

**Books and Websites Reviewed and Recommended for Families which are more Inclusive  
by Framingham High School GSA Volunteers, Tammy Weiser and Vicky Barstow.**

**Framingham Public Library – Main Branch**

**Different Kinds of Families:**

The Great Big Book of Families

Author – Mary Hoffman, Illustrations – Ross Asquith Published 2010 Dial Books for Young Readers –  
Group A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group Appropriate for Pre - K to Grade 3

Features all kinds of families –from different aspects - holidays, family trees, schools, feelings,  
enjoyable writing and very good illustrations. A very good book.

ABC – A Family Alphabet Book

Author – Bobbie Combs Illustrations – Desiree Keans and Brian Rappa - Two Lives Publishing 2000 Ages  
2-5

Deals exclusively with GLBT families. Cover – 2 fathers and one child. Features two dads and 2  
moms. Country, beach and suburban landscapes. “Celebrates alternative families as it teaches young  
kids the alphabet.” Beautiful and delightful illustrations. Great book.

Is Your Family Like Mine

Author – Lois Abramanchik Published by Open Heart, Open Mind 1993

Features mixed-racial girl with 2 moms who is entering kindergarten. Explores all kinds of families,  
including single parent families, foster families, etc. “It is love that connects and makes a family”.  
Features many multicultural friendships and diversity. Good book – illustrations not in color.

I’m Like You, You’re Like Me

Author – Cindy Gainer Free Spirit Publishing 1998 Ages Recommended 3-8.

Child’s book about understanding and celebrating each other. “Our Differences make us unique,  
interesting and fun.” Emphasis on cooperation, kindness, acceptance and understanding one another;  
includes many minorities. Good illustrations - colorful.

Who’s in a Family?

Author - Robert Stitch Illustrations - Laura Nienhaus – Tricycle Press – Berkeley, Cal. 1995

Celebrates families of all kinds –Multicultural, single parent families, mixed racial families, two  
moms, two dads, divorced parents, and kids raised by grandparents. Nice illustrations. OK book.

### All Families Are Different

Author – Sol Gordon Ph. D Illustrated by Vivian Cohen Prometheus Books 2000 Ages 7 and older

The central message is that there is not one type of normal family – all are different. And, what counts is that the people in your family love you and you love them. He points out that some children live with older relatives, are in step families, are raised by older brothers or sisters, are in foster-care, are orphaned, live in interracial families, have two same sex parents, have poorer or richer families, and families with handicapped members. Also is the message that “... children play a special and important role in making their home a happier one.” And, it is not the child’s fault that there is no father present. A good book, but illustrations are black and white and are somewhat drab and dated.

### Different Kinds of Families; Sam Is My Half Brother

Author – Lizi Boyd – Viking Press 1990

This book features a young boy whose dad and step-mother are having a baby. The boy lives primarily with his mother, and on a visit to his dad’s, discovers that he will have a new sibling. Good at explaining that a half sibling has 1 parent who is the same and 1 who is different. Good at addressing jealousy issues. Rating – Good

### Let’s Talk About Living With A Single Mom Grades K - 4

Author – Elizabeth Weitzman - The Let’s Talk About It Library. Published by The Rosen Publishing Group’s Power Kids Press, NY 1996

Deals with death of a parent, divorce, adoption by single parent. Deals with important issues, but presentation is dry. But, a good resource for parents.

### Do I Have a Daddy? – A Story About A Single parent Raising a Child

Author Jeanne Warren Lindsay Illustrated by Cheryl Boelles Morning Glory Press 1991, 4<sup>th</sup> printing 1996

Son questions mother about his father who he does not remember and who is not involved in his life. Mother explains that he had a daddy, but he is gone now. She explains that they were very young when they had him, and his father wasn’t ready to raise a child. Shows a very supportive and involved maternal grandfather. Emphasizes “... right now we have each other.”

