

North American Council on Adoptable Children
45th Annual Conference



*Exploring
Solutions*
in Adoption and
Foster Care

Las Vegas, Nevada • July 17-20, 2019
Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino

LGBT Parents and Our Children

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parenting looks like most other parenting, but there are some important differences. We must equip our children to navigate a unique set of challenges in a society that often judges their family unit as inferior. From subtle exclusion to outright discrimination, our children are on the front lines. The presenters will offer practical and humorous advice on how LGBT families nurture self-acceptance and resilience.

John Ireland, RaiseAChild, California

LGBT Parents and Our Children

John Ireland and his husband became parents in 2005, fostering six and adopting a sibling set of four children, ages 3, 5, 11 and 14.

In 2012, he co-founded [RaiseAChild.org](https://www.RaiseAChild.org), which finds and supports prospective foster/adoptive parents. The organization

outperforms the national standard by advancing 23% of prospective foster and adoptive parents from inquiry to certification.

John consults with nonprofits on foster parent recruitment and support.

You can reach him at john@iCareFOSTER.org



Introductions

1. Name

2. City & State

3. Connection

Introductions

1. Name

2. City & State

Alabama	Georgia	Montana	Tennessee
Arizona	Idaho	Nebraska	Texas
California	Indiana	New York	Utah
Colorado	Kansas	North Carolina	Virginia
Connecticut	Minnesota	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin

3. Connection

Social Workers
Agency Administrators
LGBT Parents
Children of LGBT parents
Foster Parents
Adoptive Parents
Teachers
Big Brother/Big Sister/Mentors
Legal Professionals
Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

LGBT Parents and Our Children

1. Living in the spotlight
2. Finding community
3. Nurturing a supportive school environment
4. Advocating
5. Developing a parenting style

I. LIVING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- The Courts, Executive Orders & Legislation
- The states are anything but “United”
- The Media Cycle - Zeitgeist

Every Child Deserves a Family Act would prohibit any public child welfare agency receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating against any potential foster or adoptive family on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

How Jim Obergefell became the face of the Supreme Court gay marriage case

By Michael S. Rosenwald April 6, 2015



Jim Obergefell, left, and John Arthur, who suffered from ALS, are married by officiant Paulette Roberts, Arthur's aunt, on a plane on the tarmac at Baltimore-Washington International Marshall Airport on July 11, 2013. (Glenn Hartong/AP)

CINCINNATI — Jim Obergefell cannot fathom hearing his name mentioned alongside Brown or Roe.

For one thing, he knows people will mispronounce it. (It's *Oh-ber-guh-fell*.) And he never wanted to be the face of a movement or a legal groundbreaker.

"I'm just Jim," he said. "I just stood up for our marriage."

It was not a long marriage, just three months and 11 days — the time it took his husband, John Arthur, to struggle to say, "I thee wed," and then die from ALS. Now their union, and the 20-year relationship that preceded it, is at the center of *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the title case of four consolidated appeals the Supreme Court will hear this month.

Marriage Equality May Soon Be in Peril

How the Supreme Court could overturn *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

By Mark Joseph Stern



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Justice Neil Gorsuch and Chief Justice John Roberts talk outside of the Supreme Court in Washington on June 15.

Will marriage equality remain the law of the land in the United States? When the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution protects same-sex couples' right to wed, its **thundering decision** seemed enduring and irrevocable. Yet just two years later, gay Americans' marriage rights are once again under attack in conservative states—with the encouragement of some Supreme Court justices. It's now clear that not all states, and certainly not all courts, view same-sex marriage as a settled issue. In fact, it's increasingly apparent that marriage equality opponents have a long-term plan to roll back, and eventually reverse, the signature achievement of the U.S. gay rights movement.



MARK JOSEPH STERN

Mark Joseph Stern is a writer for Slate. He covers the law and LGBTQ issues.



To be sure, the Supreme Court's 5–4 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* remains secure so long as its author, Justice Anthony Kennedy, remains on the court along with the four justices who joined his opinion. On June 26, in *Pavan v. Smith*, the court **reaffirmed** *Obergefell's* core holding that states must extend *all* benefits and privileges of marriage to same-sex couples. But

shortly thereafter, Kennedy retirement rumors resurfaced with a vengeance, this time with real substance attached: NPR's Nina Totenberg **reported** that Kennedy had told law clerk applicants "he is considering retirement." *Above the Law's* David Lat then **confirmed** that Kennedy did, indeed, inform at least one applicant that he might retire at the end of next term. (That would be the

Trump's executive order on religious liberty

May 4, 2017

(CNN) President Donald Trump campaigned on being a “real friend” to the gay community, but several LGBT rights organizations said the religious liberty executive order he signed Thursday could open the doors for more discrimination against gay Americans.

The order, signed during a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden, directs the Internal Revenue Service to exercise “maximum enforcement discretion” over the so-called Johnson amendment, which prevents churches and other tax-exempt religious organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates. The order also provides “regulatory relief” for organizations that object on religious grounds to a provision in Obamacare that mandates employers provide certain health services, including coverage for contraception.

“In signing this so-called ‘religious liberty’ order, the president has essentially granted broad permission to discriminate, and ceded enormous power to unelected officials to interpret regulation and current law,” Interim Executive Director Elizabeth Kohm told CNN. “We are deeply concerned that rights and protections for people from marginalized communities will be even further subject to the whims of others’ personal ideology controlling their lives, a concept entirely antithetical to the values of freedom and dignity our nation holds dear.”



(CNN) Texas lawmakers are poised to vote on a bill that would allow adoption agencies to turn away potential parents they find objectionable on religious grounds.

Opponents say the proposed law would allow faith-based agencies to discriminate against potential parents who are gay, single or of a religion that members of the adoption agency find objectionable.

The bill's author insists it heads off any potential discrimination by mandating that alternatives be made available for potential parents who are rejected by faith-based providers.

Called the "Freedom to Serve Children Act," Texas' [House Bill 3859](#) extends religious liberty protections to providers within Texas' child welfare system, allowing them to decline services to individuals based on "the provider's sincerely held religious beliefs." The vote on the bill was originally planned for Saturday but has been rescheduled for Monday.

The Texas bill also includes provisions that let adoption and foster care agencies refuse to provide or facilitate abortion services and contraception to teens under their care. Child welfare providers can also require children under their care to receive a religious education, including putting them in religious schools.

"HB 3859 would allow child welfare service providers that contract with the state to use taxpayer money to discriminate against LGBT individuals and families in foster care, adoption and other services," [ACLU of Texas said in a statement](#) on its website. "It's about as limiting a bill as we have seen," Terri Burke, executive director for ACLU Texas, told CNN.

"You say you have a sincerely held religious belief and you are a private adoption agency or private entity that helps place foster children -- you can say you will not place that child with gay parents If I'm Catholic I can say I don't want any Baptists to raise the child," Burke said.

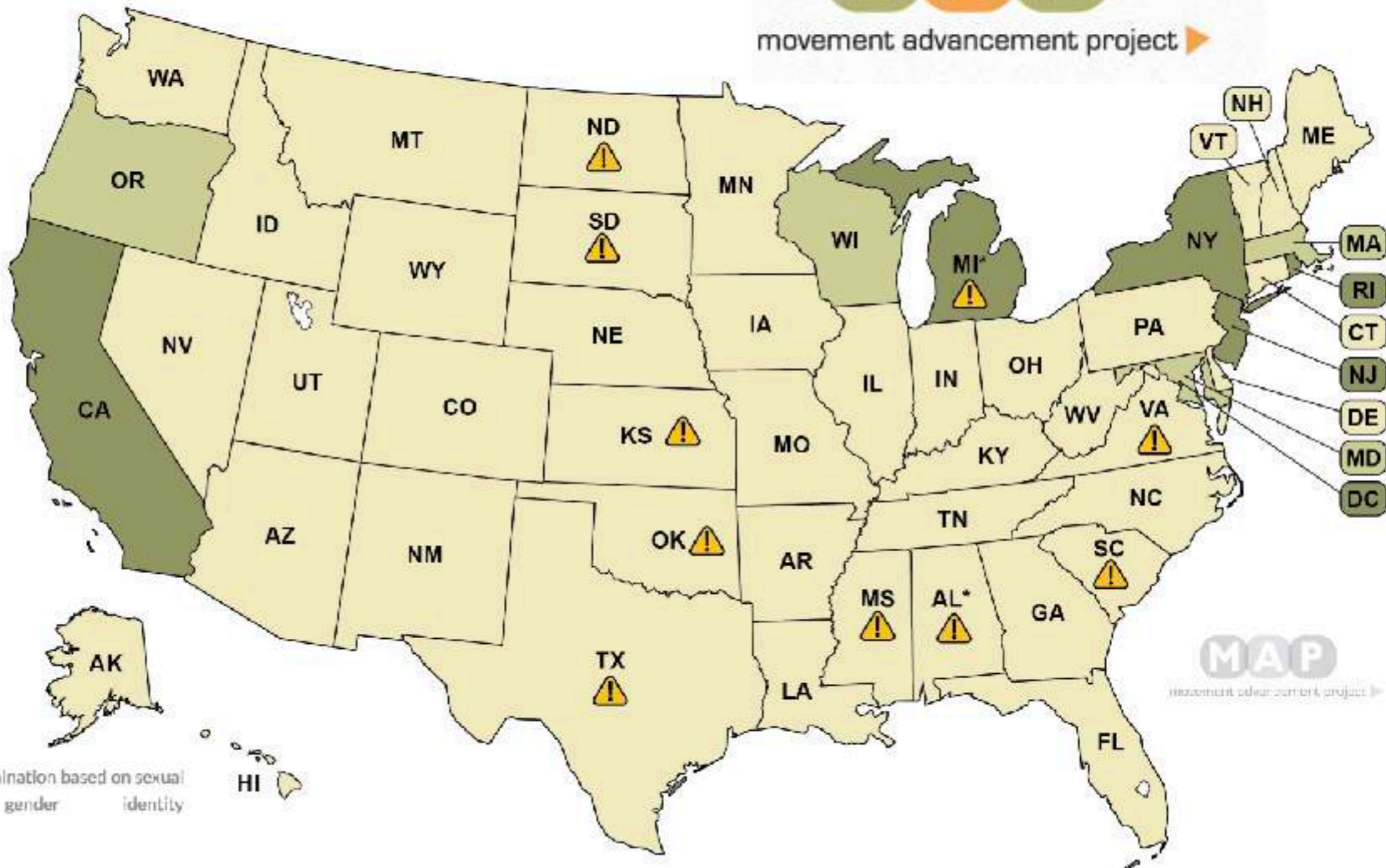
Texas bill would let adoption agencies refuse parents on religious grounds

May 8, 2017



Foster care non-discrimination laws protect LGBT foster parents from discrimination by foster care agencies and officials.

Some states permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBT people and same-sex couples, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs.



Law or policy prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
(5 states, 0 territories + D.C.)

