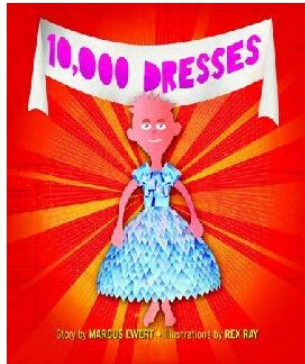




Provided by: Maricar Almeda, Matthew Chao, Beata Corcoran, and Hannah Faughnan

Advancing Transgender Health through Children's Literature

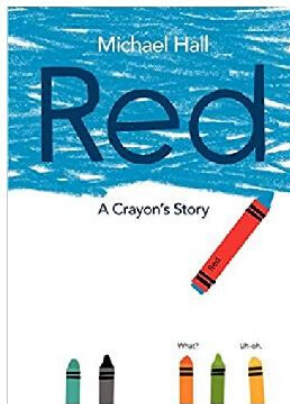
A resource created for the Rutgers Libraries Gender Health Center at Robert Wood Johnson Hospital that serves as a compilation of children's literature that explores topics of gender and identity, with the hope of helping parents and families of transgender youth connect with their loved ones.



10,000 Dresses by Marcus Ewert

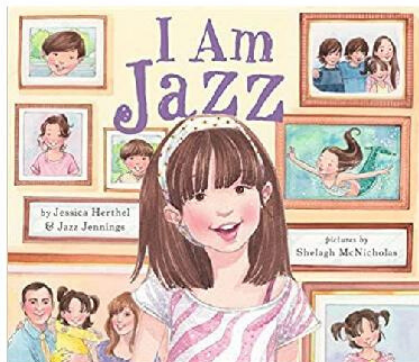
Bailey is a trans girl who dreams of mystical dresses every night. When she wakes up, she asks her family members to help her find the dresses, but they tell Bailey that boys can't wear dresses. Eventually, Bailey not only finds the dresses of her dreams but also the support she needs.

In this book, Marcus Stewart emphasizes the importance of consistently using the correct pronouns for Bailey from the beginning even when her parents don't believe that she's a girl.



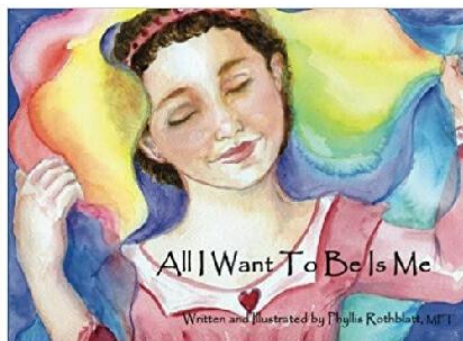
Red by Michael Hall

This funny, insightful, and colorful book is about a blue crayon that is accidentally labeled "red". Despite the bright red label, Red is actually Blue. No matter how hard he tries to be, Red knows that he is not red. He's blue! Red teaches us how to have the courage of showing your true inner self.



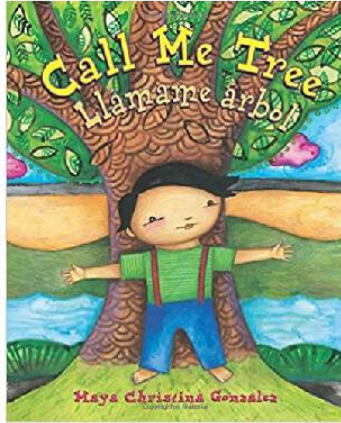
I Am Jazz by Jessica Herthel

I Am Jazz is based off of the real experience of Jazz Jennings who is now an advocate for transkids everywhere. Since she was just two years old, Jazz knew that she had a girl's brain in a boy's body. Her family did not know what to do until they took her to a doctor who told them that Jazz was transgender.