Special section for parent – good parental resource. ***Do not read to whole class.*** Emphasizes honesty between parent and child, but stresses age appropriate responses to child. In parent section deals with divorce and never married. Offers some suggestions on how to respond to child’s questions. In parent section deals with parental feelings of abandonment, rejection and resentment.

book – fair, but could be helpful for the right parent/child. A bit dated.

### Raising You Alone

Author – Warren Hansen Tristan Publishing 2005 Pre-school to Grade 2

A mother rabbit raises her baby bunny alone, and bunny wishes for a daddy . She assures her bunny that she is happy. She underscores that not all dreams come true, but that she is very happy with the two of them. Mother rabbit acknowledges that there will be some hard times, but they have made some very happy memories together. Very tender and sweet with great illustrations,

### Sometimes It's Grandmas and Grandpas – Not Mommies and Daddies

Author – Gayle Byrne – Published by Abberville Kids 2009

Author writes from her own experience of raising a grand-daughter. Emphasizes that not all families are alike in their structure. Shows the unconditional love between them and that grandparents can love just as well as parents. Does not go into reasons why parents are not raising the child. Very sweet illustrations. Nice book.

### How My Family Came To Be – Great Book!

Author and Illustrator - Mike Motz New Family Press 2003

Daddy and Papa (both white) adopt, through a social worker, an interracial baby boy. Explains succinctly that her biological mother was too sick to care for her child. Narrated from the perspective of a school age child. Addresses that there are plenty of women who also nurture him – teachers, godmother, granny. The dads are enthralled with their son. Short, sweet, no drama, no conflict. Wonderful! Fabulous Illustrations

### Gloria Goes To Gay Pride

Author – Leslie Newman Publisher – Alyson Wonderland (same author as Hannah Has two Mothers)

Up - to - date, upbeat and informative. Features a daughter who has 2 mothers, one of whom is Jewish. The daughter accompanies her mothers to a Gay Pride march. It does depict a small number of detractors with signs that read, “Gays Go Away” at the parade. Deals with the issue matter-of-factly, but doesn't dwell on this conflict. The message given is that differences are natural. Good book, illustrations in black and white pencil. Recommended for ages 3-7 - could go up to grade 3.

### Dadda, Pappa and Me

Author – Leslie Newman Illustrated – Carol Thompson Tricycle Press 2009 Preschool – Kindergarten Board Book

Their little daughter, a toddler just wants to play with her dads. They play and play until she wears out her dads who settle down on the couch. She tucks them in with an afghan, and kisses them good night. Delightful – Very Cute and Sweet

### Anna Day and the O-Ring

Author – Elaine Wickends Published by Alyson Wonderland 1994 Appropriate for early elementary grades.

Depicts two mothers in very typical situations with no conflict. Setting up a tent in the living room with one missing piece. Nice book.

### Uncle Bobby's Wedding

Author – Sarah S. Brennen – Publisher – G.P. Putman and Sons (Division of Penguin Young Readers' Group)

2008

Features a family of guinea pigs. The young niece guinea pig worries that she will not have the full attention of her favorite uncle now that he is getting married, and worries that she will no longer be the most special person in his life. His uncle marries a male guinea pig. Shows a supportive extended family. The niece guinea pig is the flower-girl in their wedding; and she now has two special uncles. Delightful book with fabulous illustrations. Appropriate for Pre K - 2.

### Felicia's Favorite Story

Author - Leslea Newman Illustrated - Adriana Romo Two Lives Publishing 2002 Ages 3-6

Felicia was adopted from Guatemala by her 2 mothers. Rather than have her moms read a bedtime story, she wants them to retell her favorite story – the story of how she was adopted. They took a silver plane and to meet the baby girl who was waiting for them. And, explained that her birth mother did the most loving thing she could do – she allowed her to be adopted by parents who could take care of her. They named her Felicia – happiness. Tender, soothing and delightful. Lovely watercolors used by illustrator.

### Daddy's Roommate

Written and Illustrated by Michael Willhorte Published Aliyson wonderland from Alyson Publications 1990 Recommended ages 3-6

Features a child of divorced parents who maintain a good relationship. Mother is supportive of her ex husband who is gay, and who lives with his male partner. Very matter – of – fact - typical situations, no conflicts presented. “Being gay is just one kind of love ..... and love is the best kind of happiness.” Well written and great illustrations.

