brings in the biggest fish of the day!

*Glad, Glad Bear* by Kimberly Gee\*

Bear is so excited that today is dance day! He has his new leggings, slippers, and tutu, and he is ready to go. But when he gets there, he feels a little shy, a little unsure, and even a little afraid. What can make him feel better? Dancing, of course!

*Except When They Don't* by Laura Gehl

Children are often told by many different people about what toys they're supposed to play with, what interests they should have, and who they should be simply because of their gender. This stereotype-breaking book invites children to examine what they're told "boy" and "girl" activities are and encourages them to play with whatever they want to and to be exactly who they are!

*Princesses Wear Pants* by Savannah Guthrie

What she wears each day depends on which job she has to do. Will she command the royal air force sporting her sequined flight suit? Will she find her zen in her yoga pants and favorite tee? Or, will she work in the kingdom's vegetable garden with pocketed overalls for all of her tools? Unfortunately for Princess Penelope, not everyone in the Pineapple Kingdom thinks pants are always appropriate princess attire. When the grand Lady Busyboots demands that Princess Penelope must wear a gown to the annual Pineapple Ball, the young royal finds a clever

way to express herself. Penelope's courage (and style choices) result in her saving the day!

*Ambitious Girl* by Meena Harris

When a young girl sees a strong woman on TV labeled as "too assertive" and "too ambitious," it sends her on a journey of discovery through past, present, and future about the challenges faced by women and girls and the ways in which they can reframe, redefine, and reclaim words meant to knock them down.

*Téo's Tutu* by Maryann Jacob Macias

Téo loves to dance, whether it's the cumbia with Papí, the bhangra with Amma, or ballet class with Miss Lila. He also loves the way his tutu makes him feel, inside and out. But when it comes time to decide which outfit to wear in the big dance recital--a sparkly tutu or shimmering silver pants--Téo wonders if being his most authentic self on stage will put him too much in the spotlight.

*Princesses Can Fix It* by Tracy Marchini

The castle is crawling with wayward alligators, and the clueless king doesn't know how to fix it. Lila, Margaret, and Harriet have lots of ideas, but their father won't listen! According to him, the Princesses should be focusing on proper pursuits like drawing, jewelry, and music. When the three girls start falling asleep during the day, the King sends the Prince to investigate. What he discovers is that the three princesses are gathering at night to use their knowledge of the six simple machines to invent an ingenious alligator removal contraption in their secret workshop.

*A Girl's Bill of Rights* by Amy Mucha

In a world where little girls must learn to stand tall, this boldly declares the rights of every woman and girl: power, confidence, freedom, and consent.

*Mary Wears What She Wants* by Keith Negley

Once upon a time (but not that long ago), girls only wore dresses. And only boys wore pants. Until one day, a young girl named Mary had an idea: She would wear whatever she wanted. And she wanted to wear pants!

*Dolls and Trucks are for Everyone* by Robb Pearlman

Dolls and trucks are for boys and girls, as are dancing shoes, figure skating and hockey, and many more activities and hobbies. This celebratory read-aloud book defies gender stereotypes and encourages the youngest readers to reach for the stars and to follow their dreams no matter what.

*Pink is for Boys* by Robb Pearlman

Pink is for boys . . . and girls . . . and everyone! This timely and beautiful picture book rethinks and reframes the stereotypical blue/pink gender binary and

empowers kids-and their grown-ups-to express themselves in every color of the rainbow.

*Penny and Penelope* by Dan Richards

Penny and Penelope are very different dolls. Penelope is a sweet princess, while Penny is a fierce secret agent. Penelope wants to ride her pony through the countryside, while Penny wants to wrestle alligators. How can they possibly get along playing in an imaginary kingdom? Luckily, Penny and Penelope are more than their packaging. After all, you can't judge a doll by its outfit.

*Rainbow Boy* by Taylor Rouanzion

A little boy attempts to answer one of grown-ups' all-time favorite questions: "What's your favorite color?" But with so many wonderful colors to choose from, he doesn't know how to answer. He loves his pink sparkly tutu, bright red roses, soft yellow baby doll pajamas, and big, orange basketball. How will he ever pick?