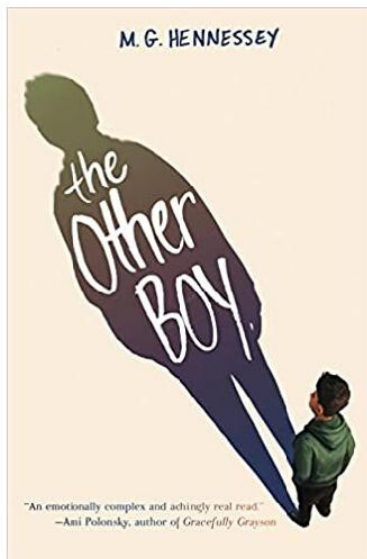
All I Want To Be Is Me by Phyllis Rosenblatt MFT

This book is a celebration of children who don't fit into narrow gender stereotypes and is a reflection of the different ways that children experience and express their gender.



Call Me Tree by Maya Christina Gonzalez

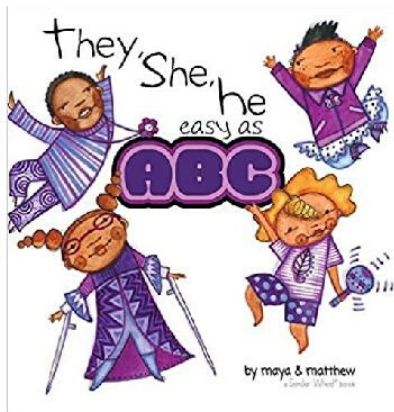
In both English and Spanish, this lyrically written story is of a child's journey in self-discovery. Just like a tree, a child develops from the inside out and grows. Gentle, empowering, and beautifully written, this story is about belonging, connecting with nature, and becoming your fullest and most authentic self.



The Other Boy by M. G. Hennessey

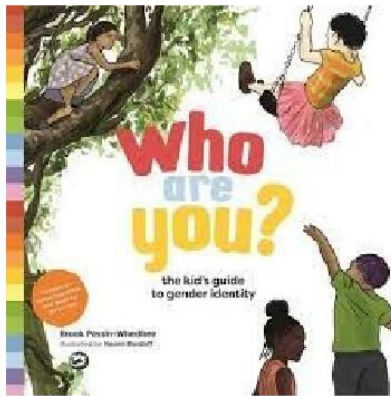
Shane Woods is just like any other boy. He loves to play baseball and hanging out with his best friends, but he has a secret. He hasn't told anyone that he's taking testosterone for hormone replacement therapy.

The Other Boy is a beautiful heartfelt story about Shane's journey towards self acceptance.



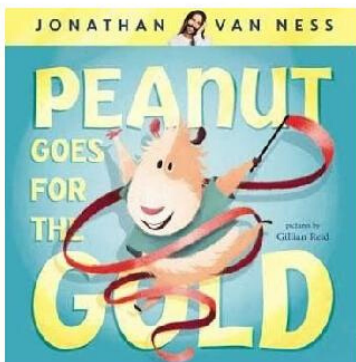
They, He, She easy as ABC by Maya Christina Gonzalez

As portrayed in this book, including and respecting everyone can be easy! The reader meets 26 different kids with their own cool dance move and they teach the important lesson of inclusion.



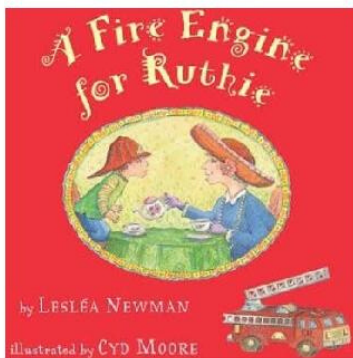
Who Are You? The Kid's Guide to Gender Identity by Brook Pessin-Whedbee

An extremely useful, yet colorful guide to how gender is expressed and experienced by people in the world, for children age 5+, that is described to be perfect for at-home or in-classroom use. This book describes gender experienced in the body, the identity, and the expression of a person using a fun, interactive wheel and included resource guide for adults located at the back of the book. Serves as an educational tool on many aspects of the gender experience, and helps adults with finding talking points and understanding key concepts as well.