### In Our Mothers' House

Author – Patricia Polacco – Philomel Books - Penguin Young Readers Books 2009 Grades 3-5

Inter-racial and multi – ethnic. Two white moms, Meema, a doctor, Marlme, a paramedic, adopt a black daughter who is 6, a three year old Asian son and a white 3 month-old with red hair. Living typical lives parenting 3 lively kids who love music and dance together. Very supportive Italian extended family, and very supportive neighbors, with the exception of one family. The situation is not resolved, but accepted in a matter-of-fact way. Depicts a very inclusive neighborhood – Jewish, Arabic, Greek, Asian and Black families. A beautiful story of a house filled with love – “... where we could all speak our hearts.” Great Book!

### Mom and Mum Are Getting Married

Author – Ken Settering Illustrated by Alice Priestly Second Story Press 2004 Early Elementary grades

No problems facing the mothers of two who are officially getting married. Sweet book with their two children participating in the wedding. Supportive parents (who would like a larger celebration, but respect their daughter's request for a smaller family wedding) and supportive extended family members celebrate this union. Great colorful illustrations.

### Tango Makes Three

Author – Justin Richardson; and Peter Parnel Publisher – Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers – 2005

Setting – New York City – Central Park Zoo. Appropriate for preschoolers to grades 3-4.

Based on the true occurrence of two male penguins Roy and Silo at the Central Park Zoo. Roy and Silo spent so much time together - sang, swam, and walked together. While the female penguins laid an egg and sat on the egg until it hatched, Roy and Silo built a nest of rocks, sat on the nest, but nothing happened. Observing the situation, the zoo keeper found an egg that needed tending, and placed it with Roy and Silo. Faithfully Roy and Silo sat on the egg until Tango was born – “... it takes 2 to make a Tango”. Tango was the first penguin in the zoo to have 2 daddies. This occurred in 1998 which brought many visitors to the zoo. Great illustrations and wonderful writing - a fabulous book! Even older kids have enjoyed this story.

### Antonio's Card – La Tarjeta de Antonio – In English and Spanish

Author – Rigoberto Gongales 2005 – Children's Book Press – San Francisco, Cal. Illustrations by Cecilia Concepcion Alvarez

#### **2006 Lambda Literary Awards ‘ Finalist**

Deals with social worries and concerns of children living in nontraditional families.

Antonio lives with his mother and her female partner. Antonio is embarrassed when in school he makes mother's day cards for his mother and Leslei. Leslie, an artist, always come to school to pick

him up in paint splattered overalls, and as she is unusually tall, the kids make fun of Leslie in front of Antonio. The cards are to be on display in the auditorium. Antonio's mother leaves it up to Antonio on how he should handle this situation, which he handles with courage and love.

A great book with beautiful illustrations.

### **Very Imaginative:**

#### One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad. Blue Dad

Author - Johnny Valentine Illustrated by Melody Sarecky Publisher – Alyson Wonderland 1994 Ages 3-6

A take – off on Dr. Seuss. Lou explains that although his dads are blue, they aren't different from other dads. In answer to how they got that way, he responds, "They are blue – well, because they are blue." Humorous – delightful!

#### The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans

Author - Johnny Valentine Illustrated - Lynette Schmidt Publisher – Alyson Wonderland 1991

Five stories.

##### 1 – The Frog Prince

Nicholas, who lived with his father in a far away kingdom, was playing and from a well he heard a human voice coming from a frog who claimed he was a prince and not a frog. He had been turned into a frog by the king's wizard. He was a very unhappy boy, as his parents treated him badly.

Nicholas outwitted the wizard, and the prince was turned back into a boy who lived happily ever after with Nicholas and his father who adopted him. Nicholas's best friend Carl moved in with them to help take care of the boys – he also wanted to have another son.

##### 2 – The Eaglerider – sex roles

Scarlet wanted to be an eaglerider to protect the kingdom from the evil dragons, but she was a girl.