*Brian the Dancing Lion* by Tom Tinn-Disbury

When Brian the Lion enters a big dancing competition, he proves to everyone that even though he is a lion who loves to dance, he can still be brave and strong and fierce!

*Dress Like a Girl* by Patricia Toht

A diverse cast of slumber party participants considers the most time-honored traditions for how to dress. If a lady should wear white in summertime, then how about donning a spacesuit? If team colors are apropos at sporting events, why not wear helmets and play ball? Uplifting and resonant, and with a variety of interests ranging from sports to science to politics, this book is sure to inspire any young girl, instilling the idea that the best way to dress like a girl is the way that makes you feel most like YOU!

*Ogilvy* by Deborah Underwood

When Ogilvy moves to a new town, the possibilities feel endless. There are so many new bunny friends and fun things to do together! But in this town, bunnies in dresses play ball and knit socks, and bunnies in sweaters make art and climb rocks. Ogilvy wants to do everything—and won't let a sweater or a dress get in the way.

*Peanut Goes for the Gold* by Jonathan Van Ness

Peanut just has their own unique way of doing things. Whether it's cartwheeling during basketball practice or cutting their own hair, this little guinea pig puts their own special twist on life. So when Peanut decides to be a rhythmic gymnast, they come up with a routine that they know is absolutely perfect, because it is absolutely, one hundred percent Peanut.

*Not All Princesses Dress in Pink* by Jane Yolen

Princesses come in all kinds. Some jump in mud puddles and climb trees, play sports and make messes—all while wearing their tiaras! Not every girl has a passion for pink, but all young ladies will love this empowering affirmation of their importance and unlimited potential.

### Affirming Identities

#### *You Are Not Alone* by Alphabet Rockers

It can be scary to feel like you're all on your own, especially in the face of prejudice. But always remember: you are not alone! Encouraging words invite readers to love their beautiful selves, celebrate their identities, and use their voices against hate. This uplifting picture book reminds kids that they always belong and asks us to step up for each other and have each others' backs, no matter what.

#### *Riley Can't Stop Crying* by Stéphanie Boulay

Riley is inconsolable. He can't stop crying and nothing is making him feel better. His sister, Regina, tries her best to help him figure out what's wrong, but four-year-old Riley isn't sure. It's not his tummy, or his head, or the monsters under the bed. Regina and their dad try everything they can to make Riley smile, but nothing works until one day Regina has an idea. Maybe it's Riley that is making Riley upset.

#### *Fred Gets Dressed* by Peter Brown

The boy loves to be naked. He romps around his house naked and wild and free. Until he romps into his parents' closet and is inspired to get dressed. First he tries on his dad's clothes, but they don't fit well. Then he tries on his mom's clothes, and wow! The boy looks great. He looks through his mom's jewelry and makeup and tries that on, too. When he's discovered by his mother and father, the whole family (including the dog!) get in on the fun, and they all get dressed together.

#### *Calvin* by Vanessa and JR Ford

Calvin has always been a boy, even if the world sees him as a girl. He knows who he is in his heart and in his mind but he hasn't yet told his family. Finally, he can wait no longer: "I'm not a girl," he tells his family. "I'm a boy--a boy in my heart and in my brain." Quick to support him, his loving family takes Calvin shopping for the swim trunks he's always wanted and back-to-school clothes and a new haircut that helps him look and feel like the boy he's always known himself to be. As the first day of school approaches, he's nervous and the "what-ifs" gather up inside him. But as his friends and teachers rally around him and he tells them his name, all his "what-ifs" begin to melt away.

*Ho-onani: Hula Warrior* by Heather Gale

Ho'onani feels in-between. She doesn't see herself as *wahine* (girl) OR *kane* (boy). She's happy to be in the middle. But not everyone sees it that way.

*Jacob's School Play: Starring He, She, and They* by Sarah and Ian Hoffman\*

As Mrs. Reeves class plans for their school show, *Life on the Farm*, all of the students, including Jacob, find themselves unexpectedly trying to understand Ari's identity as they. Ms. Reeves helps Jacob through his confusion by saying, "From the outside, we can't see who anybody is on the inside. So we have to trust them when they tell us." After the show premieres and is a hit with family and friends, Jacob comes to full realization of what he, she, and they means and embraces Ari as who they are and the whole class reaches a new level of identity comprehension.

