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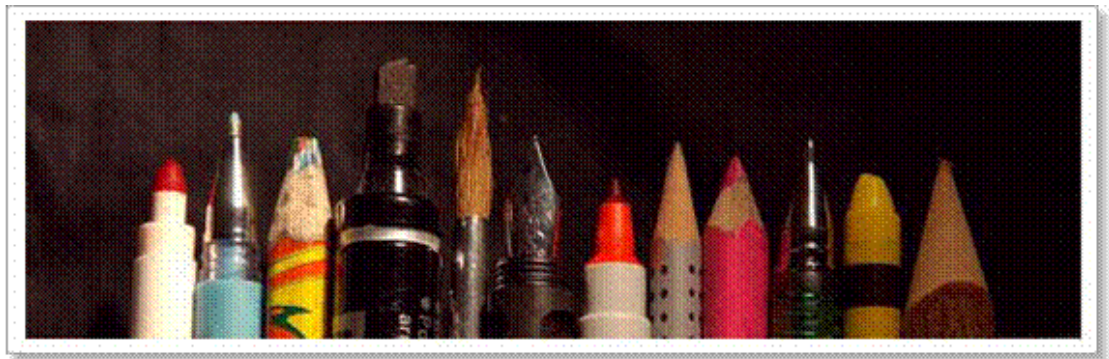


University
of Worcester

Family Diversities Reading Resource

Second Edition

Comprehensively Revised and Updated



150+ picture books to
value children's families

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Notes for Readers

The books included in this resource are those generally available in the Library at Bishop Grosseteste University in Lincoln and in The Hive at the University of Worcester.

When accessing the books through other libraries, or making purchases, readers should be aware that, in some cases, other editions are available. Some of the books are not currently in print. However, most are readily accessible to purchase online.

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Foreword

This project began in the autumn of 2005, when *Teachers' TV* recorded part of a programme at what is now Bishop Grosseteste University. The input from students to this event was highly significant, and, although much of the footage was not included in the final programme, the issues which were highlighted suggested that there was an interest in engaging with the representation of families in primary school classrooms.

A selection of children's books showing diverse families was introduced into sessions as a part of the BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS (Qualified Teacher Status). This generated interesting discussions, particularly about how children see their own homes and family backgrounds represented (and unrepresented) in primary schools, and how schools can begin to address homophobic and other bullying.

The *Family Diversities Reading Group* began to meet formally in mid-2007, consisting of the Teaching Resources Librarian, students from across the three years of the degree programme and a member of academic staff. A collection of books was gathered from the Library at Bishop Grosseteste University and the range enlarged by further purchases. The rationale for the project was underpinned by research suggesting that difficult and controversial issues were not being addressed by providers of initial teacher education.¹ Furthermore, cross-cutting cultural perspectives suggested that children in other global settings were being exposed to such complex or controversial issues.² This raised questions as to how schools might address and explore, in their classrooms and libraries, the diverse family experiences of children. That the family life of children should be regarded as difficult or controversial to address in schools provided a further catalyst for exploration and analysis.

This project set out to develop an annotated bibliography suitable for use by teachers, students and teacher educators. Whilst it is by no means exhaustive, the intention was to provide a range of age-appropriate books that could be used by carers and parents, by schools, and in other child-care settings, to value and to support a diverse community of learners. Additionally, the intention was to provide a resource that could be used by schools in communities with apparently limited diversity to help children and teachers to consider the nature of society and family in the twenty-first century. The project also identified a range of books to help to consider difference in a range of forms. These texts provide a more generic approach to difference, which teachers (and others) may use to facilitate discussion and to support children's lived experience.

The collection of books has been used with students on a variety of courses since 2007, including degrees in Primary Education, Education Studies and Learning Support. It has also been used as the basis for in-service sessions with staff in primary schools. This revised edition contains a significant number of additional publications, reflecting the increasing availability of books exploring diverse family life. The original project group was self-selecting from across the three years of the BA (Hons) in Primary Education with QTS. This revised edition has been developed by Janice and Richard, with support from colleagues. Thanks must be expressed to the Head of Library Services at Bishop Grosseteste University, Emma Sansby, and to all the staff in the University Library for their support.

Janice Morris
Teaching Resources Librarian, Bishop Grosseteste University

Dr Richard Woolley
Head of Centre for Education and Inclusion, University of Worcester

¹ Woolley, R. (2010) *Tackling Controversial Issues in the Primary School: facing life's challenges with your learners*. London: Routledge.

² Harber, C. and Serf, J. (2007) *Comparative Education and Quality Global Learning: engaging with controversial issues in South Africa and the UK*. Birmingham: TIDE.

Introduction

To think of children's families as being a source of controversial issues in primary schools is challenging: we do not choose where or when we are born; we do not select our birth parents; and we may have little control over the circumstances that affect our patterns of home life as we grow up.

Children may live with one or two parents, their parents may live separately and have new partners or spouses giving them more than two parents. They may have been adopted and be aware of this and have questions about their birth parents and the circumstances surrounding their adoption. Their parents or carers may be bisexual, gay, lesbian or transgender. They may live in circumstances that are different from their peers: in houses of varying sizes, in flats, on boats or in trailers, in urban or rural locations, or in temporary accommodation. Children may live in a family of two people – comprising themselves and an adult; they may have siblings or may live in an extended family made up of different generations. Some children will live apart from their brothers or sisters. Other children will live in more than one location, sharing their time between different adults. Some are looked after by a foster carer and may or may not have contact with their parent(s). Some children are separated from a parent who works away regularly, is serving in the armed services, is in prison, or has died.

Classrooms include children with diverse experiences of family life. Sometimes these circumstances change dramatically and unexpectedly and this raises many questions in their minds. The level of security and care experienced by children can vary over time. It is in this context that teachers and other childcare professionals seek to nurture individual development and to promote learning. How we as teachers seek to maximise learning is affected by the ways in which we appreciate the backgrounds and life experiences of the children in our care.

It is often the differences between children that impact on the ways in which they relate to one another. Bullying can arise from perceived differences in family income, social class, ethnicity, attitudes to school, ability and disability, sexual orientation, personality traits, confidence, family background — indeed any difference (whether real or perceived).

This project focuses on similarity and difference, particularly in relation to differences in families, to consider how teachers can be proactive in promoting diversity and valuing difference. The books reviewed in this project provide quality resources to encourage discussion and support learning. They seek to develop respect for those living in circumstances similar to or other than our own, and to help children to see positive images of their own situations.

Sometimes we communicate what we value through our words, actions, attitudes and the resources we make available in our classrooms. However, we can also reveal what we value by the things that we omit. If the texts that we share with children always show families as having two parents of different gender, how does this impact on those living with another model of family life? If a child is being raised by their grandmother or an uncle, how can they find positive images of that setting that give reassurance and value their experience?

Users of this resource will make their own judgements on the quality of the books included. We would encourage this, and acknowledge that some people will disagree with the books that we have selected and rejected. Our intention is to highlight books with high quality stories and illustrations. Where we feel there are limitations, we identify these in order to help users of this resource to make informed decisions about the resources they use with their learners.

Books by Subject

Adoption

And Tango Makes Three
 Chester and Daisy Move On
 Dad David, Baba Chris and Me
 Dragon Loves Penguin
 Family for Sammy, A
 Flora's Family
 I Wished for You
 Josh and Jaz Have Three Mums
 Milly, Molly and Different Dads
 Most Precious Present in the World, The
 Mother Bridge of Love
 Mummy for Owen, A
 My Family is Forever
 My Two Dads
 Nutmeg Gets Adopted
 Picnic in the Park
 Teazles' Baby Bunny, The
 Tell Me Again
 Two Dads
 We Are Adopted
 We Belong Together

Gender and Identity

10,000 Dresses
 Amazing Grace
 Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?
 Boy Who Cried Fabulous, The
 Clive and His Babies
 Football Star
 I am Jazz
 I'm a Girl
 Introducing Teddy
 Jump!
 King and King
 Made by Raffi
 Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress
 Pass it, Polly
 Pearl Power
 Prince Cinders
 Princess Smarty Pants
 Rosie Revere, Engineer
 Story of Ferdinand, The
 Toby's Doll House
 Two Homes
 What Are You Playing at?
 William's Doll

Grandparents

Azzi In Between
 Balloon for Grandad, A
 Catherine's Story
 Dominic Grows Sweetcorn
 Elephant Dance
 Grace and Family
 Grandfather and I
 Grandmother and I
 Grandma's Saturday Soup
 Gregory Cool
 Harry's Home
 Happy Birthday Jamela!
 Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers
 Kicking a Ball
 Mama Loves Me from Far Away
 My Dadima Wears a Sari
 My Two Grandads
 My Two Grannies
 No Mirrors in My Nana's House
 Silver Shoes
 There's Going to be a Baby
 Where's Jamela?

Families: All Sorts

All Kinds of Families'
 Everywhere Babies
 Families
 Family Book, The
 Families, Families, Families!
 Letters Around the World
 Meet the Parents
 Picnic in the Park
 Welcome to the Family
 Who's in My Family

Mixed Race / Dual Heritage Families

15 Things NOT to do with a Baby
 African Princess, An
 Anna Hibiscus' Song
 Balloon for Grandad, A
 Grace and Family
 Lucy's Quarrel
 My Two Grandads
 My Two Grannies
 Silver Shoes
 That's My Mum

Black and Asian Families**Black**

15 Things NOT to do with a Baby
 African Princess, An
 Amazing Grace
 Anna Hibiscus' Song
 Boy on the Beach, The
 Colour of Home, The
 Day with Daddy, A
 Dominic Grows Sweetcorn
 Ella Moves House
 Football Star
 Grace & Family
 Grandfather and I
 Grandmother and I
 Goggle-Eyed Goats
 Grandma's Saturday Soup
 Happy Birthday Jamela!
 Lucy's Quarrel
 Lulu Reads to Zeki
 Most Important Gift of All, The
 Mum's Late
 My Two Grandads
 My Two Grannies
 No Mirrors in My Nana's House
 Our Gracie Aunt
 Silver Shoes
 So Much?
 That's My Mum
 Where's Jamela?
 Will There be a Lap for Me?

Asian

Busy Week, A
 Cleversticks
 Elephant Dance
 My Dadima Wears a Sari
 Nadia's Hands
 New Year's Reunion
 Pass It, Polly
 Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek
 What Shall I Make?

Carers / Children in Care / Looked After Children

Chester and Daisy Move On
 Family for Sammy
 Milly, Molly and Different Dads
 Mummy for Owen
 Nutmeg Gets Adopted
 Our Gracie Aunt

Difference / Acceptance / Inclusion

10,000 Dresses
 African Princess, An
 Amazing Grace
 And Tango Makes Three
 Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?
 Boy Who Cried Fabulous, The
 Broken Bird
 But Martin!
 Cleversticks
 Dad and Me in the Morning
 Daft Bat
 Different Dragon, The
 Dragon Loves Penguin
 Driftwood Ball
 Giraffes Can't Dance
 I'm Special I'm Me!
 Introducing Teddy
 It's Okay to be Different
 Jump
 Made by Raffi
 Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress
 Lion Who Wanted to Love, The
 Mama Zooms
 Mice Next Door, The
 Milly, Molly and Different Dads
 One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads
 Pass it, Polly
 Princess Smarty Pants
 Purim Superhero, The
 Ringo the Flamingo
 Something Else
 Story of Ferdinand, The
 Two Eggs, Please
 Two Left Feet
 We Are Britain!
 You're Different and That's Super

You're Too Big

Families: Two Mums

Different Dragon, The
 Donovan's Big Day
 Emma and Meesha My Boy: a two mom story
 Heather Has Two Mummies
 If I had a Hundred Mummies
 Josh and Jaz Have Three Mums
 Mommy, Mama and Me
 Two Mums and a Menagerie

Families: Two Dads

And Tango Makes Three
 Baking with Dad
 Dad David Baba Chris and ME
 Daddy, Papa and Me
 My Dads
 Milly, Molly and Different Dads
 One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads
 Purim Superhero, The
 Stella Brings the Family
 Two Dads

Divorce and Family Separation

Are We Nearly There Yet?
 Balloon for Grandad, A
 Chester and Daisy Move On
 Day with Daddy, A
 Do You Sing Twinkle
 Every Second Friday
 Grace and Family
 I don't Want to Talk About It
 I Still Love You Dad
 Journey, The
 Living with Mum and Living with Dad
 Milly, Molly and Different Dads
 Mum and Dad Glue
 On the Day His Daddy Left
 Standing on My Own Two Feet
 There for You
 Two Homes
 Two Nests
 Visitors Who Came to Stay
 When Daddy's Truck Picks Me Up

Single Parent: Father

Are We Nearly There Yet?
 Baking with Dad
 Day with Daddy, A
 Don't Let Go!
 Every Second Friday
 Gorilla
 Milly, Molly and Different Dads
 Mia's Story
 My Mum and Our Dad
 My Dad Used to be so Cool
 Peek! A Thai Hide and Seek
 Two Homes
 Visitors Who Came to Stay, The
 When Daddy's Truck Picks Me Up