Peanut Goes for the Gold by Jonathan Van Ness

This picture-book follows Peanut, a gender-nonbinary hamster that has always followed their own path on a personal mission to become a rhythmic gymnast. This book explores the value in personal identity and the importance for children to always be themselves, through the lens of a gender nonbinary character. Celebrating self-love and pursuing one's dreams, this feel-good family book will encourage children to be who they are without the pressure of fitting into any gender norms.



A Fire Engine for Ruthie by Lesléa Newman

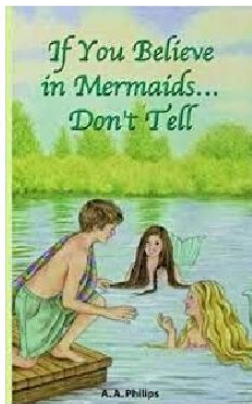
Ruthie's Nana enjoys playing with dolls and tea parties. Ruthie likes trucks and fire engines, and notices that the neighbor Brian gets to play with those things. Why doesn't Ruthie? This book explores the gender norms of child's play and the relationship loving relationship between Ruthie and Nana, with Nana slowly learning that girls can like trucks, too. This book illustrates the relationship between children and adults, and expression of desires in the face of gender norms for children of young ages.



Love Z by Jessie Sima

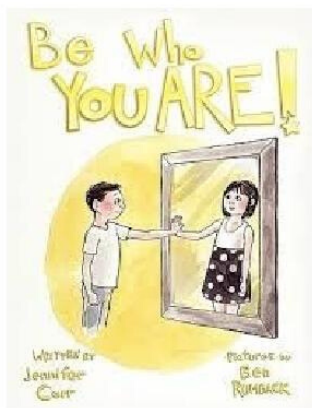
Jessie Sima explores the meaning of love and how it can be interpreted in many different ways. A robot named Z goes on a journey of discovery asking what the significance of the phrase "Love, Beatrice" is, on a bottle that they find. Throughout this book, Z is not given a gender, and is referred to with They/Them pronouns. It allows for parents as well as children become familiar

with non-gendered pronouns, advancing the cause of acceptance throughout the LGBT community.



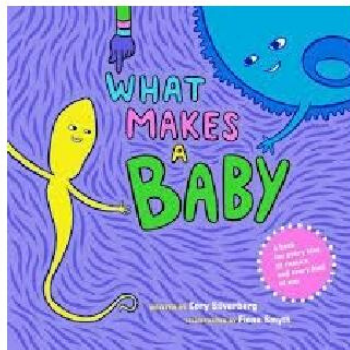
If You Believe in Mermaids... Don't Tell by A.A. Phillips

Todd, a boy who has just finished seventh grade, struggles with his gender identity and expression, fearing what Brad, the local bully, and his father might think of him. Todd wants to be a mermaid in order to escape the world of expectations, play with dolls, and most importantly, be a mermaid. This book explores gender expression in young children, through both Todd's desires and the actions he takes to hide them from others, such as befriending popular girl Sylvie and trying to fit in at his summer camp. Another important topic of the story is the relationship Todd has with his father, and how he might face his father discovering that Todd is different from the other little boys at the summer camp.



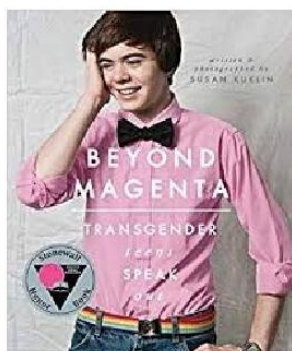
Be Who You Are by Jennifer Carr

Based on Author Jennifer Carr's own experiences with her children, *Be Who You Are* tells the story of Nick, a child who was born in the body of a boy, despite feeling as though he were a girl for his whole life. When Nick begins to request to be called by the name Hope, and moves away from "boys' clothes," Nick's family is supportive and finds a group for families like theirs. This book highlights gender expression as Nick (eventually called Hope) navigates her gender identity and expression with the help of her family. By showing that families can adapt and support their transgender children, this book shines a positive and welcoming light on the transgender coming out experience.