Law or policy prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation only
(4 states, 1 territory)

States are silent on fostering by LGBT parents
(41 states, 4 territories)

State permits state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse to place and provide services to children and families, including LGBT people and same-sex couples, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs
(10 states, 0 territories)

U.S. Territories

American Samoa

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Guam

Puerto Rico

U.S. Virgin Islands

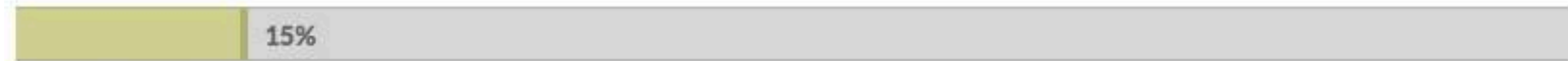


Percent of LGBT Population Covered by Laws



18%

18 % of LGBT population lives in states which have laws that support fostering by LGBT parents



15%

15 % of LGBT population lives in states which have laws that support fostering by LGB parents



67%

67 % of LGBT population lives in states which are silent on fostering by LGBT parents



movement advancement project

Every Child Deserves a Family Act



H.R. 2640; S. 1303

The Problem

According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System FY 2015 data, more than 111,000 youth living in the foster system in 2015 were eligible for adoption. However, many taxpayer-funded child welfare agencies still discriminate against qualified, licensed lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) foster and adoptive families, refusing to place youth with these families or forcing them to go through a more extensive, time-consuming, and costly process before allowing placement. By denying LGBTQ families the ability to foster and adopt children, children are denied the right to safe, happy, and healthy permanent homes. LGBTQ youth residing in care settings outside the home face additional barriers to achieving long-term placements because many foster and adoption agencies remain hesitant to place these youth with families, and many fail to ensure their safety in those environments if they do.

Currently, federal funds go to supporting permanent adoption, and there are safety precautions in place to ensure that neither families nor youth are discriminated against because of race or religion. There are no such safeguards against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

What is the Every Child Deserves a Family Act?

The Every Child Deserves a Family Act (ECDFA) would prohibit any child welfare agency receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating against any potential foster or adoptive family on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. In addition, ECDFA would prevent discrimination against any foster youth because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The bill would prevent these taxpayer-funded child welfare agencies from engaging in such discrimination by allowing the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to withhold federal funding if evidence indicates that such discrimination is occurring. To make it easier for agencies to comply, the bill would mandate that HHS provide technical assistance to all covered agencies by outlining the various legal and practical changes the agencies will need to undertake. The bill would allow an aggrieved individual to assert a violation of these prohibitions in a judicial proceeding.

Broad Support

The American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the National Adoption Center, the Child Welfare League of America, and the American Bar Association all support adoption and foster parenting by qualified unmarried individuals as well as LGBTQ parents.

What is the Current Status of the Bill?

ECDFA was introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. John Lewis (D-GA) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) on May 24, 2017, and in the Senate by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) on June 7, 2017.

LGBTQ Parents

Nearly 40 years of social science research tell us that children raised by LGBTQ parents are doing just fine.

Every major professional association dedicated to the health and well-being of children and families supports LGBTQ parenting.

3.8 million LGBTQ millennials are considering expanding their families in the coming years.⁸

84% of LGBTQ adults surveyed would consider adoption or foster care in the future.⁹

70% of LGBTQ adults surveyed were concerned or unsure about their ability to find a welcoming agency.

55% feared being turned away because of their LGBTQ identity.

Only 14% know of an LGBTQ-inclusive agency in their community.

8% of respondents who have applied for adoption or foster care **were denied** due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Equality Act

Rep. John Lewis Video

II. FINDING COMMUNITY

- Social network (from playgroup to playdate to Colage)
- Peer-to-peer support
- Faith Communities
- Parent Education
- Local LGBT parenting groups
- LGBT Center

Georgia

- COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere) Greater Atlanta: Support and Community for kids 8+ with one and/or more LGBT parent in the greater Atlanta area. We provide a fun, safe environment for kids where they can be themselves with other children and youth of like families. COLAGE offers a diverse array of programs to engage, connect and empower children, youth, and their parents through various social activities and education. colageatlanta@yahoo.com or www.myspace.com/colageatlanta
- MEGA Family Project, mission is to strengthen Georgia families by working to ensure equality, Kathy Kelly, executive director, 404-808-3350, kathy@eqga.org, MEGA Family Project, 1530 Dekalb Ave., Suite A, Atlanta, GA 30307, www.megafamilyproject.org.
- The Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center
159 Ralph McGill Blvd, Suite 600
Atlanta, GA 30308
Phone: 404-523-7500
Email: cw@aglc.org
- Gay Fathers of Atlanta
Phone: 404-342-6451
Email: pres@gfoatlanta.org
Website: www.gfoatlanta.org/
- Georgia Equality
PO Box 95425
Atlanta, GA 30347-0425
Phone: 404-327-9898
Fax: 404-327-9897
Email: geinfo@georgiaequality.org
Website: www.georgiaequality.org/

North Carolina

- Triangle Families, a group for LGBT parents and wannabe parent in the Triangle region (Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Durham) of North Carolina. To join our list serve for event information and discussions, go to yahoogroups.com, search for Triangle Families and join the group. Information about our events is also posted at www.trianglefamilies.org.

- The Lesbian & Gay Community Center of Charlotte
www.gaycharlotte.com
Contact Information
820 Hamilton Street
Suite B11
Charlotte, NC 28206
General Email: info@gaycharlotte.com
Public Contact: John Stotler, Board Chair
Board Leader: John Stotler, Board Chair
Main: 704-333-0144
Fax: 704-714-2114
Switchboard: 704-535-6277

- LGBT Center of Raleigh
411 Hillsborough St.
Raleigh, NC 27601
www.lgbtcenterofraleigh.com
Contact Information
General Email: lgbtcenterofraleigh@gmail.com
Board Leader: Glen Medders, Chair
Board Leader: Andrea Mastrobuono, Vice Chair
Main: 919-832-4484

- Time Out Youth
1900 The Plaza
Charlotte, NC 28205
(704) 344-8335
www.timeoutyouth.org/
Steve Bentley
Executive Director
sbentley@timeoutyouth.org

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Executive Director
sbentley@timeoutyouth.org

Laurie Pitts, MSW
Services Director
lauriepitts@timeoutyouth.org

Leigh Dixon
Office Administrator
ldixon@timeoutyouth.org

- OutWilmington Gay & Lesbian Community Center
PO Box 1205
Wilmington, NC 28402
newoutwilmington@gmail.com
Phone 9107429277
Website: www.outwilmington.com

Tennessee

- Nashville Gay Parents
www.nashvillegayparents.com

We are a group of LGBT parents with infant to school-aged children. We meet monthly throughout the Greater Nashville area for kid-centered activities. Currently, more than 60 families are involved. Families vary from same gender male couples to same gender female couples to single parents. Many ethnicities and nationalities are represented. Families of children with exceptionalities are active.


We've done private and public MeetUps, from an Easter egg hunt at a home to a playday in a water park. While a monthly option is hosted, members are encouraged to use the on-line platform to create small cell groups for additional interest and geographic activities.

- COLAGE-Memphis (Children Of Lesbians And Gays Everywhere), email: colagememphis@yahoo.com, web site: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/colagememphis>

- Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center
892 S. Cooper
Memphis, TN 38104-5603
General Email: wbatts@mglcc.org
Executive Director: Will Batts, Executive Director
Board Leader: Christy Tweddle, Board Chair
Board Leader: Brian Moody, Vice Chair
Main: 901-278-6422
<http://www.mglcc.org>

- OutCentral Cultural Center
1709 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: (615) 294-4834
www.outcentral.org
http://www.nowplayingnashville.com/org/detail/32455/OutCentral_Cultural_Center



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III. NURTURING A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- Auditing the classroom for diversity
- Preparing the teacher for conversations
- Modeling our families, Telling our stories
- Visibility (PTA)

AUGUST 5, 2016

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Exciting New Nonfiction Titles for Fall

2016 Children's/YA Lambda Literary Award Finalists Announced

 By [Kiera Parrott](#) on March 8, 2016 [Leave a Comment](#)

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Seven S Benefits S

Celebrating its 28th year, the [Lambda Literary Awards](#) celebrate achievement in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) writing. A committee of nearly 100 literary professionals, including booksellers, book reviewers, librarians, authors, academics and previous “Lammy” winners and nominees selected the finalists in 25 categories, including children’s and YA titles—two of which, *George* by Alex Gino and *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera, were *SLJ* Best Books of 2015.