Scarlet, posing as a boy with the help of her mother, became an eaglerider. Not falling for the ploy set up for them, she was not distracted and saved the kingdom. She was declared a national hero and revealed herself as being a girl.

##### 3 – Dragon Sense

Peter, who lives with his 2 lesbian mothers, one a bookkeeper and the other a sorcerer, have trouble paying the rent. Peter learns of a hidden treasure from a book in his mother's library. He demonstrates great skill and bravery against an evil dragon and saves his family from being evicted.

##### 4 – The Ogre's Boots

Two mothers lived with their daughter, Little Jenny and big brother Dan. Jenny longed to be bigger. The first time the hungry ogre came to town, he took the innkeeper, and one week later he took one of the mothers. Dan tried unsuccessfully to stop him. Little Jenny saved the day by getting into the

ogre's magic boots which shrank to fit her. Without the boots, the ogre fell through the clouds and died. She saved the town and her mother from the ogre.

#### 5 – The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans

The daughter of two mothers is brave enough to declare the visiting grand duke's decrees to be silly. Books are banned as well as gay couples. Finally giggling is outlawed. The guards and the people (including the children from the previous stories in the collection) stood behind the daughter, and the grand duke left the kingdom in humiliation. Kind of like The Emperor's New Clothes.

#### The Daddy Machine

Author – Johnny Valentine Illustrated – Lynette Schmidt 1992, 2004 Publisher – Alyson wonderland Elementary Level

A son and daughter of two mothers fantasize about what it would be like to have a father when a construction set was delivered to their house when their mothers were out. They thought about making a robot, but decided instead to make a Daddy Machine. They produced dads beyond their wildest expectations with the machine sputtering out 54 dads wrecking havoc in their house. They finally were able to reverse the process until all but two men were gone. The remaining two men wound up renting the vacant house next door, and their family made friends with the gay couple next door. Very humorous with wonderful illustrations. Same author as The Duke who Outlawed Jelly Beans.

## **Appreciation of Differences, Examination of Sexual Roles and Gender Stereotypes**

#### Horace and Morris but Mostly Delores

Author- James Howe Published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers 1999 Great Illustrations by Amy Walrod. Ages 4-8.

Horace, Morris and Doris are the best of mouse friends who love adventure. They do everything together until Horace and Morris are convinced to join a boy's club – The Mega Mice – No Girls! Then Doris joins the Cream Puffs, a girl's only club, but soon becomes bored. She then has the great idea of starting The Frisky Whisker Club for all who want to go exploring. Horace and Morris didn't find the Mega Mice Club very satisfying, so they and many of their mice friends joined the Frisky Whisker Club and had great fun. Great Book for breaking down sexual stereotypes and emphasizing shared interests.

### Oliver Button Is a Sissy

Story and Pictures by Tomie de Paula. Published by Harcourt Bruce Janovich – 1979 Ages 4-8

Addresses stereotyped sex roles. Oliver is teased by the boys and called him a sissy because he didn't do the things boys generally did, and the girls stuck up for him. He enjoyed singing, dancing, drawing, jumping rope, dress-up. Eventually his parents send him to dance school, and he later participated in a talent show as a tap dancer. He didn't win and was disappointed, but he was thrilled to see a poster in school which read, "Oliver Button is a Star." An older book, but a good one – great illustrations.

### William's Doll

Author – Charlotte Zolotow Published Harper Collins 1972 Ages 4-8

Deals with sex roles. William copes with his father's and the boys' attempts to influence what he should play with. Though he was good at basketball, and enjoyed trains and his workbench, he still wanted a doll. His grandmother came to visit and wisely said, "Nonsense" and then bought him a doll, so that "he could practice being a father". An older book, but a good one.

### The Sissy Duckling

Author – Acclaimed actor and play writer Harvey Fierstein Publisher – Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers 2002 Ages 4-9 (This can be used in upper elementary to discuss bullying.)

