

Books for our pride and joy

Pride. We see it showcased joyously in Pride parades in Canadian cities and throughout the world. We also see it targeted horrifically in places like the Orlando nightclub a few weeks ago. How can such opposite emotions and reactions surround this simple, one-syllable word? Merriam-Webster defines pride as 'a reasonable or justifiable self-respect: delight or elation arising from some act, possession, or relationship (e.g. parental pride).'?

Pride in our children is something most adults know something about! I often hear parents and grandparents share stories of their 'pride and joy' - stories of their child hitting new developmental milestones, showing kindness, cleverness, skillfulness, or an enviable sense of wonder. They want others to recognize how unique and special their child is. Yet when these unique and special children mature and identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) they often experience loss of affirmation from family members, friends, community or country.

A new recommended booklist from Kingston Frontenac Public Library, called *Pride Books for Children*, would suggest that books with affirming stories about children, families and communities that don't fit gender stereotypes are not only important to share with children. They are also books families are seeking. Their list highlights books available in your local library or through interlibrary loan.

Red: A Crayon's Story by George Shannon tells the story of a blue crayon that has been given a red label. He is encouraged to be red by drawing red objects like strawberries, and to mix with yellow crayons to draw oranges but, no matter how hard he tries, he simply cannot be red. Eventually Red discovers what readers have known all along. He's blue! This simple picture book can speak to children in varied ways and encourages them to be true to their inner self.

Families, Families, Families! by Suzanne Lang is filled with whimsical portraits of animals in non-traditional families. The text on each page is simple and brief, yet prompts children to think about and appreciate families that are different from their own.

This Day in June by Gayle Pitman received the 2015 ALA Stonewall Book Award, and was winner of the 2015 Notable Books for Global Society Awards. *This Day In June* is a children's book about pride celebrations and includes a reading guide with facts about LGBT history and culture and a note to parents and caregivers about how to talk to children about sexual orientation and gender identity in age-appropriate ways.

My Princess Boy was written by Cheryl Kilodavis, a mother who began journaling to help her understand and accept the uniqueness of her four-year-old son who loved to dress in beautiful feminine clothing. At first Kilodavis shared her book selectively with family members and classroom teachers to help them understand and accept her son. They in turn encouraged Kilodavis to share her book with others. The book is now published and available for purchase in book stores. In her book Kilodavis shares her belief that 'my? Princess Boy is really 'our? Princess Boy, and as a community, we can accept and support others for whoever they are and however they look.

Her book and others show us that our pride and joy needn't turn off when children come out.

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