LAMBDA LITERARY

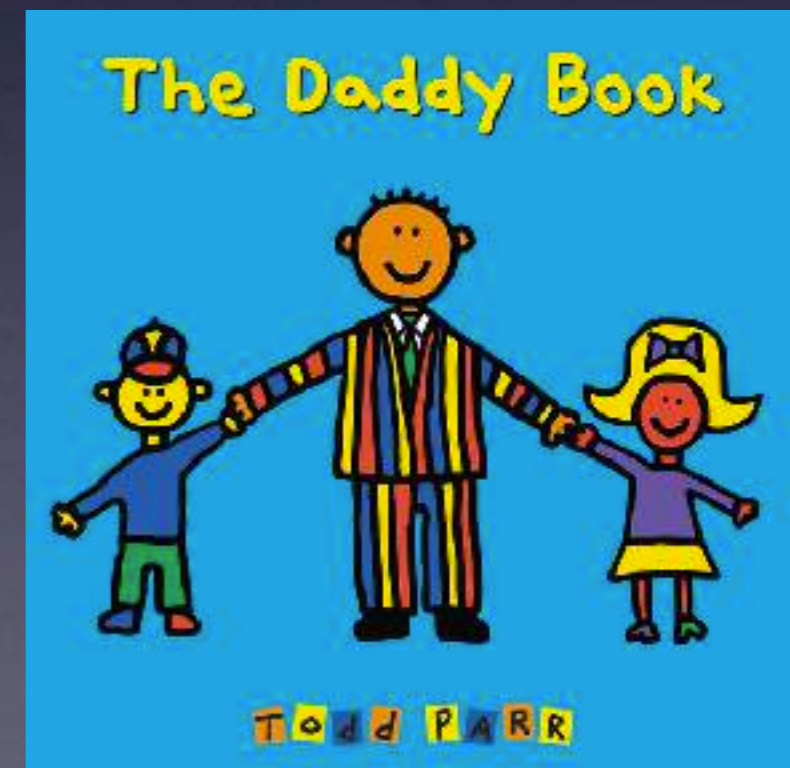
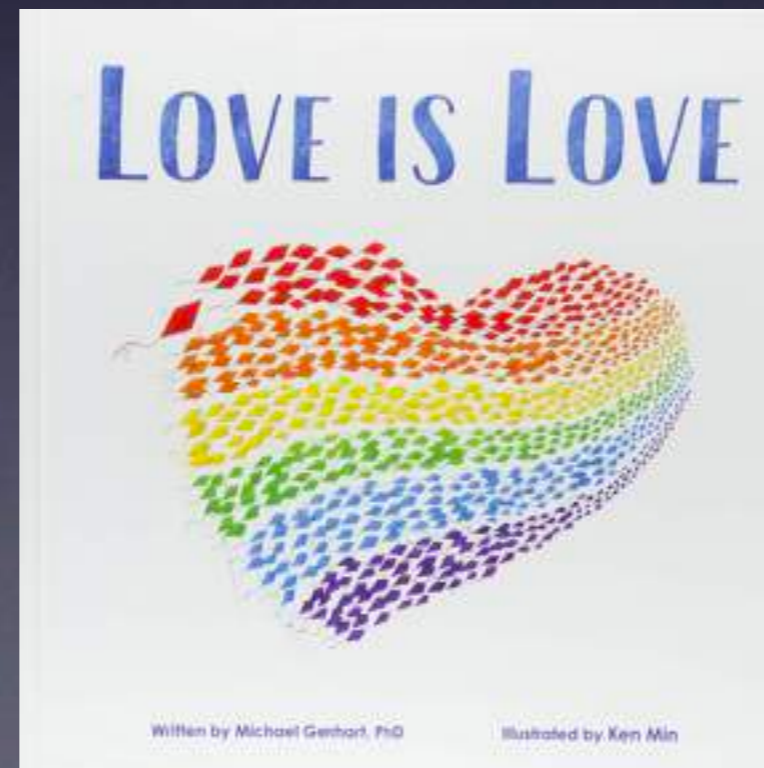
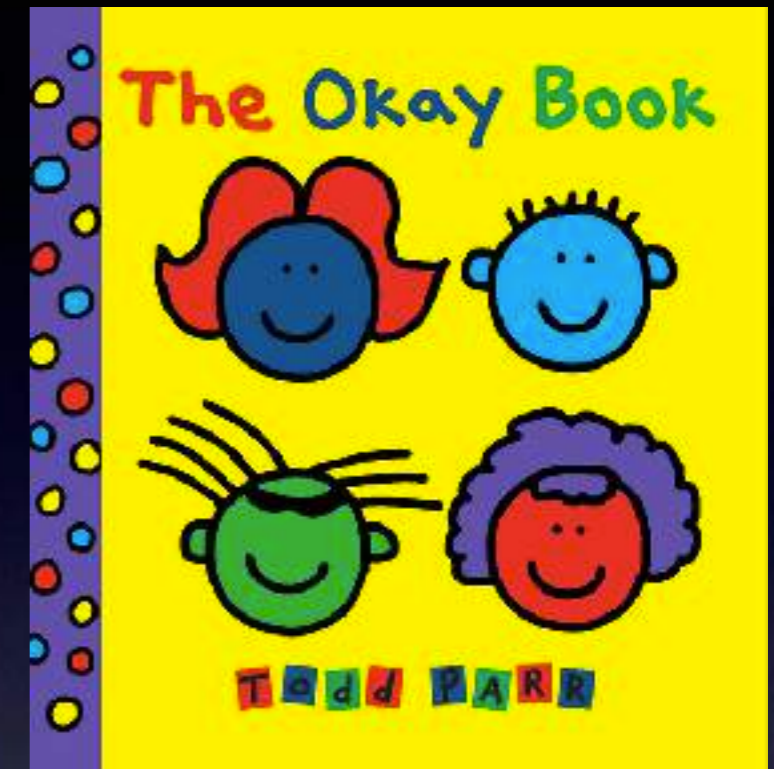
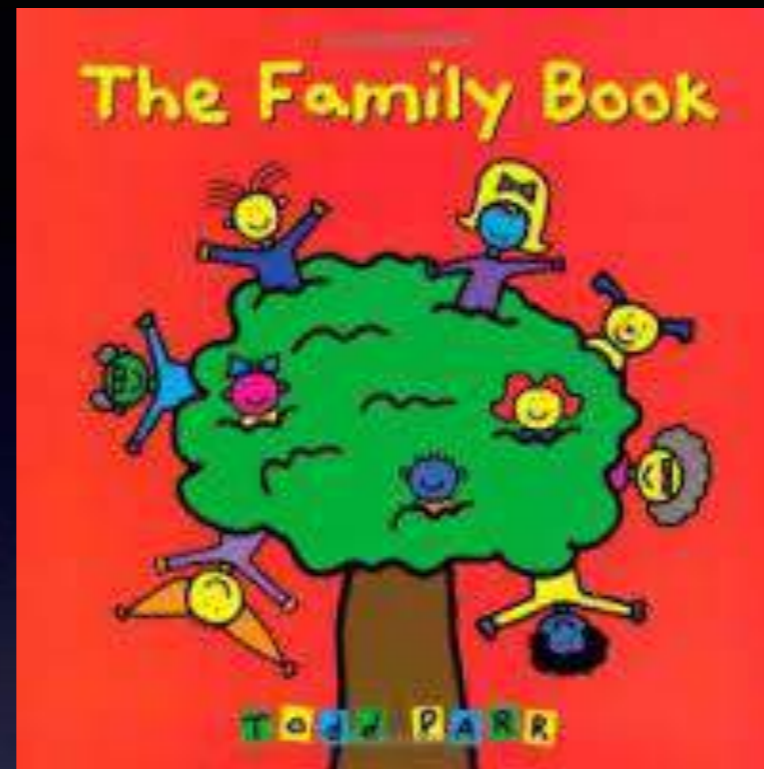
“The Lambda Literary Awards were founded in 1989 to elevate the profile of LGBT literature,” says Lambda Literary Board President, KG MacGregor. “In so doing, we also elevate the lives of those who find themselves authentically portrayed in our stories. It is with great pride that we come together each year to celebrate the excellent works of inspiring authors who have walked in our shoes.”

The finalists in the LGBT Children's/Young Adult category are:

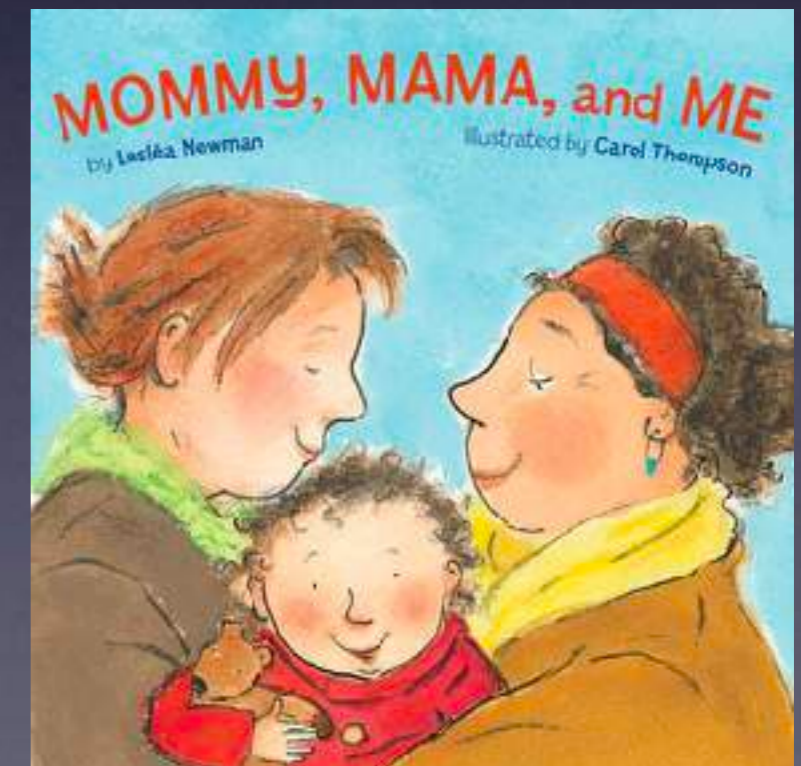
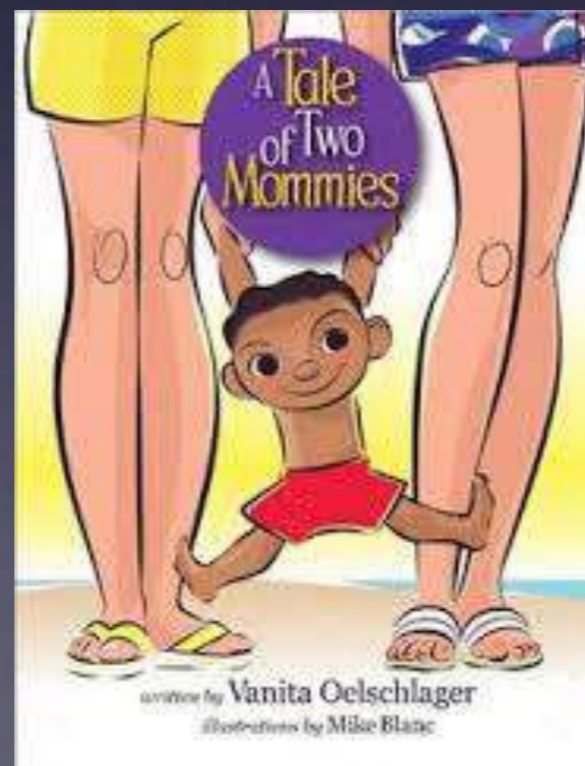
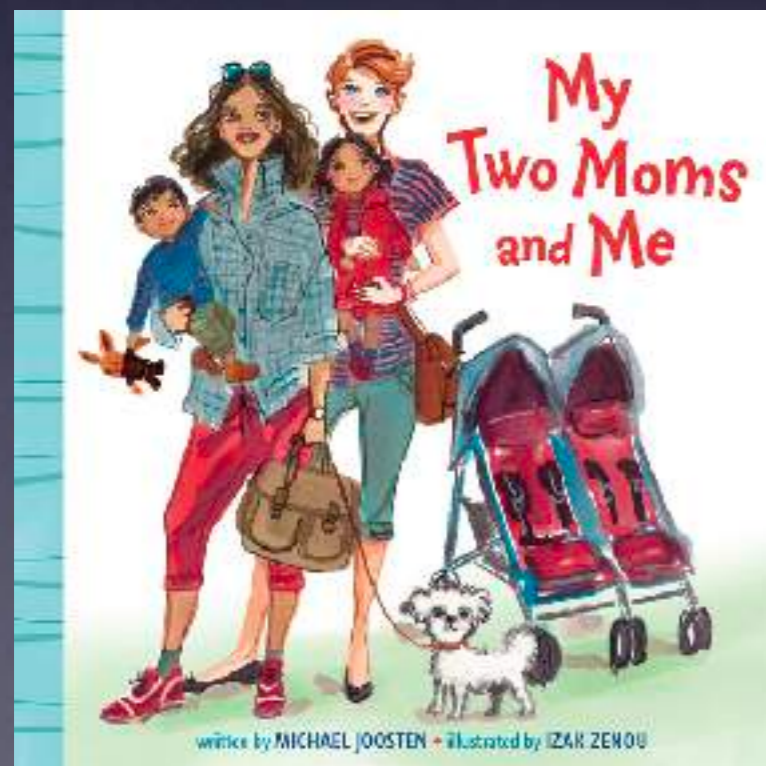
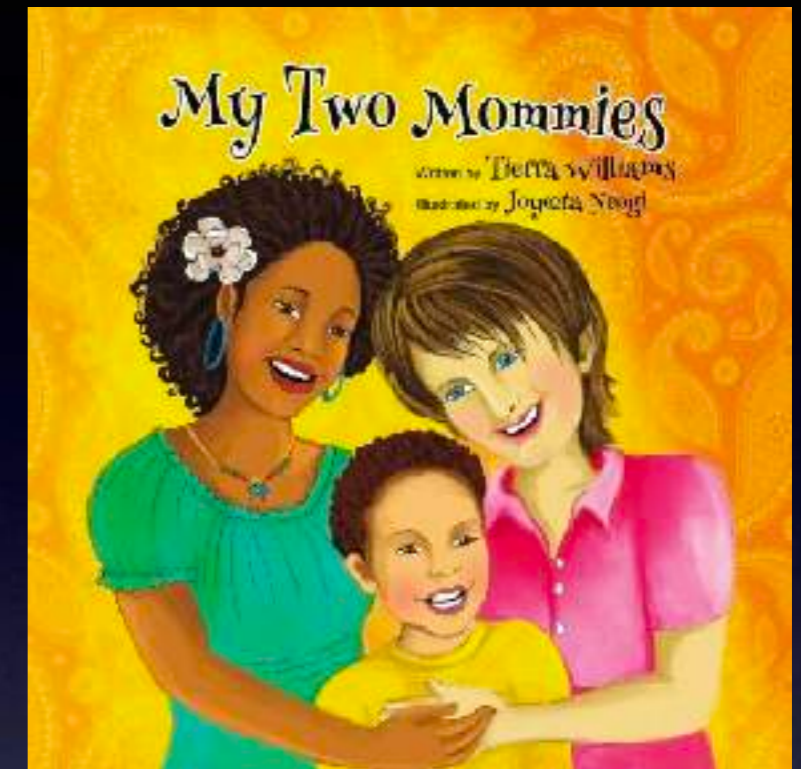
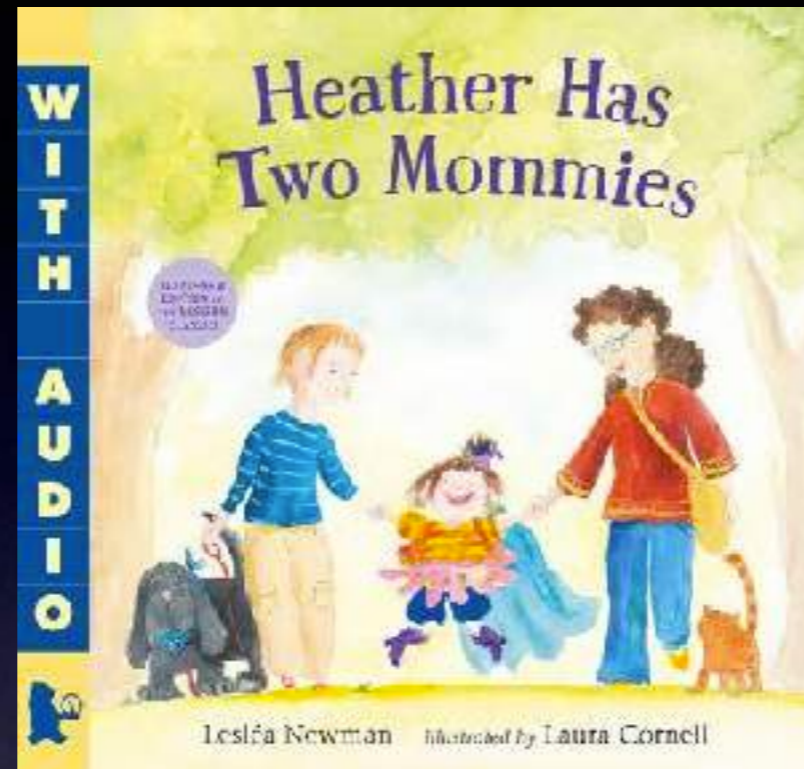
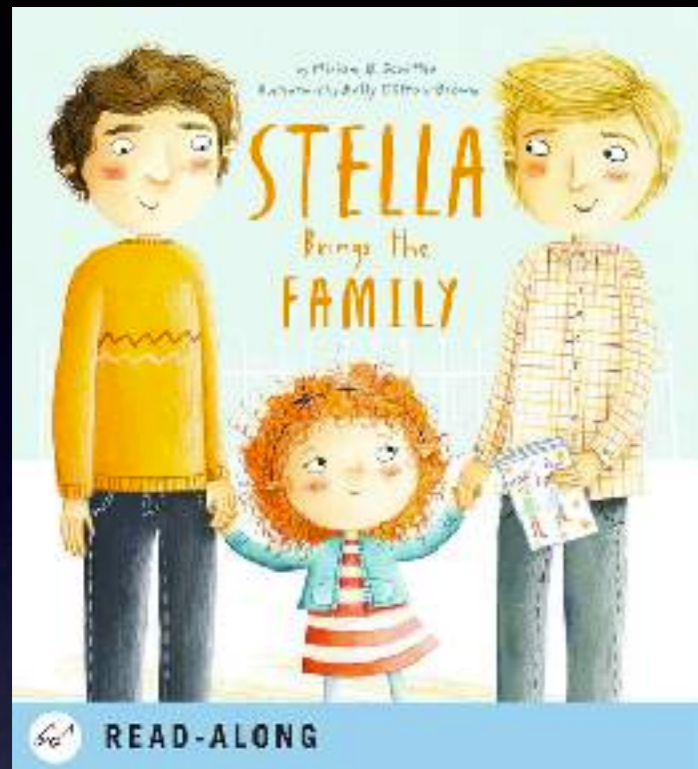
- [About a Girl: A Novel](#), Sarah McCarry, St. Martin's Griffin
- [Anything Could Happen](#), Will Walton, Push