Single Parent: Mother

Are We Nearly There Yet?
 Ella Moves House
 First Day of School, The
 Football Star
 Grace & Family
 Happy Birthday Jamela!
 Harry's Home
 Mama Loves Me from Away
 Mama Zooms
 Mum's Late
 My Mum Goes to Work
 My Mum is a Wonder
 My Mum and Our Dad
 On the Day his Daddy Left
 Pearl Power
 Princess and the Castle, The
 Supermum
 What Shall I Make?
 Where's Jamela

Step: Families

Do You Sing Twinkle?
 Ella Moves House
 Grace & Family
 My Dads
 Prince Cinders
 Princess and the Castle, The
 Visitors Who Came to Stay, The

Traveller Families

Christy's Dream
 Ossiri and the Bala Mengru
 Rauni and the Rye
 Where's My Teddy
 Yokki and the Parno Gry

Working Away from Home

Come Home Soon
 My Daddy's Going Away
 New Year's Reunion, A
 When Daddy's Truck Picks Me Up

Parents in Prison

Dad's in Prison
 Mama Loves Me from Away
 When Dad was Away

Refugees and Migration

Ali's Story
 Azzi in Between
 Colour of Home, The
 Dominic Grows Sweetcorn
 Here I am
 Journey, The
 Petar's Song
 Silence Seeker, The

Living Alone

Harry's Home
 Way Home

Minority Ethnic Families

15 Things NOT to do with a Baby	That's my Mum
African Princess, An	Thunderboy Jr.
Amazing Grace	Two Dads
Ali's Story	We are Britain!
Anna Hibiscus' Song	Welcome to the World Baby
Azzi In Between	What Shall I Make?
Balloon for Grandad, A	Where's Jamela?
Boy on the Beach, The	Will There be a Lap for Me?
Busy Week, A	
Cleversticks	
Colour of Home, The	
Day with Daddy, A	
Dominic Grows Sweetcorn	
Elephant Dance	
Ella Moves House	
Football Star	
Friday Nights of Nana, The	
Grace & Family	
Grandfather and I	
Grandma's Saturday Soup	
Goggle-Eyed Goat	
Happy Birthday Jamela!	
Lucy's Quarrel	
Lulu Reads to Zeki	
Mabrook! A World of Muslim Weddings	
Most Important Gift of All, The	
Mum's Late	
My Dadima Wears a Sari	
My Mum is a Wonder	
My Two Grandads	
My Two Grannies	
Nadia's Hands	
New Year's Reunion, A	
No Mirror in my Nana's House	
Our Gracie Aunt	
Pass it, Polly	
Peek! A Thai Hide and Seek	
Petar's Song	
Princess and the Castle, The	
Ramadan Moon	
Rebecca's Passover	
Silent Shoes	
Silver	
So Much	

Families: Mum and Dad

15 Things NOT to do with a Baby
10,000 Dresses
African Princess, The
Ali's Story
Anna Hibiscus' Song
Azzi in Between
Balloon for Grandad, A
Boy on the Beach, The
Boy Who Cried Fabulous, The
Busy Week, A
Catherine's Story
Christy's Dream
Colour of Home, The
Come Home Soon
Daddy's Lullaby
Friday Nights of Nana, The
Goggle-Eyed Goat
Grandma's Saturday Soup
Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute?
Kicking a Ball
Letters from Around the World
Lucy's Quarrel
Lulu Reads to Zeki
Made by Raffi
Mirror
Most Important Gift of All, The
Mabrook! A World of Muslim Weddings
My Family is Forever
My Two Grandads
My Two Grannies
Nadia's Hands
New Year's Reunion
Our House on the Hill
Petar's Story
Piggybook
Ramadan Moon
Silver Shoes
There's Going to be a Baby
That's My Mum
Thunder Boy Jr.

Family Life

15 Things NOT to do with a Baby
 10,000 Dresses
 African Princess, An
 Amazing Grace
 Anna Hibiscus' Song
 Are We Nearly There Yet?
 Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?
 Baking with Dad
 Balloon for Granddad, A
 Boy on the Beach, The
 Boy Who Cried Fabulous, The
 Busy Week, A
 Catherine's Story
 Christy's Dream
 Dad and Me in the Morning
 Daddy's Lullaby
 Daddy, Papa and Me
 Day with Daddy, A
 Different Dragon, The
 Dominic Grows Sweetcorn
 Donovan's Big Day
 Don't Let Go!
 Ella Moves House
 Emma and Meesha My Boy: a two mom
 story
 First Day of School, The
 Football Star
 Friday Nights of Nana, The
 Goggled-Eyed Goats
 Gorilla
 Grandfather and I
 Grandma's Saturday Soup
 Happy Birthday Jamela!
 Harry's Home
 I am Jazz
 I'm Special, I'm Me
 If I Had a Hundred Mummies
 Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers
 Kicking a Ball
 Lucy's Quarrel
 Lulu Reads to Zeki
 Mabrook! A World of Muslim Weddings
 Made by Raffi
 Mama Zooms
 Mia's Story
 Meet the Parents
 Milly, Molly and Different Dads
 Mirror
 Mommy, Mama and Me
 Most Important Gift of All, The
 Mum's Late
 My Dads
 My Dad Used to Be so Cool
 My Daddy's Going Away
 My Dadima Wears a Sari
 My Family is Forever
 My Mum and Our Dad
 My Mum Goes to Work
 My Mum is a Wonder
 My Two Grandads
 My Two Grannies
 Nadia's Hands
 New Year's Reunion, A
 Our House on the Hill
 Pass it, Polly
 Pearl Power
 Piggybook
 Princess and the Castle, The
 Purim Superhero, The
 Ramadan Moon
 Rebecca's Passover
 Silver Shoes
 So Much
 Supermum
 That's My Mum
 There's Going to be a Baby
 Those Messy Hempels
 Thunder Boy Jr
 Two Mums and a Menagerie
 Welcome to the Family
 What Does Daddy Do?
 What Shall I Make?
 When Daddy's Truck Picks Me Up
 Where's Jamela?
 Where's My Teddy
 Will There be a Lap for Me?

There are many other books featuring families that are included in our resource packs:

The Transitions Reading Resource

Over 200 high quality children's picture books featuring changes in life, including moving home, bereavement, a new baby, a new parent or carer as well as other aspects of change faced by children.

<http://libguides.bishopg.ac.uk/c.php?g=164363&p=2986796>

The 'Disability' Reading Resource

High quality children's picture books including a range of needs and disabilities experienced by children and their families. It focusses on a *social model* of disability.

<http://libguides.bishopg.ac.uk/c.php?g=164363&p=2986796>

The Family Diversities Reading Resource

(i.e. this resource) can be accessed at:

<http://libguides.bishopg.ac.uk/childrensliterature>

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Annotated Bibliography

15 Things NOT to do with a Baby

By Margaret McAllister

Illustrated by Holly Sterling

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London

2015

ISBN 9781847807533 (McAllister, 2015)

This amusing book does just what the title suggests: it explores things not to do with a baby! It is designed to be read with children who have a new brother or sister in the family, in order to help them to consider how to relate to their sibling. Beginning with the amusing suggestions of what not to do, it later moves to suggestions that will help to welcome the baby into the family and build positive and accepting relationships. The book features a dual heritage family.

The illustrations are very colourful, and add to the humour by showing some of the more unlikely things that should not be done with the baby: pegging it to the washing line, sending it up in a hot air balloon, giving it to a kangaroo or passing it to an octopus to cuddle!

The overall feel is very warm-hearted. The author suggests that although the baby is referred to as "he" in the text, the pronoun could be changed as is appropriate if the book is read aloud. As the illustrations are very inclusive, perhaps the text could have remained non-gender specific. That said, it is a relatively minor weakness.



10,000 Dresses

By Marcus Ewert

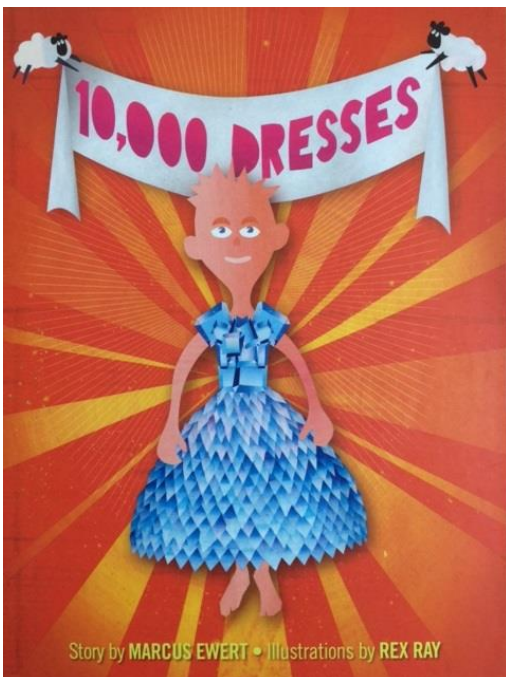
Illustrations by Rex Ray

Published by Seven Stories Press, New York

2008

ISBN 9781583328500 (Ewert, 2008)

Bailey dreams about dresses every night: each one is different, and there are ten thousand of them. They are made of precious stones and the light bounces off the crystals causing rainbows to jump out.



In the morning Bailey shares the dream with mum, but she wonders what Bailey is talking about. The next night Bailey dreams of a dress made of lilies, roses and honeysuckle, but in the morning dad does not understand when he looks up from his gardening. On the next night Bailey dreams of a dress made of windows which show amazing places around the world. Bailey's brother does not understand when he hears of the dream in the morning. Bailey's dad, mum and brother all tell Bailey that he is a boy and that boys don't wear dresses.

Bailey runs down the street, and finds a girl making dresses. She is concerned that everything she makes ends up looking the same. Together they make a dress from mirrors, which do not show places around the world, but do reflect themselves.

This is a powerful story of how our dreams may help us to understand who we are, or who we aspire to be. Whilst Bailey's family does not understand, Bailey does find a kindred spirit and is able to reflect on identity. Bailey is able to help Laurel, the older girl, to realise her ambitions, by using the creativity and imagination that is inherently part of Bailey's identity. That courage helps Bailey's dream begin to come true.

The idea of windows and mirrors has appeared in various literature in recent years: windows help us to look out onto the world and to appreciate it, and mirrors enable us to reflect and deepen our understanding of ourselves. Standing together, their dresses would reflect infinitely, providing a powerful metaphor of the power of gaining an ever deepening understanding of oneself.

It is interesting to note that Bailey and Laurel are the only two characters that we see, the others are partially seen (feet, a back view, a hand or legs). This powerful symbolism shows how these characters are developing a full, rounded understanding or view of themselves, whilst the others have only a partial appreciation of the world around them and the needs and identity of Bailey.

African Princess, An

By Lyra Edmonds

Illustrated by Anne Wilson

Published by Doubleday, Sine Loco

2004

ISBN 0385606176 (Edmonds, 2004)

This story is based on the author's life and highlights a family with different ethnic backgrounds. Lyra's dad is white and her mum is black. This book is excellent in highlighting that every family is different.

When Lyra is told that she is an African princess, the children at school say, 'Don't be silly!' These responses encourage Lyra's mama and dad to take her to Africa so she can explore her family tree and discover who she is. The insertion of the speech - 'Remember to be proud of who you are' - towards the end of the story gives the reader an important message that difference and diversity should be valued.

The illustrations are vibrant and display Lyra's journey and excitement. The story may engage girls in particular due to the princess theme. However, the underlying messages about acceptance and inclusion will hopefully attract all children and can lend themselves to classroom use and discussion.

Some of the text has slightly complex ideas and contains figurative language such as '...palm trees everywhere wave their arms at me.' Although this creates an image for the reader, it may need some explanation. Therefore parts of this text would be more appropriate for an older child when reading independently.



Ali's Story

By Salvador Maldonado

Illustrated by Andy Glynne

Published by Wayland Books

2015

ISBN 9780750292078 (Maldonado, 2015)

This is the story of Ali's journey from Afghanistan. There, he lived in the hills in an area that was not rich, where many people lived in tents. When the war starts to get worse, the family decides that it is time to flee to a safer place. They head for Europe, but Ali's parents cannot complete the journey as they do not have passports; Ali continues to travel with his grandmother.

They travel on a 'plane, believing that his parents are not far behind. He misses his parents greatly, but gradually starts to learn English and to play with friends. After four years they receive a 'phone call – his cousin has found his dad. Ali is very happy. He hopes that at some point soon they may be reunited.

This is an accessible story about one child's journey: the real-life account of a ten year old refugee. Told in his own words, Ali shares his feelings, hopes and frustrations. This is accompanied with powerful and evocative illustrations which enhance the sense of emotion. This book may be useful for teachers and parents/carers to use when addressing news stories about refugees or with children who have had a similar experience, especially as it is based in real life testimony.