Elmer is not like other boy ducklings. Though he likes to build things, he also likes to draw, to bake, and play make-believe. Despite the boy ducklings calling him a "sissy" and the pressure from his father to be more like the other boy ducklings, he is a very happy duckling. His mother who is very supportive of his being different explains to him that, "Being called a sissy is a cruel way of saying that you do not want to do things the way others think you should." Father becomes more ashamed of him as Elmer refused to fight when called a sissy, and Elmer runs away before the flock flies south. He decides to stay, and he builds a snug, cozy and safe home in a hole in the trunk of a tree for the cold winter ahead. But before the flock flies South, Elmer sneaks back to see his parents from afar, when hunters injure his father. All the other ducks fly away in fear, but Elmer rescues his father before the dogs can get him, and takes his father back to his new home where he nurses him back to health. They survive the harsh winter and his father and Elmer enjoy each other's company. When the flock flies back in the spring, Elmer is regarded as a hero by all. Pride in being different - "I am a big sissy and proud of it." Great Book! Delightful! Despite the serious subject matter, told with great humor.

### Pinky and Rex and the Bully

Author – James Howe Publisher Simon and Schuster –(Alladden Paperbacks Ready to Read Books) 1996  
Early Elementary Grades (same author as There's a Monster Under My Bed)

Examines sexual stereotypes and roles. Pinky is being called a sissy because he likes the color pink and he rides a pink bike. A bully pushes Pinky off his bike, and Pinky doesn't tell anyone, but his neighbor, a wise older woman, sees the incident. He begins to question his own likes and dislikes and wonders if he has to give up his best friend who is a girl to be accepted. His neighbor helps him to understand that it's worse not to be yourself, and his parents are supportive of his less typical interests. Eventually Pinky becomes more comfortable with himself and verbally stands up to the bully with good results. Great Book!

### Is He A Girl?

Author – Lois Sacher – Marvin Redpost Series – A Stepping Stone Book (Random House) 1993

A boy wonders if he might be a girl because of some of the things he likes. Thinking about how boys and girls like what they like, he feels different from the rest of the boys. Addresses sexual roles and acceptance of differences. He befriends the “weird” girl who kids have rejected because she is different. Realizes how much he enjoys her. Culminates with his standing up to the boy who is bullying her. An ok book.

### Jacob's New Dress –

Author – Sarah and Ian Hoffman – Published by Albert Whitman & Co – 2014 – Illustrated by Chris Case  
Jacob enjoys dressing up and convinces his parents to allow him to wear a dress to school, although they are worried about the reactions from his peers, particularly the boys. This book Deals with Being different, sex roles, gender identity and gender nonconforming children. Grades k-2 – picture Book – beautifully illustrated and wonderfully written. A sensitive and thoughtful book.

## Middle School

### The Misfits – KIRKUS REVIEW

James Howe, Aladdin Paperbacks, 2001

The Gang of Five wants, basically, to get through seventh grade in Paintbrush Falls, New York. The four of them (there are only four, actually) have been friends forever: Bobby's fat; Addie's too tall and too smart; Skeezie has personal hygiene issues; and Joe has known he was gay almost since he was born. It's Bobby's sweet, sharp voice that narrates—how Addie's refusal to say the Pledge of Allegiance in class leads to their all running for school office, how each of them develops their first crush, and how both play out in utterly recognizable 12-year-old ways. Howe (*Color of Absence*, p. 941, etc.) lets his kids discover how the names we call each other shape our vision of ourselves, and the Gang's attempt to bring about a no-name-calling day (no Dweeb, Fluff, Twinkie, or Nerdetta) rings true and real. Straight narrative alternates with transcripts of the Gang's meetings at the local ice cream parlor down to every last word, thanks to Addie's determined style. Bobby may be preternaturally articulate, but he is also winsome and funny about some very painful issues: the loss of a parent; the weirdness of adults, even nice ones; the pressure of hormones; and the importance of friendship. Readers of every stripe will find themselves here and laugh (or cringe) as they catch on. (*Fiction. Ages 10+*) One of the best books for middle school students.