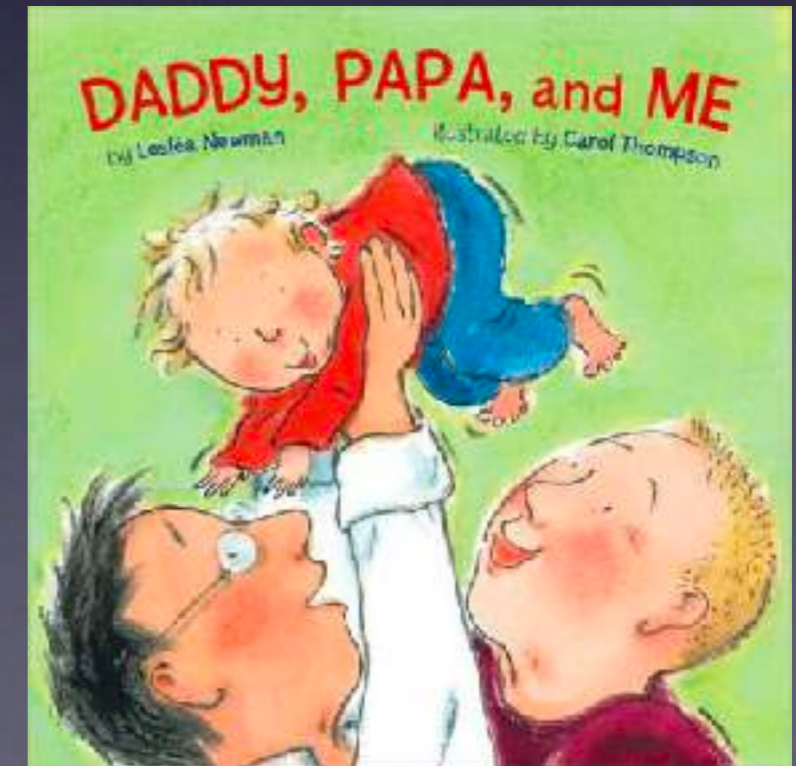
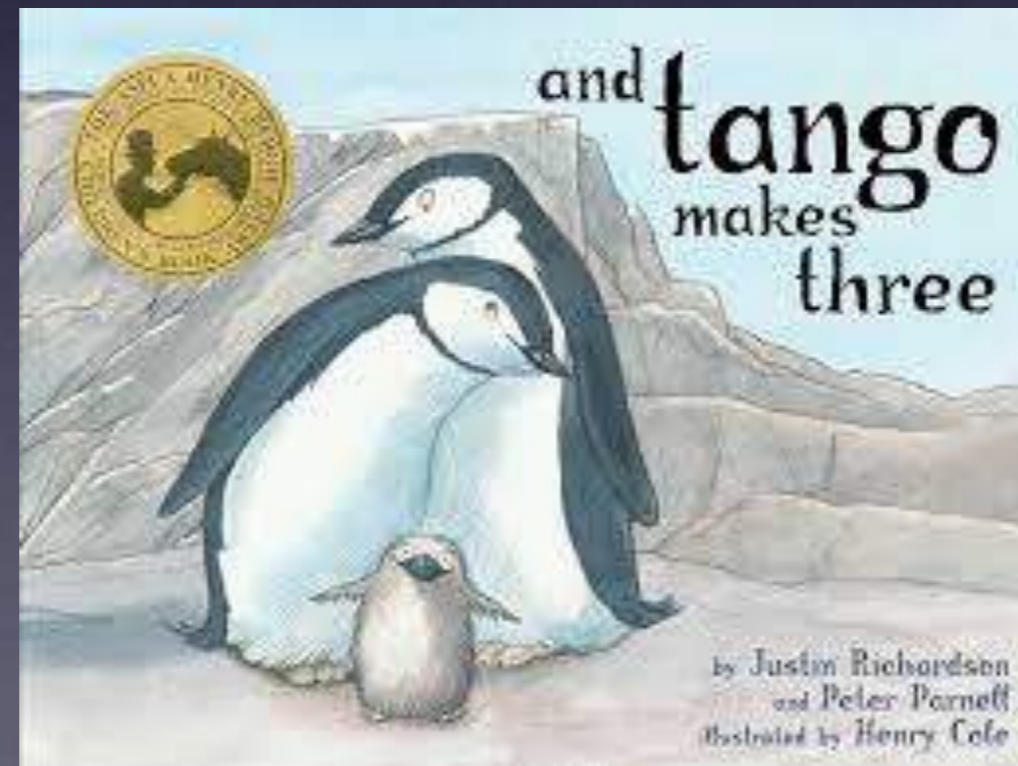
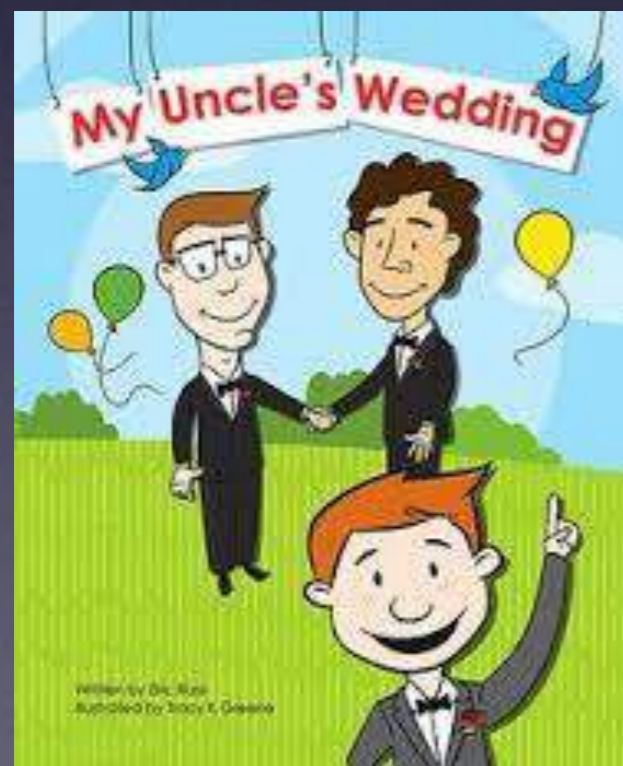
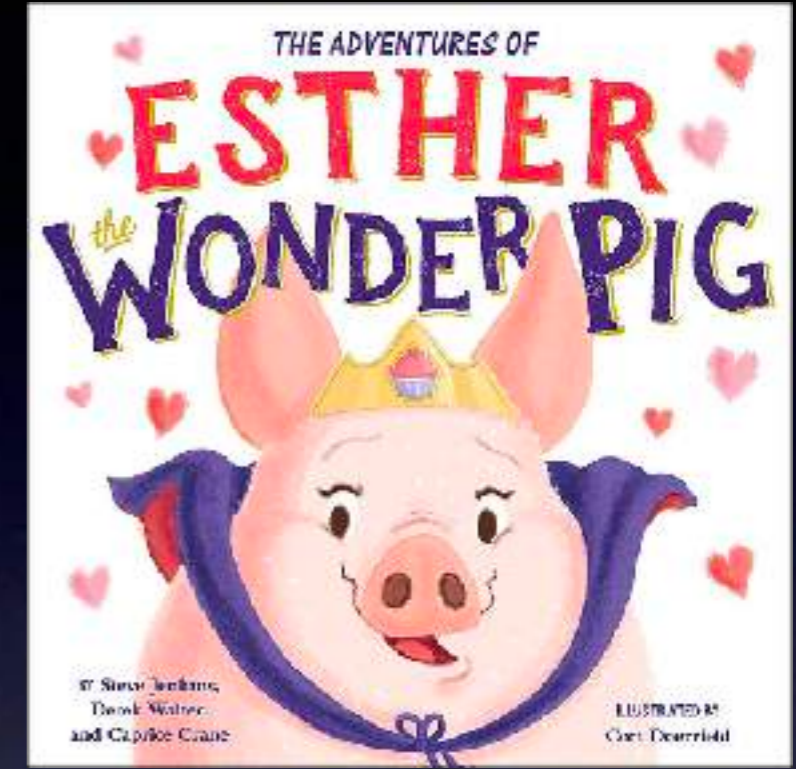
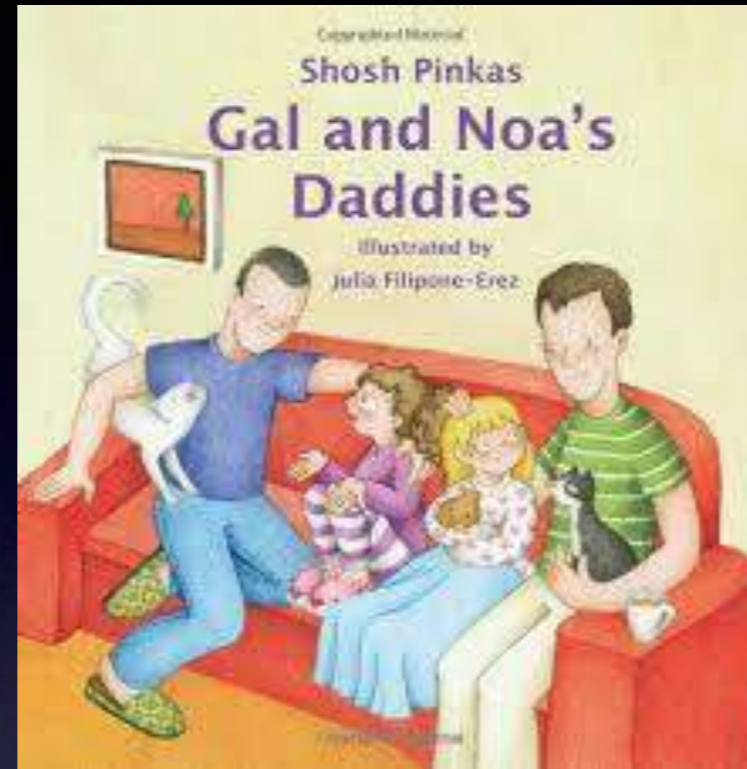
Books featuring diversity