All Families Are Special

By Norma Simon

Illustrated by Teresa Flavin

Published by Albert Whitman and Company, Morton Grove, Illinois

2003

ISBN 0807521752 (Simon, 2003)

This is a lovely book in which children in a classroom tell their teacher all about their families. It is a very inclusive book with a whole host of family models represented throughout.

The main message is that all families are special, whatever their make-up. The language is American (e.g. mom). A diverse range of ethnic backgrounds is represented. The book represents single parent, divorced, nuclear, adoptive and extended families, those from different parts of the world, twins, step-families, families separated by distance and families of different sizes.

The book concludes with a discussion of the sad and happy times experienced by families. There is a positive message that families are there for each other in the sad times and celebrate together in the good times. This might be a little idealistic – but overall the portrayal of diverse family life provides a useful and positive resource for any classroom.

The book has appealing illustrations which take up the majority of each page. It is appropriate for use with children in Key Stage 1 as a shared text, and for any discussion about *My Family* in primary school classrooms.



All Kinds of Families

Illustrated by Rachel Fuller
Published by Tango Books, London
2010
ISBN 9781857077568 (Fuller, 2010)

All Kinds of Families is a *lift the flap* book.

The flaps conceal different aspects of family life, and make an ideal mechanism for discussing the concept of family and family diversities with children. The illustrations are clear and relatively simple and ensure that the focus is on the families presented, rather than any additional detail. At the end of the book is a wipe-clean board where a child can draw their own family.



Amazing Grace

By Mary Hoffman

Illustrated by Caroline Binch

Published by Frances Lincoln, London

1991

ISBN 0711206708 (Hoffman, 1991)

Grace loves stories in a range of formats and loves to make up her own. She dearly wants to play Peter Pan in the school play, but she is a girl and she is black. Her classmates comment on this.

Grace has a wonderful imagination and loves to play out adventure stories. Her imagination crosses traditional gender stereotypes and she imagines being a pirate, doctor, soldier and explorer. She lives with her mother and grandmother – both of whom are drawn upon to participate in her stories at times. In the end, Grace gets to play Peter Pan. This is a very affirming story of being able to achieve that to which you aspire.

The illustrations are colourful and appealing and take the form of watercolour style pictures. Each page includes a detailed illustration, with a small element of text.

This book would be ideal as a shared text with a class of children in Key Stage 1 or lower Key Stage 2. It would also be suitable as a general text within a school library. It is particularly effective in challenging gender stereotypes.



And Tango Makes Three

By Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

Illustrated by Henry Cole

Published by Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, London

2005

ISBN 0689878451 (Richardson & Parnell, 2005)

This is an excellent book and the reviewers' overwhelming favourite within the collection.

It is about the relationship between two male penguins and how, with the zoo keeper's help, they hatch out a baby penguin and make a family. This book is excellent in addressing family diversity and instantly highlights this within the second page which comments on: 'Everyday families of all kinds...' It has appealing, touching, emotion-filled illustrations and is very suitable for reading aloud. It is ideal for use within the classroom as a shared text and for independent readers.

The book is based on a true story, which contributes a realistic quality to the text and adds weight to the issues raised. Furthermore, its strength is how it subtly and cleverly presents a loving family through the use of animal characters; this would be of great interest to children. This is an affirming story that shows how a couple who wanted to have a baby like their peers came to be a family of three.

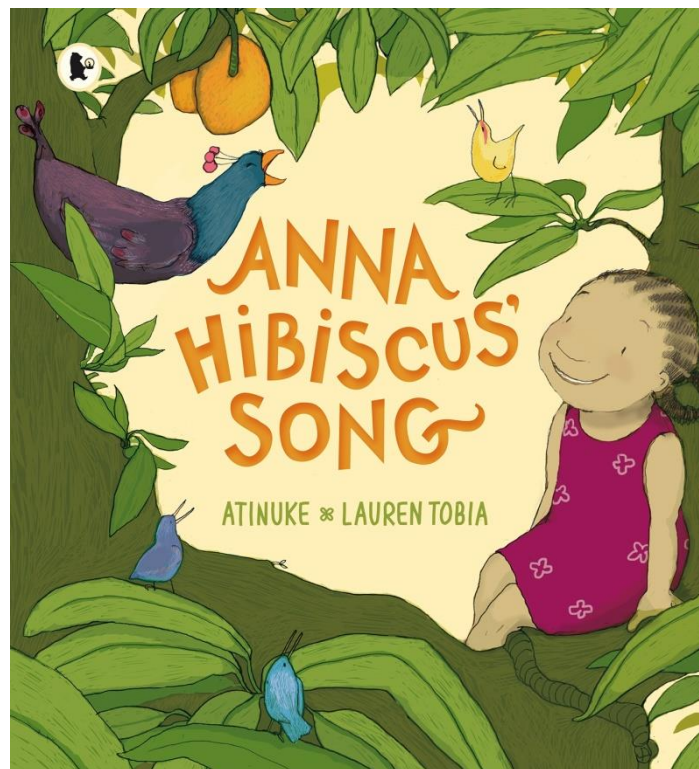


Anna Hibiscus' Song

By Atinuke and Lauren Tobia
Published by Walker Books, London
2011
ISBN 97814633841690100 (Tobia & Tobia, 2011)

Anna Hibiscus lives in Africa with her family. There are grandparents, aunties, cousins and her parents. She is a very happy child, and asks her different relatives what she can do to express her happiness. Each time she engages in an activity, her happiness grows. Finally, she sits in a tree and surveys the happy scene. Birds come to join her, and as they sing together she realises that singing is the way that she can truly express her happiness.

This is a vibrant optimistic book which shows life with an extended family, and a child with dual heritage parents. It is a real celebration of joy and provides a catalyst to discuss with children what makes them happy as well as showing them positive interactions between generations.



Cover image by permission of the rights holder.

Are We Nearly There?

By Louis Baum

Illustrated by Paddy Bouma

Published by Bodley Head Ltd, London

1986

ISBN 0370306929 (Baum, 1986)

This book outlines a story about a day out a boy has with his dad.

At first it may appear to the reader that the father is a single parent, however the end of the story reveals that the dad has in fact had a day out with his son who does not live with him, but lives with his mother instead. Because this revelation is made towards the end of the story it subtly and calmly deals with the topic of family separation. The expectation is that father and son are travelling to a special destination. The fact that this is mum's home is not anticipated. This, in particular, is a strength of the book. Because this book is written in the third person it allows a child whose family has separated to understand that it doesn't just happen to them.

The story could be read in other ways: Simon may live equally between mum and dad's homes, or indeed he might live with his dad and be visiting mum for a while. This is not clear and provides a variety of opportunities for discussion with children.

The repetitive dialogue between father and son make it an ideal read aloud text for young children. The simple vocabulary, supported by colourful, realistic illustrations, would most probably appeal to younger readers.



Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?

By Sarah Savage

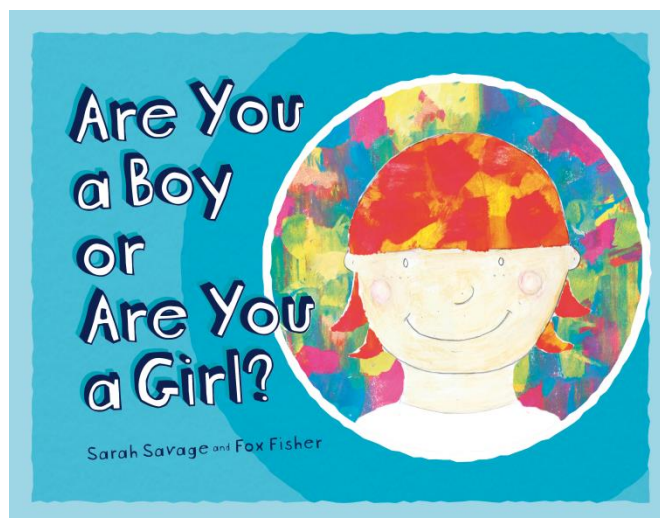
Illustrated by Fox Fisher

Published by Jessica Kingsley

2017

ISBN 9781785922671 (Savage, 2017)

Tiny and Tiny's family have just moved to a new town because dad has a new job. We see the new house, the new bedroom, the specially built new bed that looks like a castle. Tiny loves to dress up, often with sister Fiona. Tiny enjoys dressing in lots of different costumes and roles. However, for school dressing up is not an option, as there is a school uniform.



When Tiny starts the new school there are discussions about gender roles, and one child is particularly unpleasant about these and about Tiny. Finally his friend Mia asks whether Tiny is a boy or a girl, to which Tiny responds, "I am me!"

This is a well written, thoughtful and well-articulated story about a child who wishes to be themselves. They are not bound by traditional binary notions of gender, nor do they identify with one particular gender identity.

This book will be useful when discussing gender with children, when considering their assumptions and preconceptions about gender, and when supporting children who do not identify on a traditional binary scale.

The book is accompanied by short questions for discussion, and also a brief list of organisations that can support children and their families with ideas and understandings around gender identity.

The title of the book is its main weakness, as it focusses on the idea of binary gender. The book should really be called "I am me!" However, as there are few good quality books covering these issues, it is fully appreciated that the title needs to help parents and children identify that the book may be helpful to them.

Cover image by permission of the rights holder.

Azzi In Between

By Sarah Garland

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London

2012

ISBN 9781847802613 (Garland, 2012)

Azzi lives in a country which is at war. Every day the war seems to be coming closer to her house. We see Azzi at home, playing with her friends and gain insight into the work undertaken by her parents and wider family.

One evening, news comes that they are in danger and need to leave immediately. Gathering some possessions together they leave in a hurry. Grandma remains behind to look after the house. They travel by car to the coast, board a boat and are fortunate to be the final people allowed on board.

We see Azzi and her family as they find a new home and begin to settle into a new community. Azzi attends school, and soon a translator arrives to help her understand lessons. The difficulties of the new way of life are explained in a clear and empathetic way.

When Azzi plants beans (brought from their homeland) in the school garden we see that she is trying to provide food for her family. This is also a metaphor for the new life that is being created by the family. When Grandma arrives the reunion is emotional, particularly as she tells of life's events since their separation.

Overall this is an engaging and visually appealing book that shares the highs and lows of Azzi's life, and the experience of her family. The cartoon-style images support the story very effectively.

This book is endorsed by *Amnesty International UK*.



Baking with Dad

By Aurora Cacciapuoti
Published by Child's Play (International) Ltd
2016
ISBN 9781846437540 (Cacciapuoti, 2016)

A young girl bakes with her dad. They carefully lay out all the ingredients and then start to combine them: mixing, sharing, whisking, baking and decorating. Finally, dad's friends arrive for a party.

The book shows a girl and her father, other adults are not identified by name and could be dad's friend or partner, wider family and friends or neighbours. This makes the book nicely inclusive. The little girl has red hair, and it is notable that one person reading the book in a university class commented that she had never see a girl like herself (with red hair) in children's picture books (see also *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* and *Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers* in this collection).

The illustrations are filled with fun, showing the action and adding an imaginative extra dimension to the story. The lovely statement at the end of the book is that the most special ingredient in the process is dad himself: this story focusses on a very special day where father and daughter get good quality time together.



Balloon for Grandad, A

By Nigel Gray

Illustrated by Jane Ray

Published by Orchard Books, London

1988

ISBN 185213125X (Gray, 1988)

This is a lovely story about a boy and his balloon. Unluckily, Sam's balloon is caught by the wind and blows away. Although Sam is upset about this, he starts to imagine the balloon floating to his Grandad, Abdulla, who lives in a different part of the world.

This is an excellent representation suggesting that although members of a family may live apart, it does not stop them from being a family. This is definitely the strength of this book.

Most of the vocabulary is accessible and will appeal to readers in Key Stage 1. However, some words such as "sandgrouse" may be unfamiliar and will need some explanation.

The illustrations are lovely and provide detail to enhance the text.



Boy on the Beach, The

By Niki Daly

Published by Bloomsbury, London

2005

ISBN 1845614658 (Daly, 2005)

This book tells of a boy and his family at the beach on a hot summer's day and of his excitement and fun at the beach. The boy goes exploring... but soon he starts to feel lost and alone. He is found quickly by a lifeguard who returns him to his parents. The enjoyment of a day at the beach comes across well and the story is reassuring and affirming of family life.

Although never referred to explicitly, the book illustrates a variety of people – of all shapes and sizes and from different backgrounds. The family represents a traditional nuclear family of mother, father and child.

The book is full of gentle humour. The illustrations are bright and appealing with plenty of detail to engage the reader.



Boy Who Cried Fabulous, The

By Leslea Newman
Illustrated by Peter Ferguson
Published by Tricycle Press, Toronto
2004
ISBN 1582461015 (Newman, 2004)

Roger is always late for school. He finds everything to be “fabulous” on the way and is often distracted.

His teacher is furious when Roger arrives late. Later, his parents are extremely cross when he arrives home very late. Roger is a white boy from a family with a male and female parent. That Roger wears a bow tie, jacket and shorts suggests that the story is set in a bygone age.