### Better Nate Than Ever

Features 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy who lives in PA and goes to New York City to Audition For a Play while his brother is watching him when his parents are out of town.

A *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year, a *Publishers' Weekly* Best Book of the Year, and a *Slate* Favorite Book of the Year. A small-town boy hops a bus to New York City to crash an audition for *E.T.: The Musical*.

Nate Foster has big dreams. His whole life, he's wanted to star in a Broadway show. (Heck, he'd settle for *seeing* a Broadway show.) But how is Nate supposed to make his dreams come true when he's stuck in Jankburg, Pennsylvania, where no one (except his best pal Libby) appreciates a good show tune? With Libby's help, Nate plans a daring overnight escape to New York. There's an open casting call for *E.T.: The Musical*, and Nate knows this could be the difference between small-town blues and big-time stardom.

Tim Federle writes a warm and witty debut that's full of broken curfews, second chances, and the adventure of growing up—because sometimes you have to get four hundred miles from your backyard to finally feel at home.

An outstanding book for middle school students.

## Totally Joe – James Howe

Delivering trenchant messages about tolerance, self-knowledge and the vacuity of teenage popularity, Howe's ultimately uplifting tale marks the welcome return of the Gang of Five (though there are really only four), introduced in *The Misfits*. The novel's innovative format reveals the "alphabiography" of 13-year-old Joe Bunch, the gay member of the seventh-grade misfits. In this alphabetical survey, assigned by his English teacher, he shares his heartfelt, snappy reflections. For "A is for Addie," he recalls his earlier years, when he liked to dress up and play with Barbie dolls (a pastime that bonded him to Addie, also from the Gang of Five). He confesses that in fifth grade he wanted to be a "guy-guy" so badly that he asked his friend to teach him how ("Oh. My. God. It was pathetic"). Joe has a crush on "totally cool, smart" Colin (the "C" entry), a jock who returns his affection but is not ready to go public with their relationship and eventually calls it off. Encouraged by his insightful aunt, Joe takes a major leap when he comes out to his supportive family. Howe deals with weighty issues, but uses Joe's affable personality to interject ample humor, and the hero ends each segment with a "Life Lesson," many presenting principles appropriate to any kid (e.g., "Just be who you are, okay?"). This narrator is anything but an average Joe: he's candid, memorable and—though he might find this hard to believe—totally charismatic. Ages 10-14. (*Oct.*) Reviewed on: 10/03/2005

**High School:** After meeting with the High School Librarians we did not feel it necessary to generate a recommended book list. Their collection is comprehensive and inclusive of diverse individuals and families. Our FHS librarians are sensitive to these issues and alert to quality authors and titles.

## **Websites:**

**You may wish to examine the books listed on these websites, many of which we have reviewed. Others we have not.**

[www.welcomingschools.org/pages/books](http://www.welcomingschools.org/pages/books) - Welcoming Schools - A Project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation

[www.gbpflag.org/books](http://www.gbpflag.org/books) - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and Transgender

## **Grand Families:**

Grandparents Raising Children [www.raisingyourgrandchildren.com](http://www.raisingyourgrandchildren.com)

National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren <http://chhs.gsu.edu/nationalcenter/>

Grand Families of America [www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com](http://www.grandfamiliesofamerica.com)

AARP Grandparent Information Center [www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/raising\\_grandchild](http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/raising_grandchild)

## Books Not Recommended

- 1- All Kinds of Families – Nora Simon 1976 – No GLBT Families
- 2- King and King and Family – de Haan – King Lee and King Bertio's royal honeymoon to see all the animals in the jungle. Unbeknownst to them, a child who has been following them stows away in men's baggage. When they are at home and unpack, they discover her. They all want to become a family. Children may wonder why the men do not try to find the little girl's family or check to see if anyone is looking for her.
- 3- Holly's Secret – Nancy Garden
- 4- Heather Has Two Mommies – by Leslea Newman - **ONLY the first editions.** Too much information about artificial insemination for the age group it was intended to service. This, however, has been **omitted** on the anniversary of the **10<sup>th</sup> year edition.**