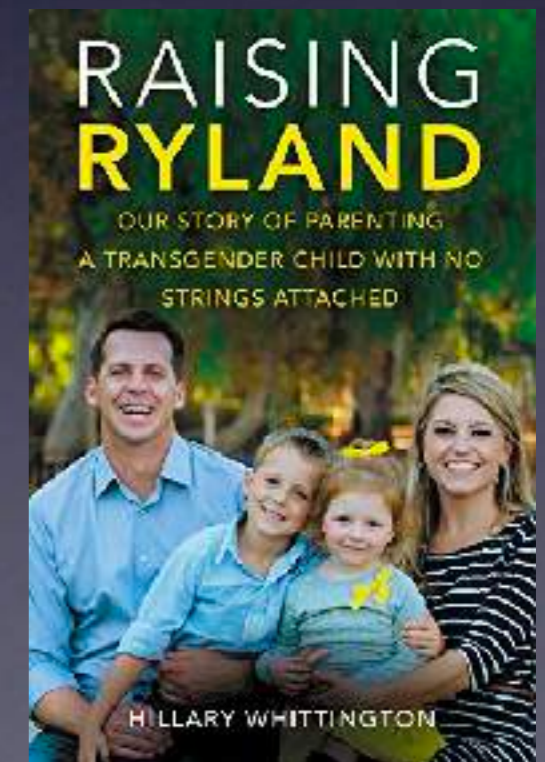
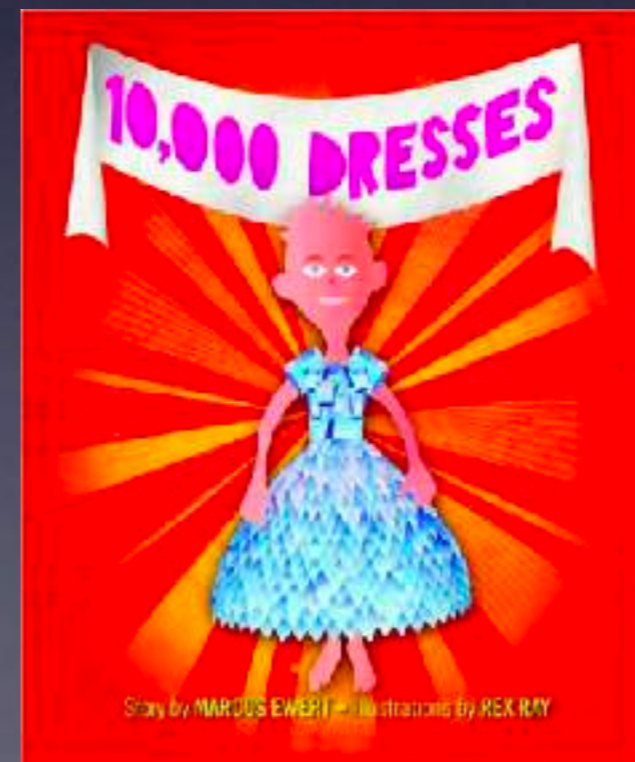
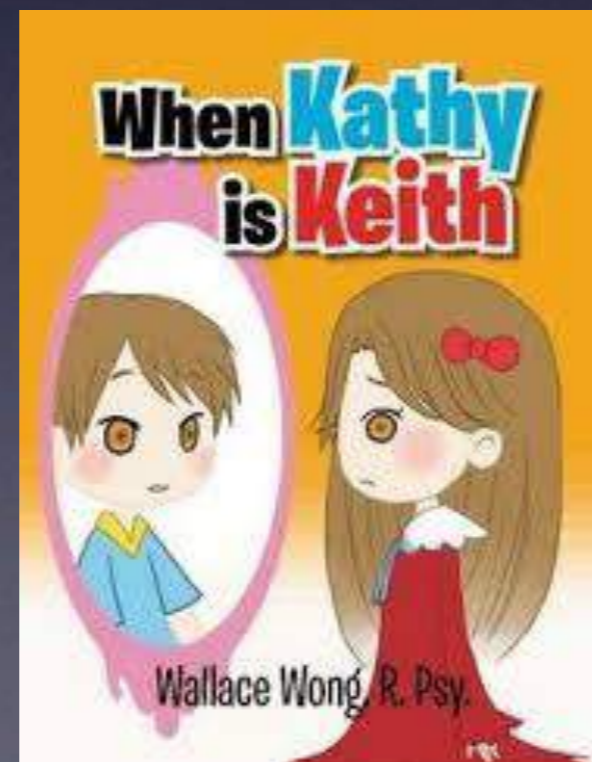
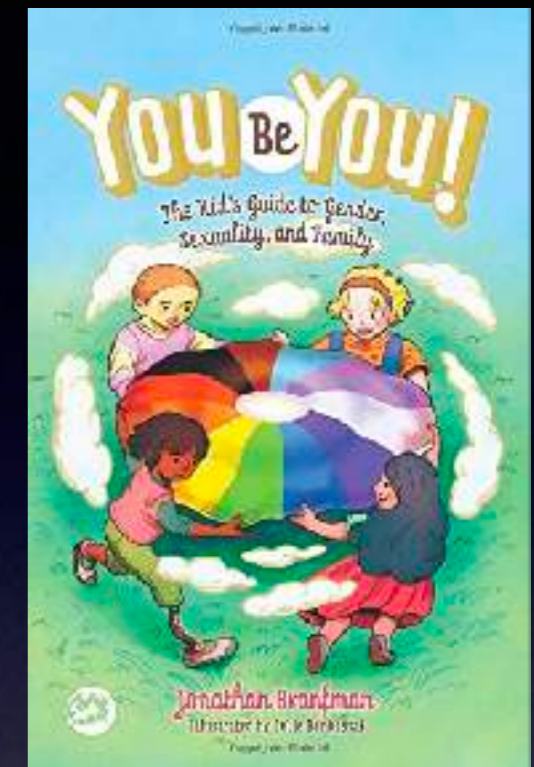
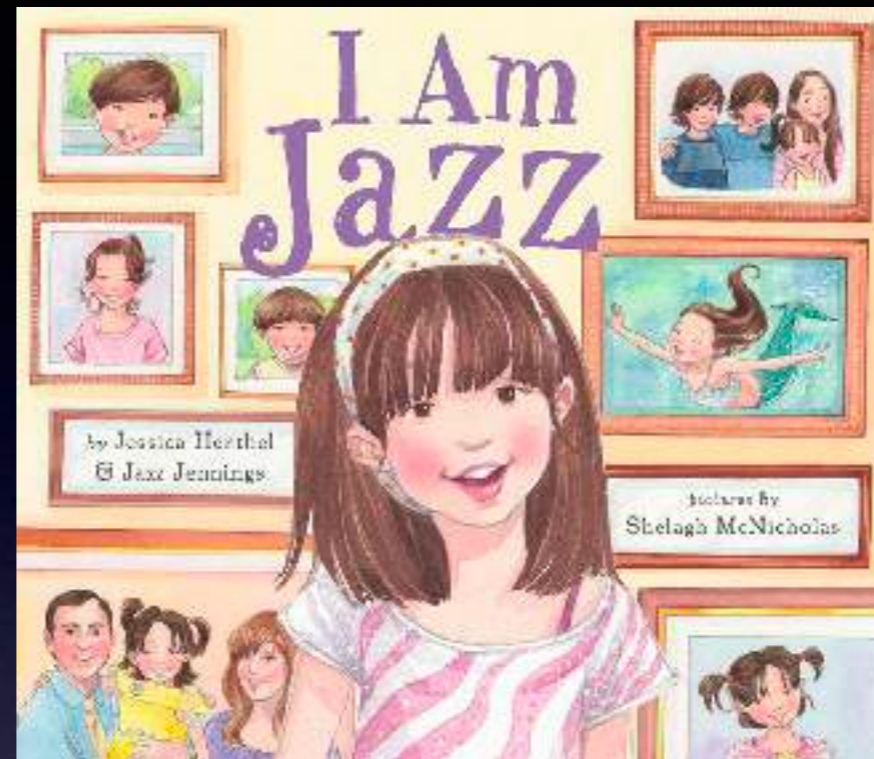
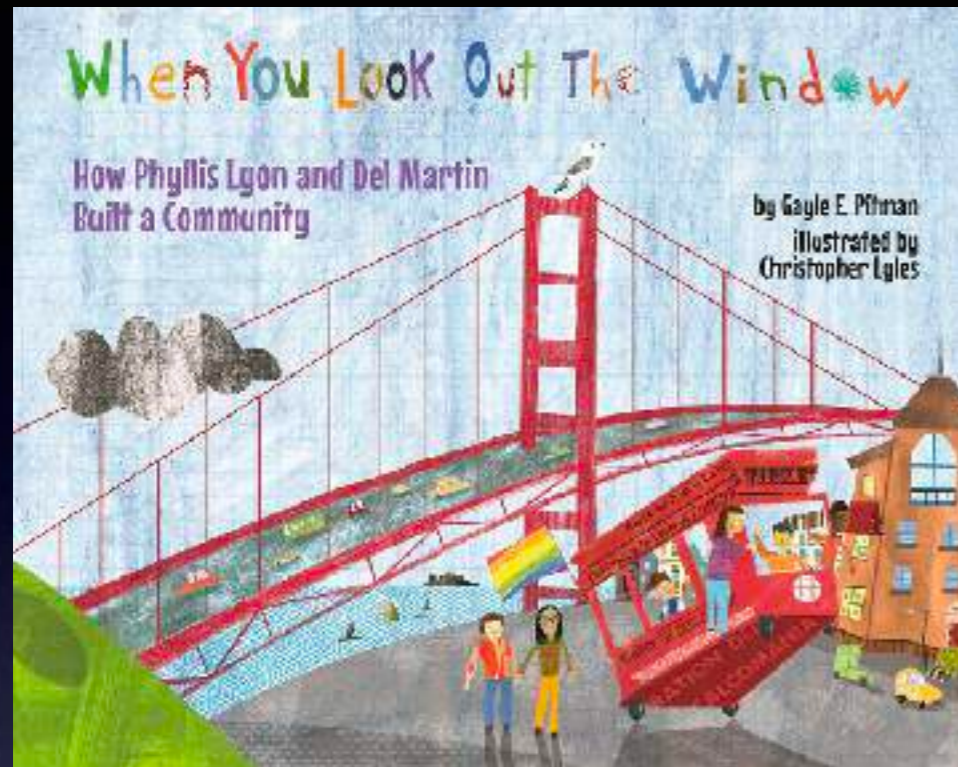
Books featuring lesbian characters