In the end, Roger finds a wider vocabulary to describe the world that he encounters. However, he still maintains his very positive outlook. His parents come to realise his special gift for seeing the world in such a positive way – and declare him a “**fabulous** son.”

The book includes a good mixture of illustrations, showing life in what can be assumed to be a US neighbourhood. A diverse community is represented.

There is a subtext to the book, identified by some commentators who claim that “fabulous” is a word often used by gay men (particularly in the United States). If this is true, then the way in which the parents embrace the word at the end of the book is affirming of their son’s sexual orientation. However, to read the text on this level may be more appropriate for a secondary school or adult audience: it will not be immediately apparent to children of primary age without significant explanation. In a primary school setting the book may be most useful in exploring difference in general terms.

The illustrations in the book are colourful and support the text well. They seem to be more from the 1950s than the twenty-first century, when the book was actually published.



Broken Bird: a tale of true love

By Michael Broad
Published by Puffin Books, London
2006
ISBN 0141381582 (Broad, 2006)

Broken Bird doesn't realise that he is different from other birds when he hatches from his egg. However, he soon senses that he is different from his brothers – as he has only one wing. Soon his is left alone with just one thin wing when the others fly away.

He makes the most of his situation, choosing to walk instead of fly. He meets different creatures and sees different places. Whilst on his travels he meets Scary Bird: named by her sisters because her one wing is expected to scare others away.

The two birds discover friendship and love. They work together to build a nest and start a family... and even learn to fly together.

This is a heart warming and endearing tale of difference and love. The two birds find that they complement each other.

The illustrations are lovely and support the story effectively. This book will be enjoyed by children in Key Stage 1. It is ideal for exploring issues of disability and difference.



Busy Week, A

By Sue Graves

Illustrated by Melanie Sharp

Published by Franklin Watts, London

2004

ISBN 0749653051 (Graves, 2004)

This is a story about a little girl called Rani who tries to help her family but who sometimes makes things worse.

The story follows Rani through the course of the week, with pairs of statements about whom and how she helped, coupled with humorous illustrations showing her disasters. The story includes illustrations of characters from different ethnic backgrounds. As such it presents an inclusive image of family and community life.

The rhyme in the text makes it enjoyable to listen to. There is little text in the book but a great deal that could be explored through discussion. The humour in the illustrations will appeal to children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It would form a good starting point for a consideration about how children help.



But Martin!

By June Counsel
Illustrated by Neal Layton
Published by Picture Corgi, London
2005
ISBN 0552551384 (Counsel, 2005)

But Martin! explores the differences between four children and a character that is even more different - Martin the green Martian!

The four children in the story, Lee, Lloyd, Billy and Angela are physically different and have different characteristics. By using four very different children in the story, the book is able to present the very unusual Martin as just another character, no more different than any of the others, rather than standing out because of his differences. This message of accepting and valuing differences permeates the book.

The book is careful to assign traits and characteristics fairly among the four children, so none is perceived as *better* than the others. The main strength of the book is in the way it shows the children as a group of friends, together despite their differences, and their welcoming of the new, strange character. It shows that we can learn from each other and benefit from differences, such as from the way Martin can teach the others how to spell 'people'.

The book is particularly appropriate for children in Key Stage 1.



Catherine's Story

By Genevieve Moore

Illustrated by Karin Littlewood

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books

2010

ISBN 9781845076559 (Moore, 2010)

Based on personal experience, this is the story of Catherine who is a special girl and can do special things. She is able to clap very quietly, to walk in her special boots, and to listen very carefully. We see Catherine with members of her family, including her cousin, grandma and father. Catherine is special not only because she has a disability, but because her family love her very much. She is able to respond to this love and we get a sense of the happiness it gives to her.

The illustrations enhance the story, and are soft, detailed and colourful and add a sense of authenticity to the storyline.



Chester and Daisy Move On

By Angela Lidster

Illustrated by Rachel Fuller

Published by British Association for Adoption and Fostering

2012

ISBN 9781907585494 (Lidster, 2012)

Chester and Daisy live happily with their parents until things start to go wrong. Mummy and daddy begin to argue and eventually daddy decides that he needs to move out of the family home. After a while, mummy finds that she is not coping with the situation and the children are having to look after themselves and the house. When their teacher visits, after their absence from Nursery, she realises that they need some help.

A social worker takes Chester and Daisy to stay with a foster bear family, and later they are adopted. A distinctive feature of the book is the discussion about why the children cannot remain with the foster family, where they are happy.

This is an engaging story that explores many aspects of family change, the emotions felt by the children and some of the processes that they face. There is a great deal of text, which makes this a good book to read to children, perhaps to support their experience and help them to ask questions; it is unlikely to be a read alone book. The use of a bear family provides a helpful distancing technique to make the story less personal for a child going through the adoptive process.



Christy's Dream

By Caroline Binch
Published by Mammoth, London
1999
ISBN 0749742941 (Binch, 1999)

Christy has always wanted a pony. He has read about them and has saved his pocket money to try and buy one. He lives with his family and their flat is always full of brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces. However, he is not at home a great deal; he prefers to spend time at the local horse project instead. He is at his happiest with the horses.

Christy's mother does not like horses, but his father loves them. The boy and his grandfather visit the market, where Christy finds a horse that he loves and wants to buy. Christy ends up back at the market where he buys the horse – all on his own. He dreads having to tell his mother of the purchase and waits days before doing this. In the end Ma is won over.

The story is set in a real area of Dublin where children look after their horses amidst the tower block estates. The family members appear to be travellers who have settled in an apartment. The interaction between Christy and his parents is fascinating. This is an engaging and endearing story of a boy with a dream.

The watercolour illustrations are beautiful – typical of Caroline Binch's work. They present a realistic image of family life. This book will be enjoyed by children in Key Stage 2 – particularly if they have a love of horses.

For other books by this author/illustrator see:

Amazing Grace
Grace & Family
The Princess and the Castle
Silver Shoes



Cleversticks

By Bernard Ashley
Illustrated by Derek Brazell
Published by Collins, London
1992
ISBN 0006638554 (Ashley, 1992)

Ling Sung has started school and has decided that he doesn't like it because he cannot do the things that all the other children seem able to do. He feels like he does not fit in and wants to stay at home where he feels more included.

One day, Ling Sung discovers that he can do something that the other children cannot and something that even his teacher struggles with: he uses chopsticks to eat his food. This leads to greater acceptance from the other children – who want to learn to use chopsticks just like him. Ling Sung feels much better and decides that school is not such a bad place after all.

This story not only explores the themes of being different, accepted and included but also subtly includes families from different minority ethnic groups and religious backgrounds. The message in the book could be used with all ages but the text is perhaps most suitable for children in upper Key Stage 1. It could be used with individuals or with a whole class.



Clive and his Babies

By Jessica Spanyol
Published by Child's Play (International) Ltd, Swindon
2016
ISBN 9781846438820 (Spanyol, 2016)

This book tells the story of Clive, a young boy who enjoys playing with his “babies”: his dolls.

It is a colourful board book, with simple, quirky illustrations. We see Clive with Mina, Asif and Jeffrey his friends, all of whom enjoy playing with the dolls. There is nice repetition within the text.

This is a gentle story which challenges gender stereotypes.

Note: The focus of the book is made clear on the back cover. On first reading [Richard] mistook the book to be about a father and his young children. This made for interesting reading when the friends started to join in the story, and conjecture about the various relationships presented. However, the clarification that Clive is a child (which should have been relatively obvious) was very helpful.



Colour of Home, The

By Mary Hoffman

Illustrated by Karin Littlewood

Published by Francis Lincoln Children's Books, London

2003

ISBN 9780711219915 (Hoffman, 2003)

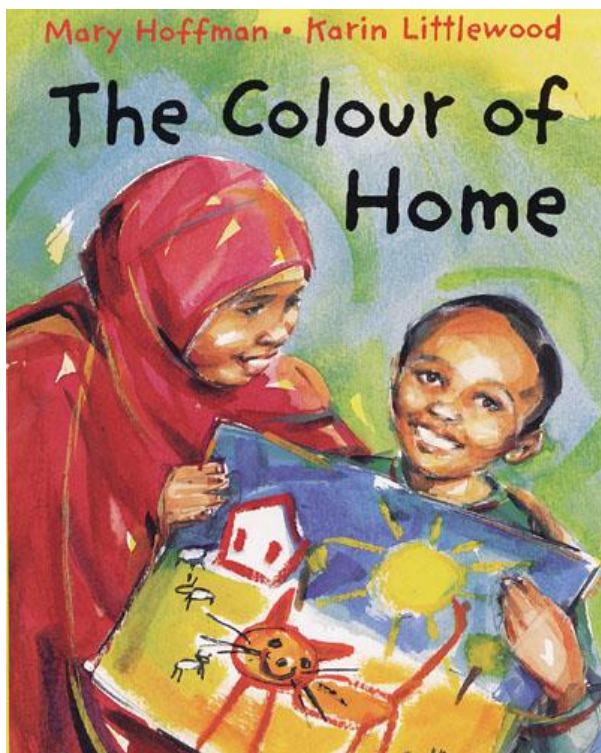
Hassan joins a new school, having come from Somalia. He paints a picture of his former home, but then develops the picture to show the devastation he has witnessed. Fela comes to translate for and to speak with Hassan and his teacher about the picture. The book shows a two parent family with children. There is a very positive ending – despite the trauma the child has faced.

The story addresses some of the issues faced by children who enter school from another location or cultural setting and who have a very limited knowledge of the English language. Hassan does not feel comfortable in his new surroundings; he knows few words and does not eat because he does not recognise the food. His story of being a refugee develops in a way that gradually unfolds. This gradual revelation makes the story engaging and increasingly challenging.

This is a moving story suitable for children in Key Stage 2. The illustrations are appealing and age appropriate. It could be used to address stereotypes or to develop discussion about events in the news.

Cover illustration used with permission:

The Colour of Home by Mary Hoffman and illustrated by Karin Littlewood, published by Francis Lincoln Children's Books, London © 2003.



Come Home Soon

By Pat Thomas
Illustrated by Lesley Harker
Published by Wayland Books, London
2013
ISBN 9780750278553 (Thomas, 2013)

This book presents itself as a first look at a parent in the armed forces. It explains that saying goodbye to a parent is not an easy process, and why it may be necessary for them to be away from home. It acknowledges that feelings of anger or loneliness may occur, and provides opportunity to pause for thought and discuss such issues with children.

The illustrations are colourful and show both the child's potential emotions and also the parent's activities whilst away from home. This would make a very good talking point with children. The language is inclusive throughout, making the book suitable when either mum or dad is going to be away from home.

The sense of being under the same sky, even when separated is a lovely touch, and there is also a sense of optimism in looking forward to the parent's return home. This is a very reassuring book, and additional support on how to use it is included at the back.

Similar books not included in this collection are:

My Dad's a Hero by Rebecca Christiansen and Jewel Armstrong (2007, Word Association Publishers, Tarentum PA)
I Miss You! By Beth Andrews (2007, Prometheus Books, Amherst NY).

Both books address parents in military service. Both are written in the very specific context of the United States of America, which may be useful for some readers.



Dad and Me in the Morning

By Patricia Lakin

Illustrated by Robert G Steele

Published by Albert Whitman and Company, Morton Grove, Illinois

1994

ISBN 0807514195 (Lakin, 1994)

This touching and heartfelt story reveals how different families may communicate. The story explores the close relationship between Jacob and his father, when they wake up early one morning to watch the sunrise. Jacob explains, "Dad and I have ways of speaking to each other, like signing or lip reading or just squeezing each other's hands. That's our secret sign."

The story shows how children with a hearing impairment can communicate (which some children may be unaware of). It also presents a warm and tender portrayal of a parent-child relationship.

The book is probably most appropriate for children in upper Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 because of the vocabulary used and the simplicity of the story. However, the message is appropriate for all ages. It could be read individually or used with a whole class. The illustrations are beautiful.



Dad David, Baba Chris and ME

By Ed Merchant

Illustrated by Rachel Fuller

Published by British Association for Adoption and Fostering

2010

ISBN 9781905664894 (Merchant, 2010)

Ben is nearly eight years old. He lives in an ordinary house, in an ordinary street and has an ordinary life. But he has three dads: his adoptive parents and a birth dad (and mum). The story tells how his dads adopted him when he was four years old, and how he is happy with his life. His dads talk to Ben about his birth parents and they have been understanding about how unsettled he was when he first came to live with them.

Then Ben begins to experience name calling at school, because of his gay dads. His parents are supportive, and so is his teacher. She acknowledges that lots of children have diverse models of family at home, and she makes Ben feel special. Over time Ben comes to cope with the name calling, even though it does not totally stop. He has some good friends, and they are supportive.

Ben asks his dads whether he will grow up to be gay. They respond that when he is older he will know how he feels, and they will support him whatever happens. This is a distinctive element of the book, as no other in this collection includes a discussion between parents and children about whether their way of being family will have an impact on their own life path when they grow up.

Overall this is a very positive representation of a family, which addresses some questions and issues in a realistic and supportive manner. The overall message is that being “ordinary” is in fact extremely special.