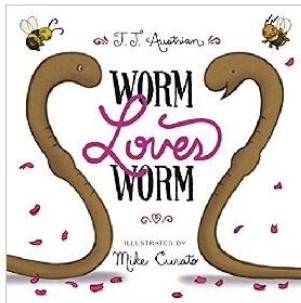
What Makes a Baby by Cory Silverberg

Certified sexuality educator Cory Silverberg recreates the ideas of making a baby without gendered body parts or roles. With the projected audience being children in preschool to age eight, the descriptions and imagery of the book include people of different ages, skin colors, and ability, and allow for conversation about each individual child's birth story, including those of nontraditional or adoptive families. This book not only educates children on where babies come from, but steps away from established norms and allows for all types of families to fit into the story.



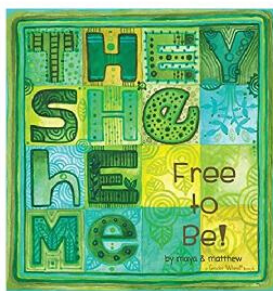
Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out by Susan Kuklin

This young adult nonfiction book explores the real-life experiences on six transgender/gender nonbinary teens as they explore their identities and navigate their social circles. Including interviews of the teens and their families and photo essays chronicling their personal experiences, this book allows for the reader to learn about what it may be like to be young and different in this world. This book explores family relationships in different circumstances, and illustrates the discourse of being transgender/nonbinary in both wonderful and heartbreaking ways.



Worm Loves Worm by JJ Austrian

This is a story of two loving creatures who have plans to get married. The book explores what it means to be in a relationship and how people, through the metaphor of these worms, can express themselves in any way they choose.



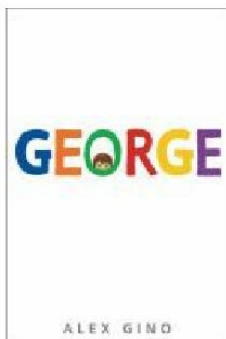
They She He Me, Free to Be by Maya Gonzalez and Matthew SG

This storybook gives a deep reflection into the importance of using correct gender pronouns, leading to feelings of security in one's individuality. By normalizing different pronouns, this book aims to teach not only children, but parents about the significance of pronouns beyond the binary.



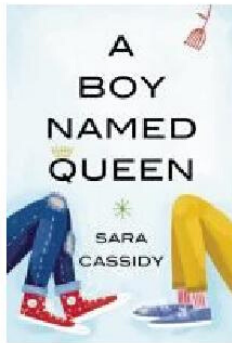
From the Stars i the Sky to the Fish in the Sea by Kai Cheng Thom, Kai Yun Ching, and Illustrated by Wai-Yant Li

This is a story of a child, Miu Lan, who can shapeshift into anything they could ever want to be. This brings challenges of fitting in at school when the other children do not know how to interact with them. The lesson of the book is to find the people in life who are loving and supportive like the mother of Miu Lan, and find meaningful bonds in those relationships.



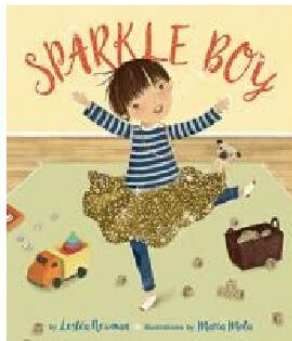
George by Alex Gino

When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl. George thinks she'll have to keep this a secret forever. Then her teacher announces that their class play is going to be Charlotte's Web. George really, really, REALLY wants to play Charlotte. But the teacher says she can't even try out for the part...because she's a boy. With the help of her best friend, Kelly, George comes up with a plan. Not just so she can be Charlotte -- but so everyone can know who she is, once and for all.