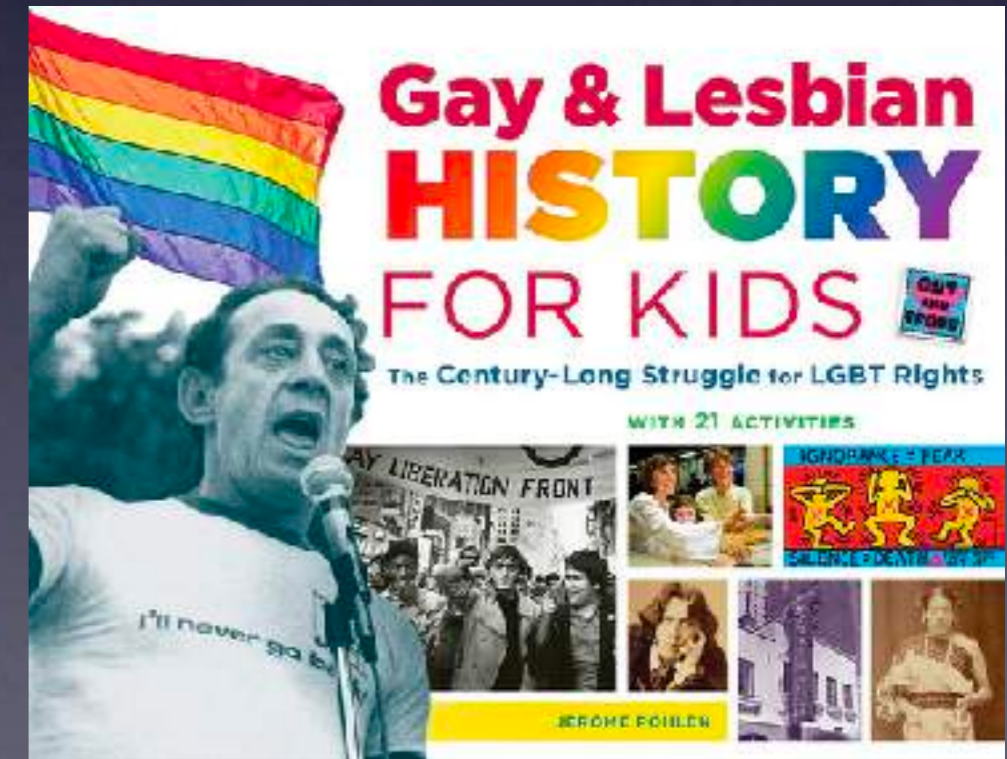
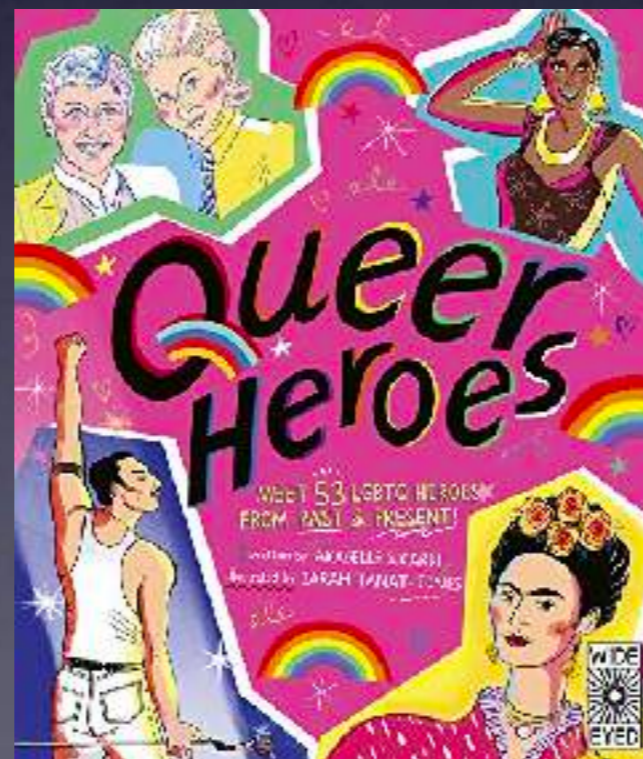
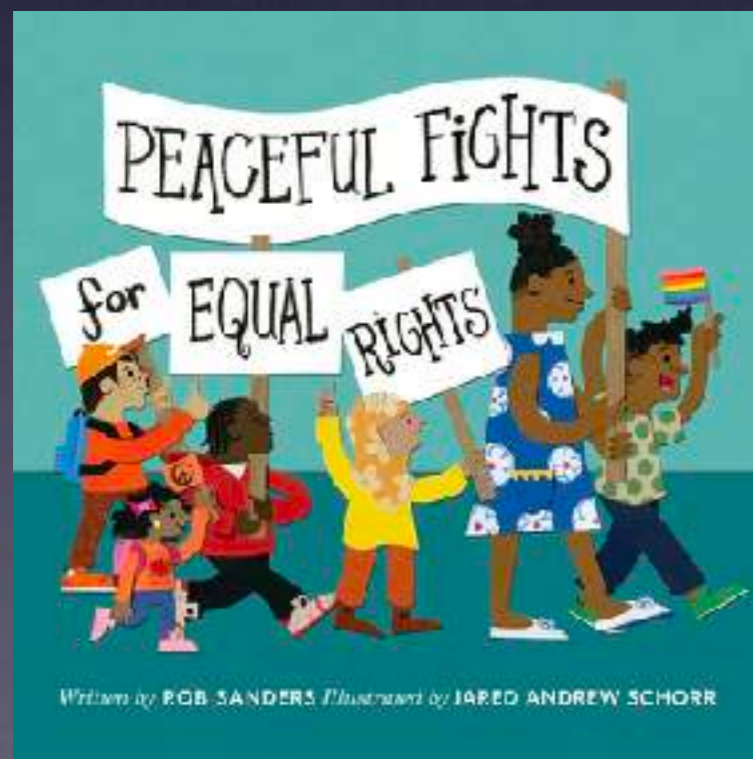
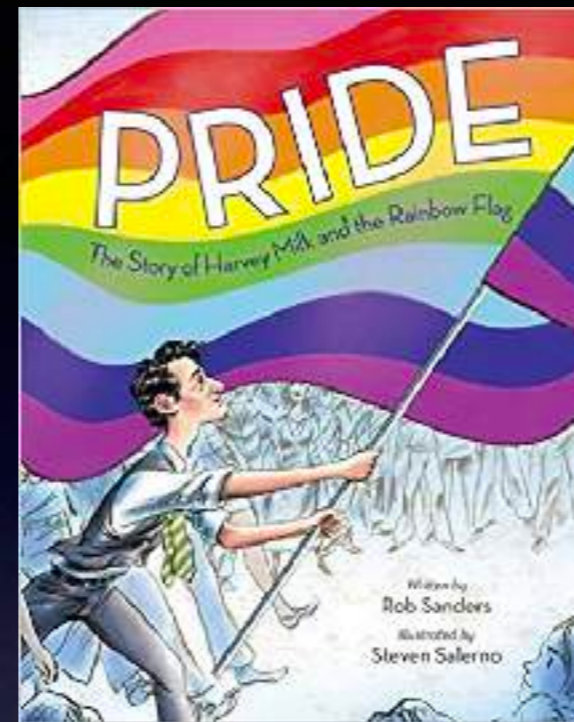
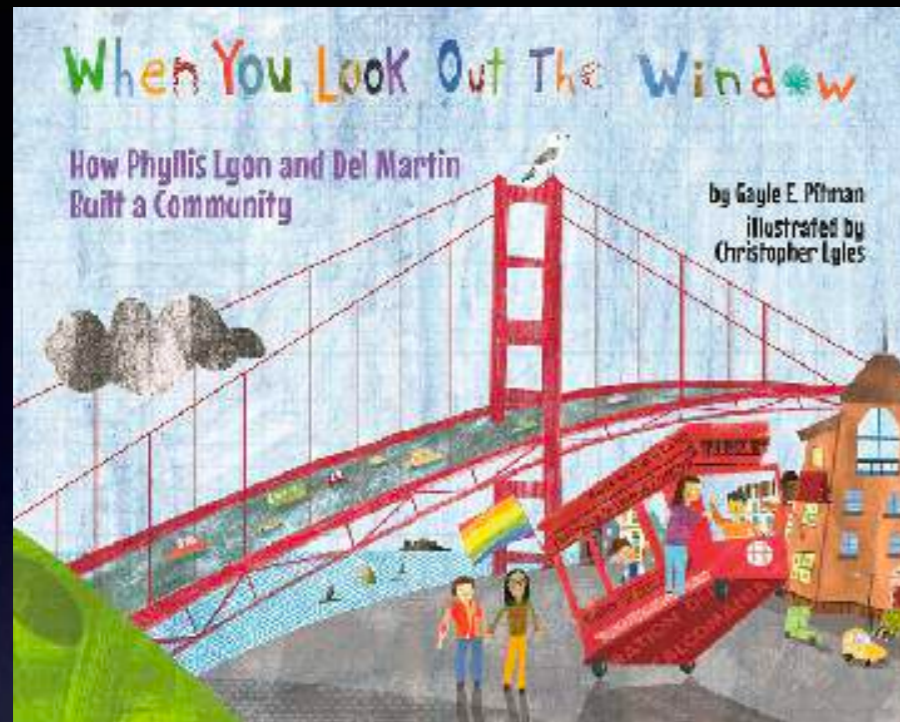
Books featuring gay characters