Daddy's Lullaby

By Tony Bradman

Illustrated by Jason Cockroft

Published by Bloomsbury, London

2002

ISBN 0747555591 (Bradman, 2002)

This book tells the story of a father who arrives home from work on Friday evening. He finds his young baby still awake in his/her cot. This now becomes daddy's time to have a cuddle and to "take stock" of what he has in life. He takes the baby in his arms and goes round each member of his sleeping family saying how lucky he is.

The book demonstrates the father's warmth and love for his family. The text is supported by wonderful illustrations which provide a feeling of warmth and security. The book represents an apparently traditional nuclear model of family life. It presents a positive image of fatherhood and of a man expressing his feelings.



Dad's in Prison

By Sandra Cain and Margaret Speed
Illustrated by Claire Heronneau
Photographs by Zul Mukhida
Published by A & C Black, London
2002
ISBN 071365094X (Cain & Speed, 2002)

Simon and Mark share the story of when their dad was sent to prison. Police officers visited their house and arrested dad – although he told the boys not to worry.

After dad is convicted, a Visiting Order arrives which enables them to make a visit to the prison, a three hour coach journey from home. The children visit with their mum. They have to go through the process of queuing and being searched.

A very touching moment comes when Mark has to put his toy Panda in a locker – as no personal possessions are allowed into the prison. “When the visit to your dad is over, we’ll let Panda Bear out” says the prison officer. This stands in stark contrast to dad – who will stay incarcerated.

The book shows the detail of a prison visit, the need for mum and dad to have time to talk alone and the opportunity for the children to play with the resources provided. The sadness shown when visiting time ends is moving – and the sense that dad has been sent a distance away from his family is realistic. The book explores a good range of issues faced by families with a close relative in prison. It concludes with handwritten letters shared between the father and his children. The boys look forward to his return.

This book uses illustrations and photographs to enhance the storyline. It may be used to support children who are separated from parents or carers because of imprisonment. Although the tone is quite light it presents the opportunity to explore issues in greater depth in appropriate circumstances. It may also be useful for those in prison to read with their children.



Daft Bat

By Jeanne Willis

Illustrated by Tony Ross

Published by Andersen Press, London

2006

ISBN 1842704761 (Willis, 2006)

This book tells the story of how all the wild, young animals think that Bat is mad – as they believe she gets everything the wrong way round. Bat talks about using an umbrella to keep her feet dry and notes that if the river rises she will get her ears wet! The animals tell the Wise Owl that Bat is mad and could be dangerous. However, Wise Owl soon has the animals hanging upside down from a tree so they can see Bat's point of view!

This is a wonderful book. Its message of trying to look at other people's points of view, which may make you think differently, is clear and superbly demonstrated. There are parts where you need to rotate the book to read the text ("upside down") which children (and adults) will love.

The illustrations are lovely - with some super expressions on the faces of the animals. The reviewers thoroughly enjoyed reading this book.

The font size of the text aims it at children in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, but it could be used throughout the primary phase as an effective starting point for discussions on difference, inclusion and acceptance.



Day with Daddy, A

By Nikki Grimes

Illustrated by Nicole Tadgell

Published by Scholastic, New York

2004

ISBN 0439568501 (Grimes, 2004)

A young boy spends the day with his father. They visit the park and play basketball together and play on the slide and the swings. Dad is very positive about his son's abilities. They eat lunch together and then visit the cinema. The boy wants the day to pass slowly so that he can enjoy his father's company to the maximum. He gains enough "happy" to see him though the week until his dad's next visit.

Although the boy feels too grown up to let his mum kiss him goodbye in the morning, he lets her kiss him in the evening as he knows she has missed him all day.

This is an affirming story of a child with two parents who are separated and who both love him very much. The book is beautifully illustrated. The story is brief and each page includes a limited amount of text in a large font. It is suitable for use with children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.



Different Dragon, The

By Jennifer Bryan

Illustrated by Danamarie Hosler

Published by Two Lives Publishing, Ridley Park, PA

2006

ISBN 9780967446868 (Bryan, 2006)

The Different Dragon starts with a story at bedtime for Noah, told by one of his two mothers, Go-Ma. When the story begins the illustrations take the reader inside Noah's imagination and a new world begins to form.

Throughout the story Noah prompts Go-Ma with how he wants the story to develop. It is Noah who asks for a mean dragon to appear in the story, but also Noah who decides the dragon is crying because it is sad. It is this that prompts the tale of the dragon who feels he is pressured to act in a certain way because this is what is expected of him. Noah explains to the dragon that he can be who he wants to be, because there are all sorts of different dragons in the world.

This is a charming story that examines difference and acceptance. A sub-theme, which is hardly touched upon, is that Noah has two mums: this might be a discussion point echoing themes of difference and how children have different families.

The book is quite text-heavy in some places and contains some challenging vocabulary (such as *luminescence*), so would be good for use as a shared text with children in lower Key Stage 2 or as an independent reader in upper Key Stage 2. The illustrations are colourful and attractive and support the text well.



Do You Sing Twinkle?

By Sandra Levins

Illustrated by Bryan Langdo

Published by Magination Press, Washington DC

2010

ISBN 9781433805516 (Levins, 2010)

A boy and his brother have to make a hard choice when mum finds a new partner and moves away. Instead of being able to spend half of each week with mum and half with dad, now they live with dad and visit mum on alternate weekends. In addition there are now step-sisters to contend with when visiting mum's house.

The boy's growing unhappiness leads to changes in behaviour, both at school and at home. Eventually he talks to dad about his feelings, and explains them to mum on the 'phone. Mum starts to make more contact, sending story books, speaking on the 'phone, sending a special calendar and making sure the boys have time on their own with her. She also explains that her own brother is her step-brother and they did not initially get on with one another.

This book introduces some useful concepts and terms, including *hard choices*, *finding common ground* and *spending quality time together*. There are detailed notes at the end of the book to guide parents with some of the issues that divorce can raise, and advice on how to support children. This book is useful in that it stresses how hard parents have to work to support their children.



Dominic Grows Sweetcorn

By Mandy Ross

Illustrated by Alison Bartlett

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London

2013

ISBN 9781847803276 (Ross, 2013)

Dominic loves to eat sweetcorn. His grandad remembers how he used to grow it when he lived in Jamaica. Now he has retired he plans to try to grow it again. Dominic and his grandad spend the following weekends clearing the garden of weeds. Dominic asks about life in Jamaica and hears about the plants that grandad grew there, the chickens he reared, and his other livestock.

Grandad explains that he traded his surplus produce in Jamaica for the supplies he needed to live. On one occasion he traded his best coffee for some sugar cane, and ended up marrying the girl involved in making the transaction. Grandad explains that later he came to England to find work, with the intention of going back home after five years. At first he found it terribly cold; after searching he found work and he and his wife worked different shifts, day and night, in order to be able to look after their young family. They settled in the UK and stayed.

Alongside the reminiscences is the story of growing sweetcorn in the garden. When they are ready they trade with a neighbour who has a surplus of tomatoes. They prepare a barbecue and invite the neighbour to join them. This makes an appropriate bridge between grandad's experiences in Jamaica, and Dominic's life in the present day.

The book is well illustrated with colourful and detailed drawings. It is distinctive in its inclusion of specific details about the grandparents' migration to England, interleaved with stories about sweetcorn.

At the back of the book is a recipe for sweetcorn fritters, and a historical note about migration from Jamaica.



Donovan's Big Day

By Leslea Newman

Illustrated by Mike Dutton

Published by Tricycle Press, Berkeley, CA

2011

ISBN 9781582463322 (Newman, 2011)

When Donovan wakes up he remembers that he has an exciting day ahead. He gets ready, putting on his smart clothes and making sure that nothing happens to spoil his pristine appearance. His uncle arrives and the journey commences. The tension mounts, as the reader wonders where it is that Donovan is heading. He has a special white satin box tucked into his pocket, but if he is heading to a wedding what is his role and who is getting married?

At just the right moment he produces the rings, one for Mommy and one for Mama. The official pronounces them wife and wife. Donovan has one final special task to perform: to kiss the brides.

This is a beautifully illustrated story that engages the reader well. The reader is left wondering exactly what the special occasion will be right until the end. This is a good example of a supportive wider family coming together to celebrate a wedding. The illustrations are engaging and include lots of detail highlighting the sense of occasion. The focus of the book is on a very happy day, and Donovan's experience as the ring bearer.



Don't Let Go!

By Jeanne Willis

Illustrated by Tony Ross

Published by Andersen Press, London

2002

ISBN 1842700715 (Willis, 2002)

This story represents a family made up of a mum, dad and daughter. It focuses primarily on the relationship between daughter and father. It may be that mum and dad are separated – as dad refers to the girl riding “from ours to yours.”

The story is about a dad teaching his daughter how to ride a bike – he does not let go until his daughter says so. Whilst the girl is scared of being let go of too soon, the father is scared of letting go. This illustrates the close relationship between father and daughter, which is a strength of this book.

The illustrations are delicate and really enhance the text. It is ideal for younger readers. The rhyme all the way through the story makes it an enjoyable read and provides a rhythm that will be relished by individual readers or when shared with a whole class.



Dragon Loves Penguin

By Debi Gliori

Published by Bloomsbury Children's Books, London

2013

ISBN 9781408839492 (Gliori, 2013)

It is Bib's bedtime, and she asks for a story – the one about the dragons. The dragons arrived in the icy land where Bib and her family live. They set up home, and in due course dragon eggs were laid... but one dragon did not have an egg. Then a lone egg is found, and the lone egg and the lone dragon are paired. When the egg hatches the new "Little One" learns and grows, but in a different way to the young dragons. Eventually the dragons are cruel to the Little One because she is different, but then the Little One saves the day by warning of danger. Whilst escaping from an erupting volcano, the Little One finds an egg and becomes a parent.

This story includes three generations: the dragon grandma, mum and Bib. It provides an interesting way of discussing adoption, and how children who are adopted are wanted and loved by their adoptive parents. There is a sense of difference (a dragon adopting a penguin baby) and sameness in families (the penguin adopting a baby penguin). It may be useful to discuss with children the idea that the eggs are "found" rather than being brought to the new parent; this could infer that the child had previously been abandoned, whereas adoption may take place for a wide variety of reasons.

The illustrations support the text well, and the text is weaved amongst the drawings. The drawings add a positive additional dimension to the story, showing the emotions being felt by the characters. This provides the opportunity to develop discussion points with children. This book is distinctive by looking at adoption across three generations.



Driftwood Ball, The

By Thomas Docherty

Published by Templar Publishing, Dorking

2014

ISBN 9781848779884 (Docherty, 2014)

George, a badger, and Celia, an otter love to dance, but have their own particular styles that are different to their respective friends and family. The badgers and the otters never mix, but George and Celia may be about to change that!

When the time comes for the Driftwood Ball Celia and George dance together, and their different approach causes a stir. They win a prize, and bring their communities together. However, at this point George and Celia are more interested in each other than a prize or developments in community relations!

This is a beautifully illustrated book, with lots of detail to explore. There is a great deal of fun and energy in the pictures. The storyline is very amusing as we see the characters dance, the two main characters become friends, and the ball take place. This is a super story which explores the coming together of two individuals and then their families and will be useful when considering difference and acceptance.



Elephant Dance

By Theresa Heine

Illustrated by Sheila Moxley

Published by Barefoot Books, Oxford

2004

ISBN 9781905236787 (Heine, 2004)

Ravi loves his grandfather's stories about life in India. From them he learns a great deal about life, food, animals, culture, religion and the geography of India.

Grandad explains how hot the sun is in India, how the wind can be fierce or gentle, and the rain sometimes torrential. Ravi's questions are the catalyst for learning about aspects of India, and also about his grandfather. He plays his flute, a special gift from grandad, making up a dance for elephants. Later, they draw a map of India together.

This is a lovely book showing one generation learning from another. The vocabulary will introduce much learning about life and customs and make this a beautiful book to listen to being read aloud.

The book is accompanied by the music for Ravi's Elephant Dance, and a glossary providing information about the geography, food and animals of India.



Ella Moves House

By Angela Hassall

Illustrated by Caroline Ewen

Published by Tamarind Books, London

2010

ISBN 9781848530065 (Hassall, 2010)

This is the story of Ella and her mum, who having been very happy in a flat just the right size for them plan to move because mum's friend Joe is coming to live with them. Joe is a dynamic and engaging character, who loves to play and enjoy child-like activities. However, Ella does not like any of the activities that Joe suggests; she does not want to jump in puddles, twirl around or catch leaves.

On the day of the move, Ella's favourite toy, Mollie, is lost in transit. When a neighbourhood dog spots the doll and runs off with it, Joe comes to the rescue winning Ella's acceptance in the process. The whole tale is accompanied by bright and colourful illustrations, that include plenty of detail to enrich the storyline.

This is a story of a child coming to accept her mum's new partner. It may be felt to be simplistic or idealistic by some readers. However, it does provide the opportunity to discuss with children how they feel when a new member joins the family, and how they might feel if they had to share a family member's affections with someone new.