*Jacob's Room to Choose* by Sarah and Ian Hoffman\*

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 administration, lead change at their school as everyone discovers the many forms of gender expression and how to treat each other with respect.

*My Sister Daisy* by Adria Karlsson

Daisy's older brother is thrilled when he gets a new sibling. They are best buddies who do everything together. But in kindergarten, things change. His sibling tells him she is a girl and wants to be called Daisy. Daisy's brother must adjust to the change—including what it means for him and their relationship.

*Julián is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love\*

While riding the subway home from the pool with his abuela one day, Julián notices three women spectacularly dressed up. Their hair billows in brilliant hues, their dresses end in fishtails, and their joy fills the train car. When Julián gets home, daydreaming of the magic he's seen, all he can think about is dressing up just like the ladies in his own fabulous mermaid costume: a butter-yellow curtain for his tail, the fronds of a potted fern for his headdress. But what will Abuela think about the mess he makes — and even more importantly, what will she think about how Julián sees himself?

*Call Me Max* by Kyle Lukoff\*

When Max starts school, the teacher hesitates to call out the name on the attendance sheet. Something doesn't seem to fit. Max lets her know the name he wants to be called by—a boy's name. This begins Max's journey as he makes new friends and reveals his feelings about his identity to his parents.

*When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff

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 his 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--from choosing the perfect name to creating a beautiful room to picking out the cutest onesie. But what does "making things right" actually mean? And what happens if he messes up? With a little help, Aidan comes to understand that mistakes can be fixed with honesty and communication, and that he already knows the most important thing about being a big brother: how to love with his whole self.

*I'm Not a Girl* by Maddox Lyons

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.

*Eli's New Clothes* by Kerri Mullen

When Chloe leaves for school one morning, she leaves her three favorite dolls having tea. The dolls come alive, and one doll shares that they don't feel comfortable in their puffy pink dress and sparkly shoes. The other dolls help them find more comfortable clothing in the toy bin, while discussing how being a true friend is about supporting and accepting others.

*The Name I Call Myself* by Hasan Namir

Meet Ari, a young person who doesn't like to be called by their birth name Edward. Throughout this beautiful and engaging picture book, we watch Ari grow up before our very eyes as they navigate the ins and outs of their gender identity; we see how, as a child, they prefer dolls and princess movies, and want to grow out their hair, though their father insists on cutting it short. At nine, they play hockey but wish they could try on their mother's dresses; at fifteen, they shave their face, hoping to have smooth skin like girls. At sixteen, they want to run away, especially from their father who insists, "You're a boy, so you have to act like one." Who will Ari become?

*My Rainbow* by Deshanna and Trinity Neal

Warm morning sunlight and love fill the Neal home. And on one quiet day, playtime leads to an important realization: Trinity wants long hair like her dolls. She needs it to express who she truly is. So her family decides to take a trip to the beauty supply store, but none of the wigs is the perfect fit. Determined, Mom



leaves with bundles of hair in hand, ready to craft a wig as colorful and vibrant as her daughter is.

*Born Ready: the True Story of a Boy Named Penelope* by Jodie Patterson

Penelope knows that he's a boy. (And a ninja.) The problem is getting everyone else to realize it.

*Benny's True Colors* by Norene Paulson

Benny may look like a bat, but Benny doesn't like flying at night, or eating bugs, or hanging upside down. Benny does like sunshine and fluttering and colorful wings. On the inside, Benny knows he is a butterfly! "I want my outside to match who I am inside!" With the help of some butterfly friends in the garden, Benny makes a happy change. And his friends and his Momma all love him just the same.

*Sam Is My Sister* by April Rhodes-Courter

Evan loves being big brother to Sam and Finn. They do everything together--go fishing, climb trees, and play astronauts. But lately, Evan notices that he and Sam don't look like brothers anymore. Sam wants to have long hair, and even asks to wear a dress on the first day of school. As time goes by, Evan comes to understand why Sam wants to look like a girl--because Sam is a girl. Sam is transgender. And just like always, Sam loves to dream with Evan and Finn about going to the moon together.

*Jack (Not Jackie)* by Erica Silverman

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.