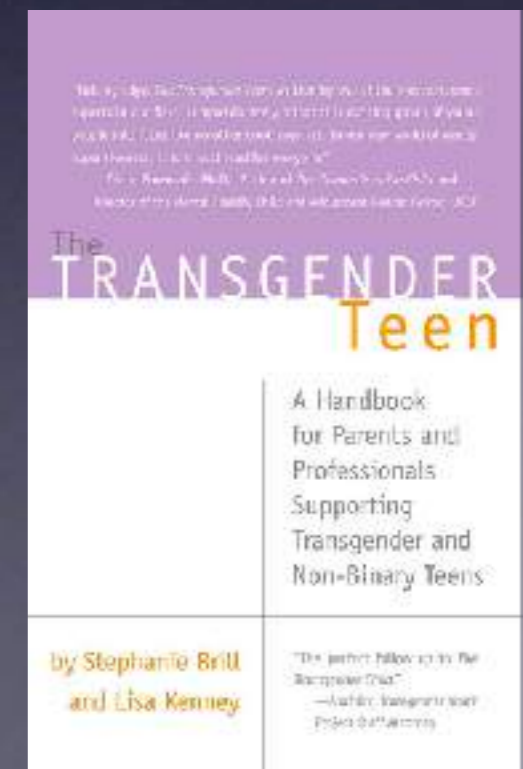
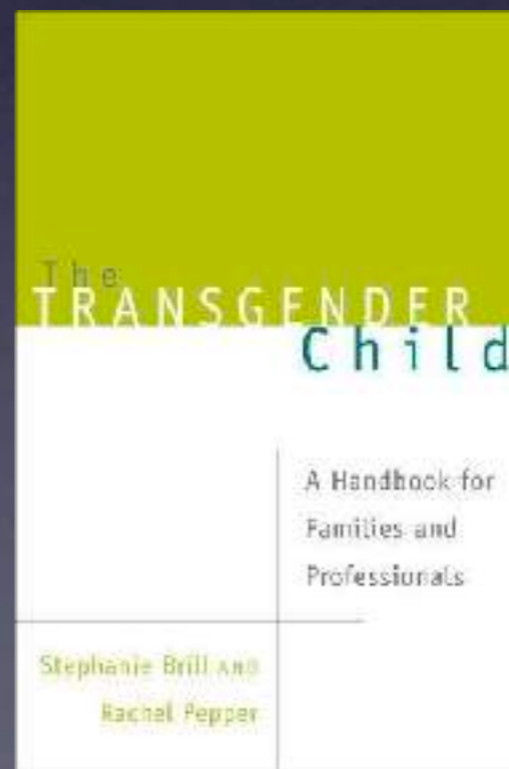
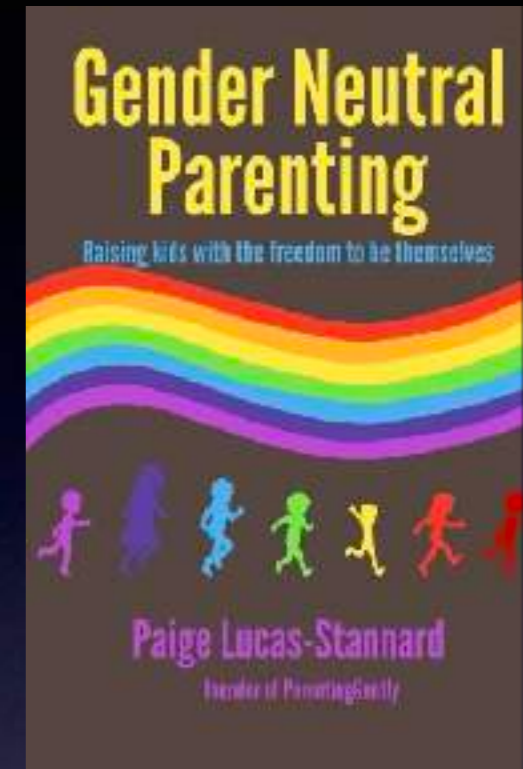
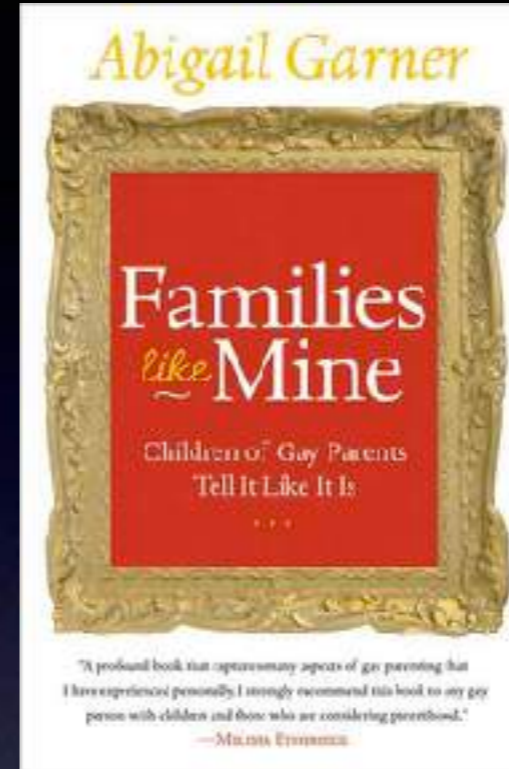
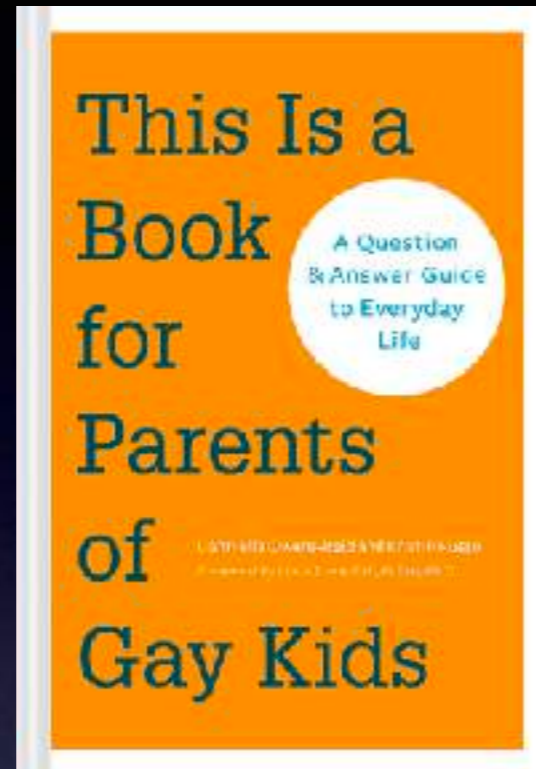
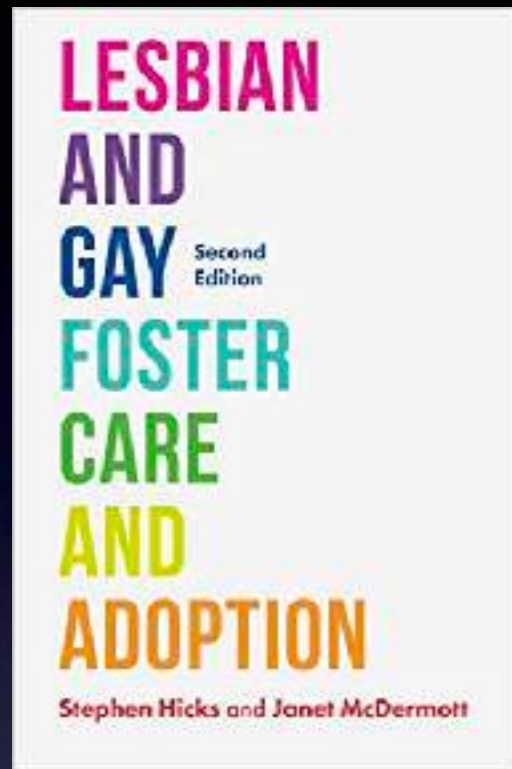
Books featuring gender diversity



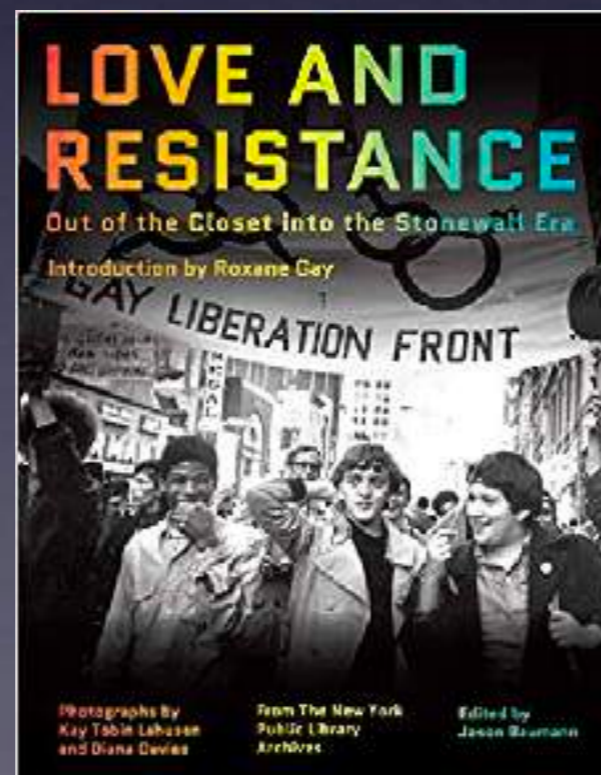
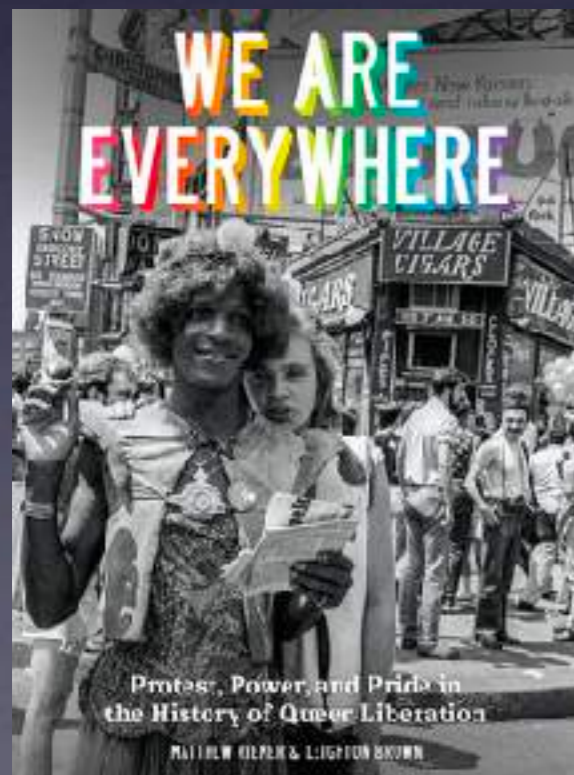
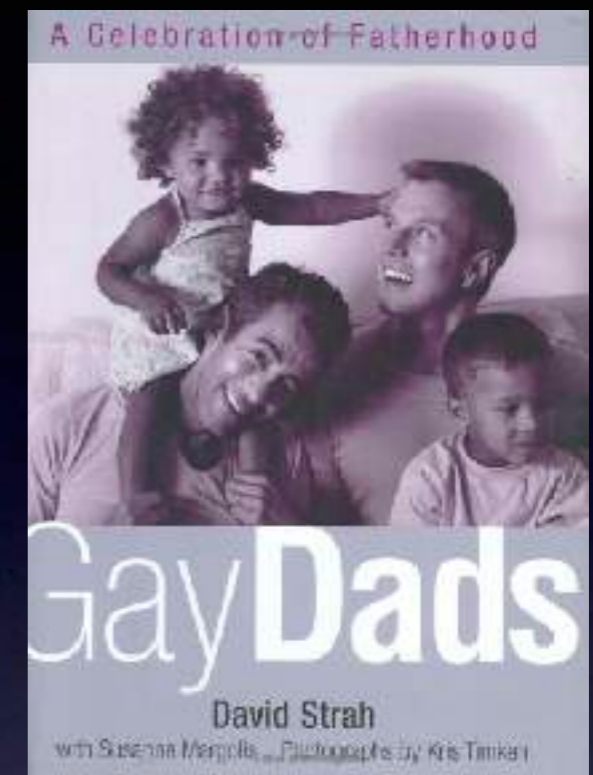
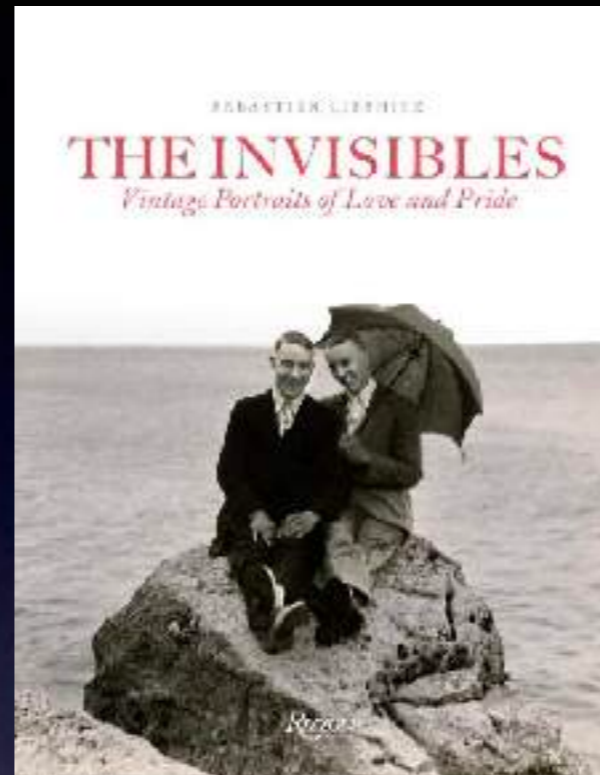
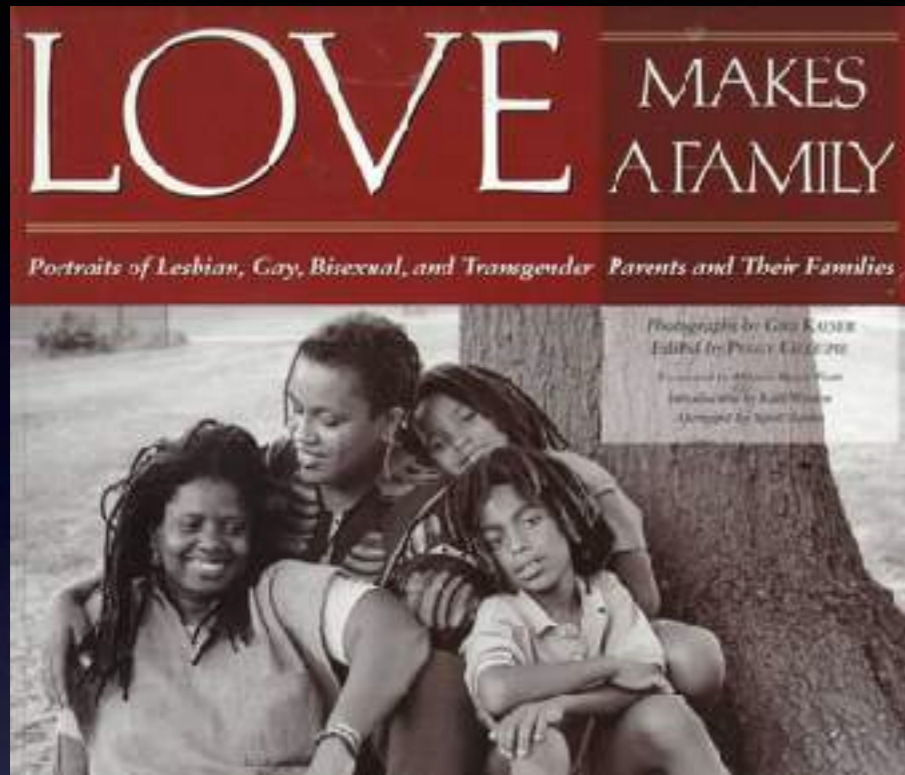
Books featuring LGBT History