This book might link well with *Two Birds*, where dad moves out of the nest because of the lack of space.



Emma and Meesha My Boy: a two mom story

By Kaitlyn Considine

Illustrated by Binny Hobbs

Published by Kaitlyn Considine, New England

2005

ISBN 1413416004 (Considine, 2005)

As part of the introduction to the characters of this story, the book makes what is almost a passing comment relating to Emma having two mums; the two mums are an element of the story but not its main focus. The rest of the story is about Emma's relationship with Meesha, her cat, and the things Emma's mums, 'Mommy' and 'Mama', say to her when she plays with Meesha.

The bold text on the page introducing the mums – 'That makes two' – is unnecessary and draws slight attention to an aspect of the story that could have been left as totally incidental. It is the only point in the story where an issue of the two female parents is made, apart from in the subtitle of the book. The latter reflects Kaitlyn Considine's purpose in writing the book – to make available more texts showing two mothers that she could use with her own children.

Mama and Mommy take turns in giving Emma advice when she tries out different activities with her cat. The book raises issues of how to care for a pet appropriately and ends with Emma finding happiness when she treats Meesha with care and attention.

The book is American, and includes the American spelling of 'mommy'. It has bold, colourful illustrations and uses simple and accessible language. It is aimed at children aged 3 – 6 years. The use of rhyme adds to the appeal of the text.



Every Second Friday

By Kiri Lightfoot

Illustrated by Ben Galbraith

Published by Hodder Children's Books, London

2008

ISBN 9780340956137 (Lightfoot, 2008)

Margi and Totty are brother and sister. Every second Friday they pack their bags and go to visit their dad at his house. They pack spare clothes, because they always end up getting muddy or messy. Dad's house is full of clutter, which provides plenty of opportunities for adventures. He collects many things and the children love to search through this treasure and to explore. They find his old records and tapes and listen to different and unusual music. After all the fun, dad tucks them up safe in bed and reminds them how much he loves them. He displays their art work on his walls, and the children are very sure that his house is also their house.

Full of busy, high quality and engaging illustrations, this book, reinforces the children's positive experience of visiting dad. It is also reassuring because, although the children never know quite what will happen when they visit their father, they are confident of his love and their place in his life.



Everywhere Babies

By Susan Meyers

Illustrated by Marla Frazee

Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston MA

2001

ISBN 9780547510743 (Meyers, 2001)

This board book presents a wide variety of the attributes of babies, and some of the activities in which they engage. They are born at different times, are different shapes and sizes, they wear different clothes and eat different foods. Babies sleep in different places and travel in different modes of transport. Basically, all babies are different and they are loved for lots of different reasons.

The illustrations show families from different ethnic backgrounds, different generations, parents of different genders and sexual orientations.

The illustrations are colourful and detailed and show clearly a variety of difference. This is a positive and celebratory book. It is ideal to read with young children, the pictures provide plenty to discuss and to explore and if read aloud the rhyme will make listening enjoyable.



Families

By Debbie Bailey

Illustrated by Susan Huszar

Published by Annick Press, Toronto

1999

ISBN 1550375946 (Bailey, 1999)

This book uses photographs more than words and is aimed at pre-school or children in a Reception class. It is an accessible book which shows positive images of a traditional nuclear family consisting of a mother, father, sibling and grandparents. The pictures demonstrate people from all walks of life, and different ethnic backgrounds.

This is a lovely book that looks at the everyday things that children do with other family members. The book uses carefully selected photographs that avoid gender stereotyping, for example both mum and dad cook at different times. At the end of each section – each focussing on a different family member - there is opportunity for discussion through the inclusion of questions.

One drawback is that the book uses some American spelling of words.



Family Book, The

By Todd Parr

Published by Megan Tingley Books, New York

2003

ISBN 0316738964 (Parr, 2003)

The Family Book introduces younger children to the concept that there are many different kinds of family. Using short, simple sentences and bold and bright illustrations the book gets across this message in a very clear, appealing and accessible way.

Whilst looking at the different compositions, habits and preferences of families, the book also focuses on what “all” families do – such as celebrating special days together and helping each other to be strong. This is reinforced at the end of the book by outlining that there are lots of different ways to be family, and that all families are special.

This book is very attractive to look at and uses very clear and accessible language. It would be an excellent introduction to family diversity with young children.

Other books by Todd Parr in the same series include:

The Daddy Book (2002) ISBN 0-316-60799-1

The Mommy Book (2002) ISBN 0-316-60827-0

See also *It's Okay to be Different* and *We Belong Together*.



Family for Sammy, A

By Kate Gaynor

Illustrated by Eva Byrne

Published by Belvedere Print Ltd, Dublin

2008

ISBN 9780955578700 (Gaynor, 2008)

Sammy is five years old. It is a year since Sally came to visit him, to discuss the possibility of him living with another family for a while. It is not clear who Sammy is staying with at this point, although he says that she visited him at his house. As the story develops Sammy goes to stay with a foster family, where his initial apprehensions are overcome and he begins to feel safe and settled. Sally returns and takes him to visit his mum, who now lives in a different house, before Sammy returns to his foster family feeling confident and settled.

The story leaves some questions unanswered, including: where Sammy is living at the start of the story, why he needs a foster family, why mum has a new house later in the story, and whether Sammy will return to live with his mum at some point. All these create the opportunity for discussion with children and ensure that the story is open enough to address a range of experiences.

The watercolour illustrations complement the story well.



Families, Families, Families!

By Suzanne Lang

Illustrated by Max Lang

Published by Picture Corgi, London

2015

ISBN 9780552572927 (Lang, 2015)

This book contains a wide variety of quirky, amusing, colourful and highly engaging illustrations!

It considers a variety of ways of being a family: with or without siblings; with varying numbers of parents of the same or different gender; having pets; being adopted; living with an aunt; or having parents who are married or not married. Whatever the combination people who love one another make a family.

This is a very inclusive book, made all the more humorous by the inclusion of rhyme and an escalating variety of “unusual” family members! It is distinctive in highlighting that the marital status of parents can vary.

Many of the families are shown in frames as portraits. This might provide the opportunity to develop children’s own frames, using drawings or selfie-style photographs.



First Day of School, The

By Toby Forward

Illustrated by Carol Thompson

Published by Doubleday, London

2004

ISBN 0385601921 (Forward, 2004)

This book presents a refreshing look at children who have working mums. The little boy telling the story takes the reader through his first day at school and mum's first day back at work.

Both the text and the illustrations draw parallels between the boy's day and his mother's day including break time, work and friends. Both show mum and the boy thinking about each other. The book presents working mothers in a positive light, helped by the parallels. It challenges the sometimes expressed notion that working mothers do not love their children as much as those who stay at home.

The illustrations are attractive and fit well with the text. This book would be useful as an independent or shared reader for children in the Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1.



Flora's Family

By Annette Aubrey

Illustrated by Patrice Barton

Published by QED Publishing

2007

ISBN 9781848350038 (Aubrey, 2007)

The story opens with Flora happy at home with her parents. She enjoys a bubble bath, some fluffy towels, having her hair brushed. As she looks in the mirror, she asks mum why they look different from one another. Mum and dad sit with Flora and explain to her that she was adopted when she was a baby. Flora is told that her birth mum and dad made a very brave choice, to find a family that could care for Flora, when they knew they could not do it themselves.

This rhyming story presents a very positive image of the process of adoption, which may be reassuring for some children. Flora is encouraged to ask questions, and her parents are positive about helping her to understand what happened earlier in her life. The outcome for Flora has been to live in a very happy and supportive home, which may not be the experience of all those who have been adopted. The illustrations reinforce the warmth of the story and the joy and happiness of the family.

This book is part of QED's *Understanding* series, which seeks to support children facing challenging circumstances and life changes. It is accompanied by some guidance for parents and teachers.



Football Star

By Mina Javaherbin

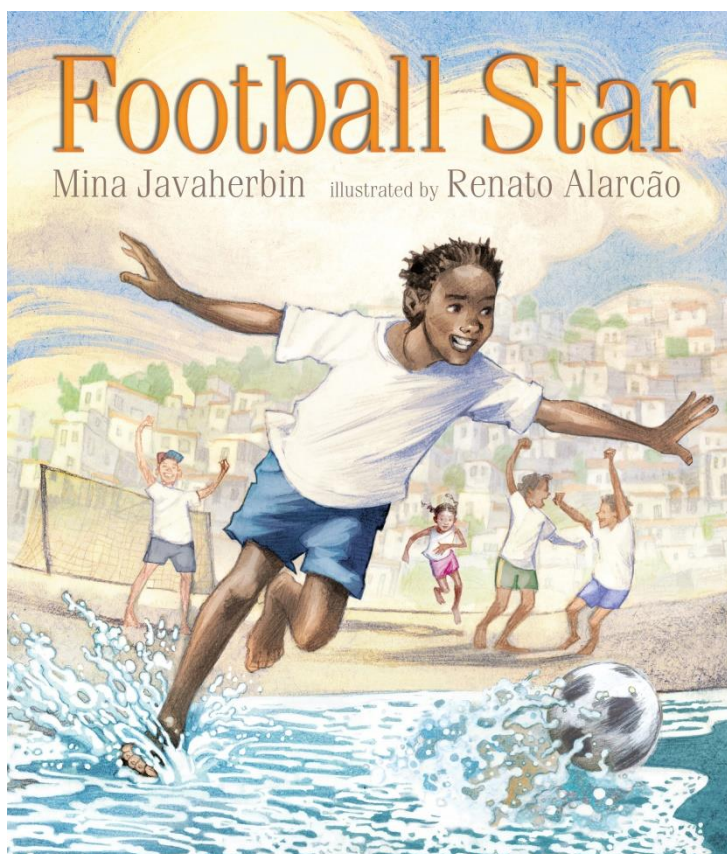
Illustrated by Renato Alarcão

Published by Walker Books, London

2014

ISBN 9781406357219 (Javaherbin, 2014)

Paulo Marcelo Feliciano intends to be a football star. He lives in Brazil, and hopes his achievements will mean that his mum does not have to work long hours in the future. Paulo fishes during the day, and trains hard in the evenings. He plays football with his sister, and she helps him to learn maths. He also plays with a range of friends who each have different jobs or other activities: one paints the carnival floats; another is busy climbing coconut trees. After finishing work, Paulo arrives to play football. Part way through the game a player is injured and Paulo votes to allow a girl to join in (Maria his little sister) who turns out to be a great success.



This is a very engaging story of an ambitious boy and his dreams and hard work to reach his goal. It shows his relationships with his family and friends and particularly his support for his sister's abilities. The concern he shows in hoping that by being successful he will be able to support his mother is admirable.

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Friday Nights of Nana, The

By Amy Hest

Illustrated by Claire A Nivola

Published by Candlewick Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

2001

ISBN 0763606588 (Hest, 2001)

This story is effective in highlighting family diversity and gives the reader an insight into a Jewish family as a girl and her nana prepare for the Sabbath. This is the main strength of the book as it concentrates on not just a family, but also on the family's religious practices. The end of the book illustrates a family including: grandma, parents, daughter, son, uncles, aunts and cousins. This again displays a diverse family.

The illustrations are excellent in capturing the family's love for each other and also their religious beliefs. The last illustration and the one on the cover of the book itself are extremely imaginative and show the family through a window: the reader gains insight by looking in on family life. The illustrations are a further strength in highlighting family diversity.

There are certain spelling variations due to its American origin. The Americanisms, 'gray' and 'favorite' may need some explanation in terms of spelling, but mirror the English meaning. Therefore, children would hopefully understand them in the context of the story.

This book would be an excellent resource for the classroom to provide a point of discussion about different families and their religious beliefs and practices.



Giraffes Can't Dance

By Giles Andreae

Illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees

Published by Orchard Books, London

2000

ISBN 9781841215655 (Andreae, 2000)

This book tells of a giraffe called Gerald who is laughed at because he cannot dance as well as all the other animals in the jungle.

He is given some advice that changes the way he thinks about this difference, and uses difference to his advantage. The book doesn't challenge any particular stereotype – it challenges many of them. It shows the reader that being different can be fun and that difference is to be celebrated.

When Gerald finds music that inspires him to dance he finds that the other animals accept him and praise his talent.

This story could be added to any collection of children's picture books and could be read as an amusing and thought-provoking story with a class. The excellent use of rhyme reflects the music referred to in the text. The illustrations are lively and appealing and contain a great deal of detail.



Goggle-eyed Goats, The

By Stephen Davies

Illustrated by Christopher Corr

Published by Andersen Press

2012

ISBN 9781849392938 (Davies, 2012)

Al Haji Amadu lives in Timbuktu with his wives and children. He has a herd of animals including camels, cows, lambs and goats. The goggle-eyed goats are extremely naughty and cause all kinds of disruption. He decides that they must be sold, as he cannot cope with them, and heads off to market to make the sale.

The wives and children beg him to keep the goats. Once at the market, the family members gradually arrive to plead the case of the goats; even his wives have travelled to ask for their reprieve. So they all head home.