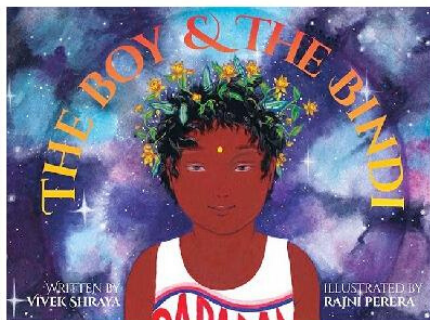
A Boy Named Queen by Sara Cassidy

Celebrating individuality and expressing what you feel inside is the central idea of this book. Queen is teased at school for being a little bit different in terms of his gender presentation, but is able to teach a young girl Evelyn what it means to have confidence in your identity. Coming from a strict family, Evelyn has never seen such freedom of expression. Her journey mirrors that of not only children, but anyone who has not been exposed to the perspective of gender nonbinary, or any type of expression outside of traditional gender norms.



Sparkle Boy by Lesléa Newman

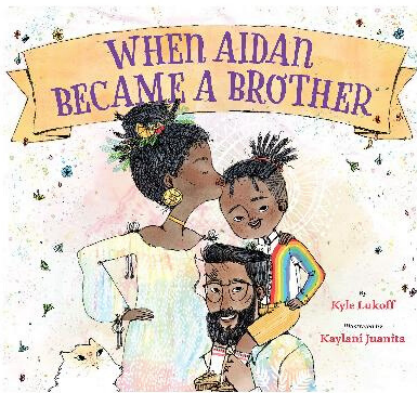
A little boy named Jesse finds it difficult to fully understand his brother Casey because he dresses in girls clothing despite being born a boy. In the book, he comes to recognise the difficulties that Casey goes through getting teased by other children because he is different. This story is effective at teaching lessons of empathy between siblings as well as gives parents perspective on how difficult it can be for children to understand why people are unique and what they face.



The Boy & the Bindi by Vivek Shraya and Rajni Perera

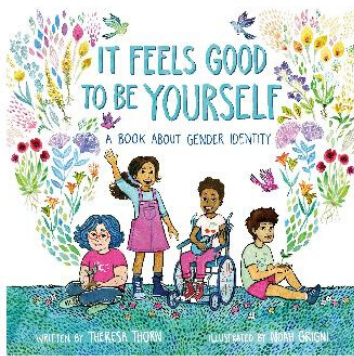
Intended for young kids, this beautifully illustrated children's book explores the decisions parents must make when raising a non-binary or gender expansive child. The story focuses on a five year old South Asian boy who becomes fixated with his mother's bindi, a culturally significant colored dot typically worn by Hindu women on the forehead. The boy's mother agrees to let him wear a bindi and in doing so gives him permission to be true to himself. A story of acceptance, The Boy & The Bindi provide insight into the fluidity of gender expression as well as cultural differences and the

representation of gender within different cultures.



When Aidan Became a Big Brother by Kyle Lukoff and Kaylani Juanita

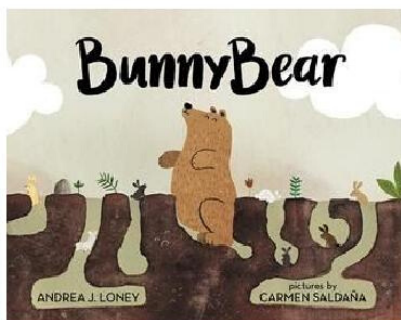
This story explores the family situation from a new angle - the anticipation of a new younger sibling - in order to explore the specific anxieties a transgender child might experience. We follow the story of Aidan, a biracial transgender boy, learning that when he was born people thought he was a girl but over time he and his family realized he was a boy! When he learns that he will be a big brother soon, he is excited but also nervous. His mother eases his anxieties with support specific to his own situation, saying “we made some mistakes but you helped us fix them....This baby is lucky to have you and so are we” (Lukoff & Juanita 6). This is a story of parental support, love between siblings and learning how to love with your whole self.