Resource Books



Family Profile & Picture Books



Families like ours... Shutterfly!

Rich & Jared



Melody & Joe

their adoption, my partner Jared moved in and we co-parent. Our kids' school is welcoming to our family--they describe our children as happy and well-adjusted. Jared and I love our kids. To each of us, there is no question--we are a family.

I still call my mother several days each week. Days before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Proposition 8 in summer 2015, she shocked me again. Defiantly, she said, "All anyone would need is to see the great job that you and Jared are doing with those two kids of yours. If they knew how far your kids have come and how well they are doing with you, no one in their right mind could question what is right and what is wrong." I was moved and, once again, speechless. Finally, the moment I had anticipated had arrived.... and it took me by complete surprise. Right then I realized that, no matter how grown up the kid, it is always powerful to hear good things from one's parent.

I had kept the secret from my family and most friends for six months. But this day, I was driving home from my eighth full day of training to become a foster parent. It was late autumn in Southern California, sunroof open, windows down—I knew family and friends in the northeast were certainly not enjoying the same luxury. Everything was perfect and I was in a celebratory mood. I called my mother.

"You're gay, single, and probably too old. They are never going to give you a kid. And if they do, they are not going to give you a good one. I'm just concerned for you," Her words stunned me. "I'm afraid you will get hurt." Never in my imagining of this joyful moment did I expect to hear this.

Today, I have two beautiful, healthy, and considerate children who have been with me for eight years. About a year after I finalized

IV. ADVOCATING

- Media Coverage of our families/Commercials
- Marching in Pride Parades
- Nat'l Family Equality Day events
- Father's Day brunch / Mother's Day event
- Local, state & federal protection of our families

Parenting by Gays More Common in the South, Census Shows

By SABRINA TAVERNISE JAN. 18, 2011



Jacksonville, Fla., is home to Latisha Bines, far right, Misty Gray, at far end, and their family. Sarah Beth Glicksteen for The New York Times

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Being gay in this Southern city was once a lonely existence. Most people kept their sexuality to themselves, and they were reminded of the dangers of being openly gay when a gay church was bombed in the 1980s. These days, there are eight churches that openly welcome gay worshipers. One even caters to couples with children.

The New York Times

Patrick And Wade's Story From The Let Love Define Family Series

240



"Cephren came to us with his personality largely developed. He is very responsible, respectful and caring," said Patrick. "He's a negotiator, but rarely does he argue or raise his voice in anger. Given his family history, and what transpired for him to be removed from them, we are very proud of how positive and happy he is. Showing him how different his future possibilities are now from what they were is an ongoing task, but we are delighted to see him evolve and open up to them. He is a very sweet boy who loves to be around his family."



Michael Thad Carter



Los Angeles

New York City



Boston



Toronto





Toronto



**International
Family
Equality
Day**

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY EQUALITY DAY - MAY 6, 2018

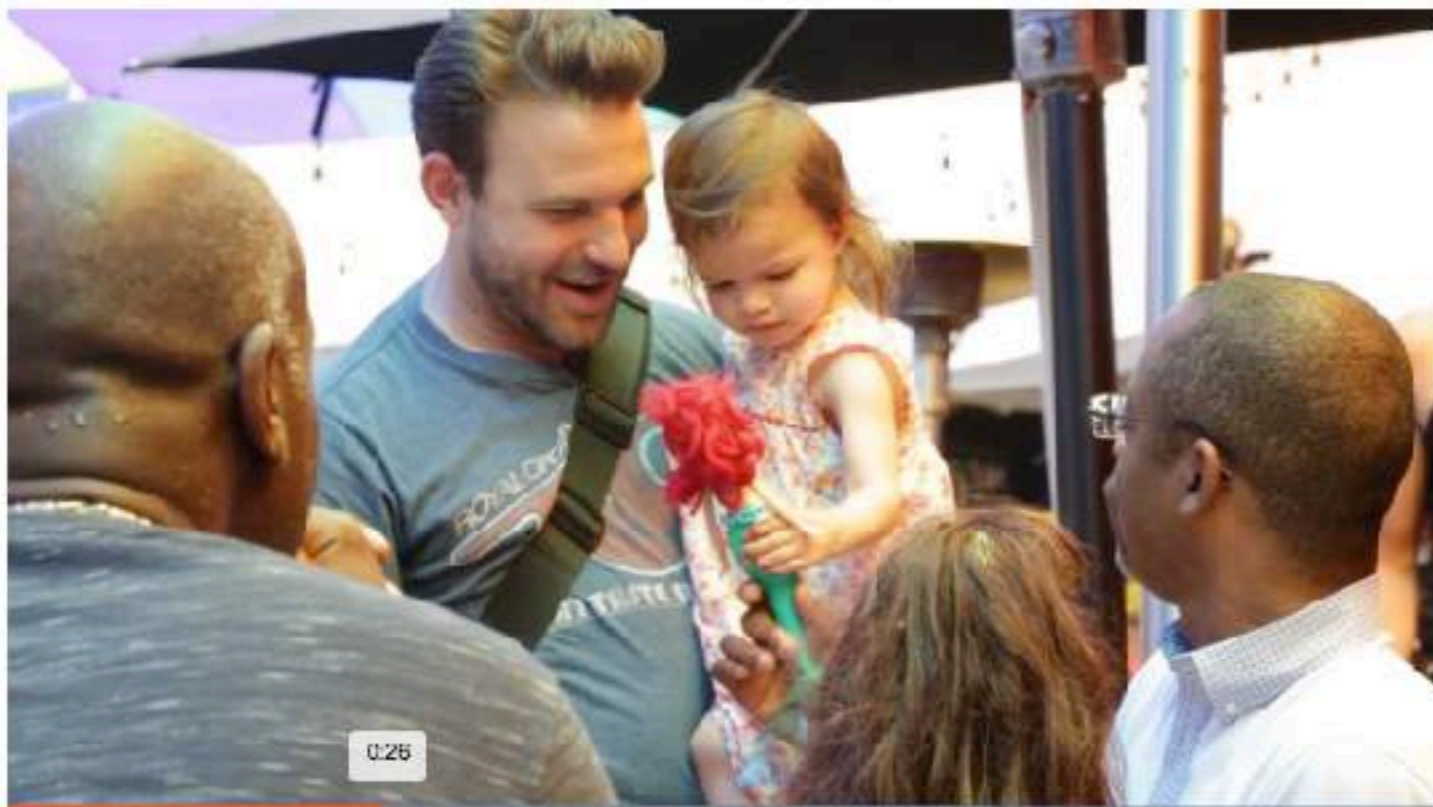
Family Equality Council is thrilled to once again join our partners across the globe in celebration of International Family Equality Day (IFED) – a world-wide celebration of the LGBTQ parenting and family community.

In 2017, we celebrated with partners in 44 countries and over 100 cities - in 2017, Family Equality Council will celebrate the sixth annual International Family Equality Day on May 6, 2018.

All over the world, more and more children are growing up in families where one or both of their parents identify as LGBTQ. Yet, each of these “rainbow families” have very different lived equality experiences, often depending not only on what country they live in but what street they live on. In some countries, our families enjoy equal rights and social recognition but in far too many others both parents and their children face overt discrimination and have to live under a constant threat of violence.



Father's Day at The Abbey



Every year The Abbey, a popular gay bar in West Hollywood, hosts a father's day brunch in conjunction with the Pop Luck Club.

V. DEVELOPING A PARENTING STYLE

- Reactive vs. Proactive
- “Making sense of the world for our kids”
- Coming Out

Pre-Answering the questions

Do I have a mommy?

Where's my daddy?

What does “gay” mean? What is a “faggot?”

Will I be gay?

Q&A with LGBT Parents

How was the foster/adoption
process for you as
an LGBT family?

How do you feel you were treated as an LGBT couple in the foster/adoption process?

What would you like
professionals to know about
working with LGBT families?

FURTHER RESOURCES

Human Rights Campaign (www.hrc.org)

School Library Journal (www.slj.com)

Family Equality Council (www.familyequality.org)

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (www.colage.org)

Movement Advancement Project (www.lgbtmap.org)