The book includes lots of repetition, which adds a sense of fun to the storyline. Counting the number of animals works in a similar manner. The illustrations are vibrant and give energy to the plot line. Finally the goats are back home and safe – but there is a twist to the tale!

This is a very good example of an extended family with several children and man with more than one wife.



Gorilla

By Anthony Browne

Published by Little Greats / Random Century, London

1992

ISBN 185681114X (Browne, 1992)

This is a magical story about how a father buys his daughter a toy gorilla for her birthday: she loves gorillas.

Although the book does not explicitly state that the father is a single parent, it is implied through the text and through the illustrations. It focuses particularly upon a child's thoughts and feelings of isolation and concentrates on the relationship between father and daughter.

During the progression of the book a child's toy transforms into a live gorilla. Whether this is meant to be the girl's dream is unclear, however, the gorilla seems to provide a metaphor for what the girl hopes for or how she wants her relationship with her dad to be.

Whilst the outcome of the story is a positive relationship between daughter and father, the adventure with the gorilla may seem scary to some children. The story raises some interesting points about family relationships, but would need to be used sensitively. How the relationship between Hannah and her father is transformed is not addressed.

The illustrations are extremely interesting and realistic and bring the characters to life. Although, this text has a lot of monosyllabic words and simple sentences, it also has some polysyllabic words and complex sentences. This book would appeal more to children in upper Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2.

Other books by this author include:

Piggybook (included in this collection)

My Mum (2005 London: Doubleday) ISBN 0-385-60821-7

A lovely book showing a child's appreciation of their mother, with beautiful illustrations.

My Dad (2000 London: Doubleday) ISBN 0-385-60072-1

A lovely book showing a child's appreciation of their father, with beautiful illustrations.



Grace & Family

By Mary Hoffman

Illustrated by Caroline Binch

Published by Frances Lincoln, London

1995

ISBN 0711208689 (Hoffman, 1995)

Grace & Family takes a look at different family structures through the eyes of Grace. To Grace, her family has always meant her mum, her Grandma and her cat, but Grace struggles to reconcile her family with the families she reads about in her storybooks.

When Grace's dad invites her over to The Gambia to visit him and his new family Grace sees the family she "ought" to have: a mum, dad, brother, sister and a dog. But she is one person too many for this arrangement and feels there isn't a place for her in this new family.

The story also touches on Grace's feelings of being stretched between her two families and she feels that there isn't enough of her to go round.

Grace & Family picks up on the important point that many children's books portray a stereotypical image of what a family ought to be. It uses Nana to explain to Grace - and to the reader - that families come in all different shapes. This point is emphasised when Nana asks Grace if she would like to get rid of her, as a grandmother doesn't appear in many of the story books either!

Throughout the story Nana explains to Grace that: "Families are what you make them."



Grandfather and I

By Helen E Buckley
Illustrated by Jan Ormerod
Published by Viking, London
1995
ISBN 0670863750 (Buckley, 1995)

This book is extremely effective in portraying a family relationship and focuses in particular on the bond between a child and his/her grandfather. The illustrations imply that the child does have a mum and dad and the text does not explicitly state that the grandfather is a carer for the child. There is a sense of an extended family.

The story concentrates particularly upon the child's interpretation of his/her own family, implying a strong bond with his/her grandfather because he doesn't rush like mums and dads.

A great strength of this book is the balance of pictures and text, making it extremely accessible for young readers. Furthermore, the repeated text throughout makes it a good text to read aloud. Similarly, the abundant use of monosyllabic vocabulary and the repetition make it ideal for independent reading. The illustrations are delicate and mirror the text by cleverly portraying the closeness the child has with his/her grandfather, further illustrating that families are all different. A further strength of the book is that it illustrates positive images of a black family.

It is interesting to note that out of four reviewers three thought the child was female, and one male. The book does not make this explicit.

A second book in the series is *Grandmother and I*, which addresses issues in a similar manner. Publication details are identical. ISBN 0-670-86374-2.



Grandma's Saturday Soup

By Sally Fraser

Illustrated by Derek Brazell

Published by Mantra Lingua, London

2005

ISBN 1844449394 (Panjabi and English) (Fraser, 2005)

This story interleaves a child's daily routine in the UK with how it reminds them of their grandmother's stories of life in Jamaica. The clouds, snow, snowballs and newly emerging spring bulbs each remind Mimi of an ingredient in Grandma's Saturday soup.

At first it may be presumed that Grandma lives in Jamaica, but by the end of the book it is clear that she lives locally and that the family visit each Saturday to enjoy her stories and the special soup.

The book is beautifully illustrated – showing life in Jamaica and in a very wintry UK. There is a real sense of warmth between the family members. A traditional nuclear family is presented, with Grandma living close by.

This book is available in twenty-nine dual language editions.



Great Big Book of Families, The

By Mary Hoffman

Illustrated by Ros Asquith

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London

2010

ISBN 9781845079994 (Hoffman, 2010)

This starts by acknowledging that once upon a time many books showed a “traditional” nuclear family, comprising a mum, dad and two children who were white and middle class. Of course, in real life “families come in all sorts of shapes and sizes”.

The book presents a wide range of families with varying numbers of parents, parents of different genders, siblings, members of an extended family. Families live in different places, children are schooled in different ways, and some people work in different jobs. It is notable that the book briefly mentions homelessness and unemployment. Some families have holidays, and some enjoy different types of food. They wear different clothes, celebrate in different ways and at different times, and in fact are different in all manner of ways.

There is an example Family Tree, with the acknowledgement that if a parent finds a new partner a new set of branches may be needed. The book ends with an affirmation that families are all different, all have their ups and downs, and asks the question: “What’s yours like today?”

This is a very inclusive book that covers not only relationships within families but also culture and ways of life and living. The final question just asks about today – leaving the possibility that a family will continue to develop and change into the future.



Harry's Home

By Laurence Anholt

Illustrated by Catherine Anholt

Published by Orchard Books, London

1999

ISBN 1841210331 (hardback) 1841214957 (paperback) (Anholt, 1999)

Harry lives in the city. His Granddad lives in the country, and writes to Harry. Harry receives a farm set for his birthday... along with a train ticket.

Granddad comes to take Harry for a visit to the countryside. Harry leaves his mum for the first time.

Harry experiences life away from home, and life on a farm. He learns to care for the animals. He learns that animals and people have their own homes – their own special places.

The illustrations will appeal particularly to children in Key Stage 1, although some pages include a good deal of text which will make this book appropriate as a shared text. On some pages the text is quite simple, and often fits the shape of the illustrations. However, this is not consistent and means the book will not be suitable for individual reading by some children. The illustrations are detailed and provide the opportunity for discussion and for a teacher or other adult to develop the story and comprehension of the story with children.

This is a warm and accessible book, which addresses the love between child and parent, extended family relationships, the contrast between urban and rural life and the ways in which homes are important.



Happy Birthday Jamela!

By Niki Daly

Published by Frances Lincoln, London

2006

ISBN 9781845074029 (Daly, 2006)

Jamela is looking forward to her birthday. She goes shopping for a new dress and shoes for her party. When she cannot have the sparkly shoes she wants, and has to have sensible shoes for school, Jamela is disheartened. However, once back at home she adds beads and glitter to the shoes. Her mother and grandmother are furious!

When a neighbour comments on the shoes Jamela ends up helping her to decorate other pairs to sell at the market. She makes enough money to buy more shoes for school. At her birthday party she finds that she has gifts of both new school shoes and sparkly princess shoes.

Not only does this book explore birthday hopes and show a party, it also provides the opportunity to consider disappointment and to explore appropriate and responsible behaviour. The book has a positive ending and the consequences of Jamela's actions are not negative.



Heather Has Two Mummies

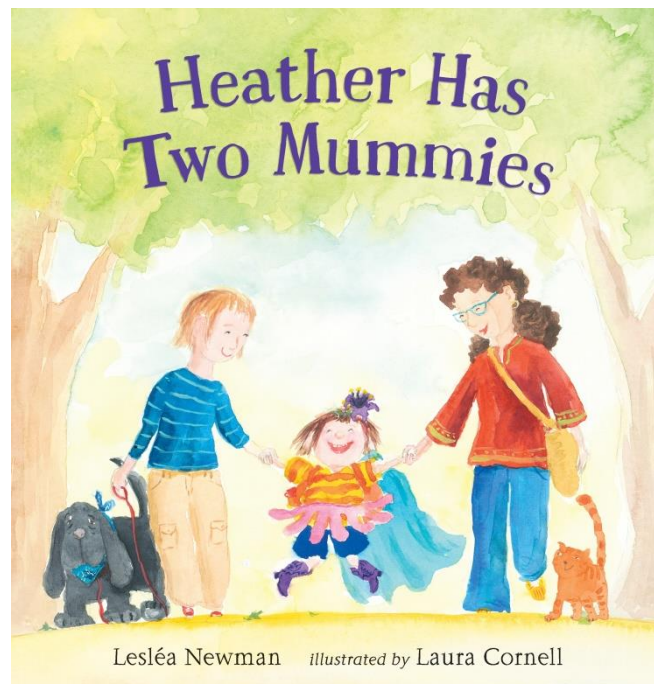
By Leslea Newman
Illustrated by Laura Cornell
Published by Walker Books, London
2015
ISBN 9781406359404 (Newman, 2015)

Heather feels loved and is happy to have two mums until she starts attending school and hears other children talking about their families. At this point, Heather realises that she does not have a dad.

Her teacher and the other children talk about their families, and it becomes clear that all parents including single parents, gay and lesbian parents, and step-parents are represented in the class and are special; the important thing is that families love each other. The book shows a range of family models in a positive manner.

This new edition has been updated significantly with colourful drawings and less text but this has not taken away its focus or impact.

The notes for parents, carers and teacher in the previous edition have been removed, and the edited story now stands in its own right. Perhaps this is a reflection and recognition of how the world has changed in the intervening 15 years, and that now the focus of the story is far more mainstream and can be appreciated without additional justification or explanation.



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Here I Am

By Patti Kim

Illustrated by Sonia Sánchez

Published by Capstone Books

2014

ISBN 9781782022268 (Kim, 2014)

This book shows a boy taking his first tentative steps in a new location. We see elements of his journey, new home, his family, his anxiety and confusion, and the way in which he starts to make sense of his new world. In places the world seems incomprehensible, with new language and ideas with which to become familiar.

With him, the boy has a small seed carried from his previous life, and one of the few constants in his world. When it is lost he has to set out to search for it, which opens up new opportunities and experiences. Embarking on the search is the catalyst he needs to engage with the new surroundings. He meets new people and starts to make new friends.

The illustrations in this wordless picture book are detailed and atmospheric and guide the reader through a story which will, to some degree, be of their own imagining.

This book will be useful when considering the lives of those who have to move to an unfamiliar place and the challenges they face. It encourages readers to see change positively by showing the boy grow in confidence and finding happiness in his new world.



I am Jazz

By Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings

Illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas

Published by Dial Books for Young Readers, New York, NY

2014

ISBN 9780803741072 (Herthel & Jennings, 2014)

The book starts with an introduction to Jazz and all her favourite activities and interests. She introduces her best friends, but says that she is a little different: Jazz was born with a girl brain but a boy body. She explains that this is called transgender.

Jazz tells the story of her gender identity and how early on it was not appreciated by those around her. She describes how she felt like she was living a lie when she had to wear boy's clothes. After a while her parents took her to a doctor, who clarified that Jazz was transgender. This led to her parents encouraging her to be herself and expressing their unconditional love for her. Although things continue to be difficult at times, particularly if teachers or other children do not initially understand, Jazz has good friends and a supportive family and is able to deal with these circumstances. The main thing is that Jazz is Jazz, and what matters most is what a person is like inside.

This book will raise some interesting views for adult discussion including the fact that it is based on real life experience, and that the doctor diagnoses Jazz as transgender explaining that she was born that way. That is not a judgment on the factual nature of those comments, but rather suggests that some of the ideas presented in the book may be contentious for some readers. This is a high quality book that presents ideas in a clear and accessible manner.

There is information to support parents/carers, teachers and children through *TransKids Purple Rainbow Foundation*, which supports the lives of children born with Gender Dysphoria.



I Don't Want to Talk About It

By Jeanie Franz Ransom

Illustrated by Kathryn Kunz Finney

Published by Magination Press, Washington DC

2000

ISBN 9781557987037 (Ransom, 2000)

A child's parents explain that they are going to divorce. The child does not want to talk about it, and keeps on stating this as the story develops. She wants to roar like a lion so that the painful words cannot be heard, hide her tears by becoming a fish in the sea, or become a wild horse and run away as far as is possible.

This book explores the emotions felt by the child in a very effective manner, using imagery that is reflected in both text and illustration.

Eventually the child begins to ask questions and to discuss the changes that are about to take place. The parents are able to give some reassurance, including that they will both still be there to love and support her, albeit in different locations.

A strength of this book is its focus on the emotions felt by the child, including the initial anger.