It Feels Good to Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn

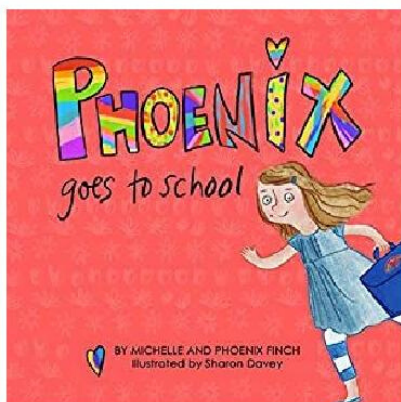
It Feels Good to Be Yourself is a beautifully illustrated story that champions being yourself and teaches about different gender identities so that children can gain language to talk about more expansive identities and understand what they might look like for different people. The book is open and direct, stating “when you were born, you couldn’t tell people who you were or how you felt. They looked at you and made a guess. Maybe they got it right, maybe they got it wrong” (Thorn 3). Transgender identities as well as gender fluidity are addressed, but at its core this book fights the societal assumption that the norm is to go through life without questioning ones gender. Instead, it argues that everyone should stop and think about who

they want to be!



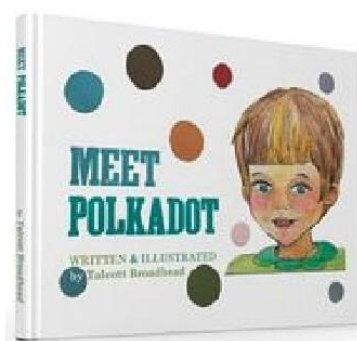
Bunnybear by Andrea J. Loney

Bunnybear explores the journey of coming to know oneself and one's place in the world around them through the adventures of Bunnybear, a young bear who despite having the physical characteristics of his other bear friends feels like a bunny on the inside. He feels “free and light and happy” when he wiggles his nose, hops and eats strawberries with the bunnies (Loney 1). His journey to find what feels right for him as well as seek acceptance from the other bunnies and from his bear friends enables children to explore complicated themes about the transgender experience in a straightforward way. This story reveals the joys of being true to oneself and of finding supporting friends to help along the way.



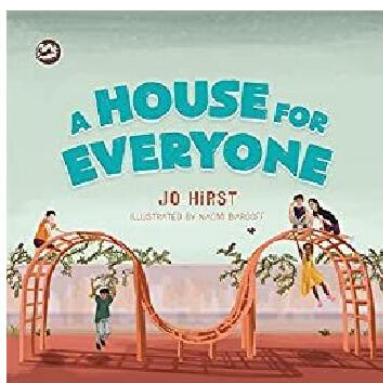
Phoenix Goes to School by Michelle and Phoenix Finch

This story addresses the realities that gender creative and transgender children can face when expressing their true gender identity at school. Phoenix, who was born a boy but knows in her heart she is a girl, decides to attend the first day of school in a dress but is nervous about bullies. She decides to be brave with the help of her family and arrives at school to find herself supported by friends and teachers. She even talks about her gender with classmates! This is a great book to help children who might be worried about being misunderstood or bullied feel less alone. It reveals the power of having supportive friends and family, as well as starting conversations about your identity and teaching the children around you!



Meet Polkadot by Talcott Broadhead

This book reveals the power of education and allyship through Polkadot, a non-binary transgender child. Polkadot, Polkadot's older sister Gladiola and her best friend Norma Alicia explore how to talk about gender differences, and as Gladiola comments, she begins to engage with information that she "didn't know she didn't know" (Broadhead 10). The book also addresses some of the challenges that a transgender child might face. Norma Alicia provides perspective on how different identities intersect and how allyship works. Together they explore the complicated and frustrating gender binaries of society which often limit gender truths.



A House for Everyone by Jo Hirst Costa and Naomi Bardoff

This book explores the power of friendship and challenges gender stereotypes through Tom and his friends Jackson and Ivy. One friend is a girl who wears her hair short, another is a boy who likes wearing dresses and Alex doesn't feel like a boy or a girl completely. But they are all friends, and their differences help them each complete a different role while building a house at recess. A House for Everyone presents a diverse range of gender identities and shows how special it is to be true to yourself.