I Still Love You Dad

By Ann de Bode

Published by Evans Brothers, London

2010

ISBN 9780237543044 (Bode, 2010)

It is the day of the school play, but Laura does not feel like joining in. No one is coming to see her, and her dad has moved away and she misses him very much. Her friend Tim empathises, as his parents don't live together either.

After the play, Laura celebrates her success with her mum, but dad has had to leave early (although readers may want to discuss whether dad was actually there, or whether this is Laura's wishful thinking). Mum breaks the news that a new male friend is coming to visit. Laura muses on what he might be like, expecting someone ugly or unpleasant. When John arrives, Laura misbehaves and hopes to make a bad impression in order to put him off. John even sits in "dad's seat" which annoys Laura. He is patient and positive with Laura.

At the end of the story, when dad collects Laura, she talks with him about John, admitting that he is quite nice but affirming that dad will always be her dad.

This story provides the opportunity to explore feelings when parents separate, and also when a parent finds a new friend or partner. Laura exhibits a range of feelings and expresses these through her behaviour. Some children will identify with her emotions and the situations that she faces. There is a positive message that whatever new relationships may emerge, the parent-child relationship can still remain special and distinctive.

This book is a redevelopment of *You Will Always Be My Dad*, which was included in the original *Family Diversities Reading Resource* (2008). The new version has a more child-friendly format, a streamlined storyline and has lost some of the more difficult or uncomfortable issues.



I Wished for You

By Marianne Richmond

Published by Marianne Richmond Studios Inc, Minneapolis, MN

2008

ISBN 9781934082065 (Richmond, 2008)

Mama and Barley Bear share the story of how Barley was Mama's wish come true. Mama has longed for the "empty place" in her heart to be filled with a special child. Barley's mum has asked God to help fulfil her wish, and Barley was picked especially for her.

They talk about how Barley's birth mother had made a different wish: for a family to take Barley and give him the love he needed. There is an interesting focus on the waiting that Mama endured, and a strong sense of her longing to have a child. This is an aspect not covered in books on similar topics. There is also a discussion about their differences, as Barley's fur is lighter in colour than his mum's. Overall this story conveys a strong sense of being wanted and of the love that makes a family. There is also an acknowledgement that wishes do not always come true.

There are some Americanisms, for example Barley is said to have grown in his mother's *belly*. The different fonts and text sizes can appear cluttered but this, and the differentiation between the narrative and spoken text, might be a useful discussion point.



If I Had a Hundred Mummies

By Vanda Carter

Published by Onlywomen Press, London

2006

ISBN 9780906500910 (Carter, 2006)

If I Had a Hundred Mummies considers the trials and tribulations that would be faced if a child had just that – a hundred mums. There would be endless bedtime stories, masses of kisses and people to care, the need for a huge house and a whole range of clutter and junk! However, there might also be plenty of holidays, lots of sweets and plenty of ice creams.

There would be a hundred people to keep an eye on the child and to make sure that she ate her greens. The prospect of one hundred mothers seems daunting and to bring a mixed range of positives and drawbacks.

The punch line is that one hundred mothers is not an exciting prospect, but having two is just fine. This is an unexpected end to the book. It provides an affirming message to children with two mums.

This is a super book to read aloud. The rhyme makes it appealing to the ear and children will find the content amusing and engaging. The illustrations are colourful and eye-catching. It could be accessed by children across the primary phase as an individual reader or a shared text.



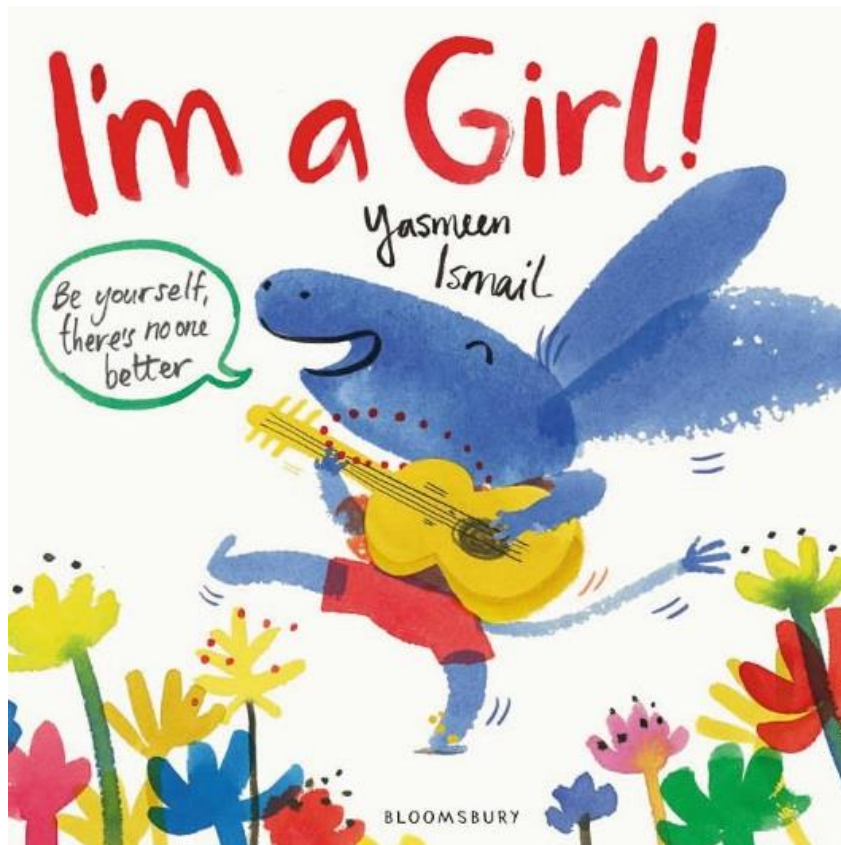
I'm a Girl!

By Yasmeen Ismail
 Published by Bloomsbury, London
 2015
 ISBN 9781408857007 (Ismail, 2015)

This is a dynamic and energetic book that celebrates the idea that we should be who we are. A girl tells the reader that although she is meant to be all sugar and spice, she is in fact sweet and sour and “not a little flower!” She is highly competitive, loves to win races and to be spontaneous. Whether playing games or music, she is often mistaken for a being a boy and repeatedly corrects people’s mislabelling.

At the end of the book she finds a boy who constantly reminds the world that he is a boy. It seems that the two of them are happy with their gender identity, but not the accompanying stereotypes that the world continually puts on them. These are addressed in a loud, colourfully bold and emphatic manner throughout!

This book pairs well with *William’s Doll*, published almost thirty years earlier and also included in this resource list. It will be interesting to compare children’s reactions to the content, presentation of gender and stereotypes, tone and appearance of each.



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I'm Special, I'm Me!

By Ann Meek

Illustrated by Sarah Massini

Published by Little Tiger Press, London

2006

ISBN 1845060431 (Meek, 2006)

This is a story about Milo, a boy who is rejected by his friends because they do not think him acceptable to take on the role of various characters in their games. For example, he is not strong enough to play the lion. He manages to turn this negative feeling into a positive, with the help of his mother and a little imagination.

This is a lovely story which could provide support and inspiration for children who feel a little different or unaccepted. Milo soon realises that by being positive, using his imagination and realising his own potential he is as special as everyone else.

The illustrations are lively and engaging.

The book is appropriate for use in both Key Stages 1 and 2. It could be read individually or with a whole class. It might also be used specifically with children who feel that they don't fit in.

Ann Meek won the *Search for a Story New Author Prize* for this book.



Introducing Teddy: a gentle story about gender and friendship

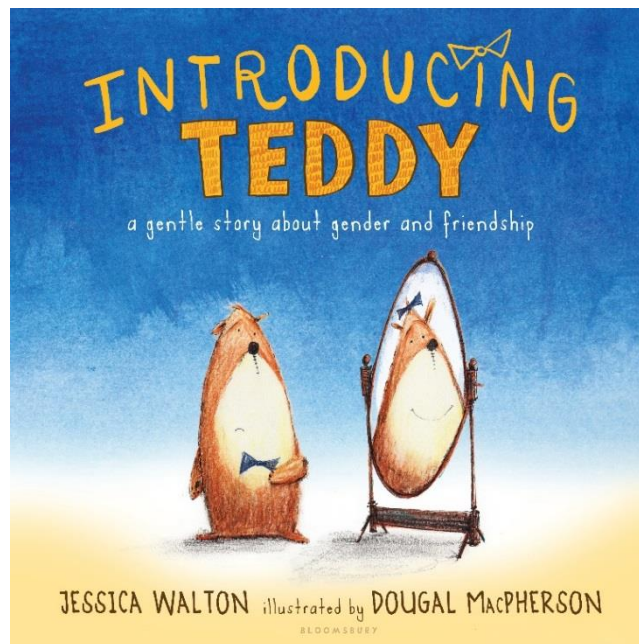
By Jessica Walton
Illustrated by Dougal MacPherson
Published by Bloomsbury, London
2016
ISBN 9781408877630 (Walton, 2016)

Thomas the Teddy and Errol play together every day. They ride their bikes, eat their lunch and plant things in the garden together. But one day Teddy is not happy, and is concerned that Errol may stop being a friend. Teddy explains that she has always known she is a girl teddy and wishes her name was Tilly. Errol is very supportive and calls a friend, Ava, to come and play.

Tilly is introduced to Ava, and after the initial fun the story begins to repeat itself, with Errol and Tilly playing together every day.

The illustrations are lovely and support the text effectively. The story is gentle, and includes repetition that affirms that Teddy and Errol, and then Tilly and Errol are continuing life together as normal. The main focus of the story is about being yourself, and being a good friend. Addressing the issues through a non-human character (Teddy/Tilly) may help discussion with children and enable adults to discuss understandings of gender identity more easily.

The book was initially crowdfunded in Australia, and came to wider publication very soon after. The dedications in the front of the book suggest that it is at least partly borne out of personal experience.



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Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute?

By Elke and Alex Barber

Illustrated by Anna Jarvis

Published by [Crowdfunded]

2012

ISBN 9780957474505 (Barber & Barber, 2012)

This is a very powerful and moving account of the sudden death of a parent. It is an important book to include within this resource, as it addresses a key moment in the life of a family. However, the book will need to be used with care and sensitivity, and may not be one that is included in the general collection within a school library: that is a matter for professional judgement.

Alex is three years old. He is heading on a boys' weekend away with his dad: his mum and sister are staying at home. After enjoying some activities, their first night away and a tasty breakfast, dad suddenly feels unwell. He asks Alex to go and find a neighbour to give assistance. Alex has to search all around the campsite, but is successful and makes it back to dad. An ambulance takes dad to hospital.

Mum arrives to collect Alex, and speaks with him about hearts and what happens when they stop working. She explains that daddy's heart has stopped working, and he will not be coming back. This is a message that she repeats and reinforces. They talk about death and dying and what might happen afterwards, and its finality. Later they talk about the funeral, which Alex, his sister and mother attend. There is also talk about what would happen if mummy also died, and they think about all the people who care about Alex and his family.

Care has been taken with the illustrations, with sensitive images that convey the mood and emotion of the story. They also help to ensure that the detail is expressed clearly. There is an affirmation that it is ok to be sad, and it is also ok to have times of happiness and celebration. The book is based on a true story, written in Alex's own words with additional detail included in the end papers. It addresses sudden death in an open, honest and clear manner, and is a unique book of high quality.



It's Okay to be Different

By Todd Parr

Published by Megan Tingley Books, New York, NY.

2001

ISBN 0316666033 (Parr, 2001)

This bright and extremely eye catching book shows many varied ways of being different.

It includes representations of children with different abilities, physical features and characteristics and children showing a range of emotions. It includes children with “different moms” and “different dads” and children who are adopted.

This book will appeal to children in the Foundation Stage and possibly in lower Key Stage 1. It looks at various and varied differences between children and affirms that it is ok to be different. The book concludes with a positive message from the author.

See also *The Family Book* and *We Belong Together*.



Josh and Jaz Have Three Mums

By Hedi Argent

Illustrated by Amanda Wood

Published by British Association for Adoption and Fostering, London

2007

ISBN 9781905664122 (Argent, 2007)

Joshua and Jasmine are twins. They have two mums, Mummy Sue and Mummy Fran, and a puppy called Bumps.

Josh and Jaz's teacher explains that all the children in the class are going to draw their family tree. This unsettles the twins: they lose their appetites and don't want to play when they get home. Eventually they are able to explain to their mums why they are upset – as they are concerned because everyone else at school seems to have a mum and a dad and they are different.

The mums retell the story of how the twins were adopted. Their birth mum and dad had been unable to learn how to take care of them, "because they took bad drugs that made them sick." They talk about the different kinds of families in which children grow up. The children realise that they actually have three mums and a dad.

Together, the family draws out the children's family tree. The children take it to school and feel accepted and valued by their teacher and classmates.

This is an affirming story about adoption and same-sex parents, which also affirms other models of family life. The book is suitable to use with children in Key Stage 1. The illustrations are of a good quality. Issues are dealt with in a realistic and supportive manner.



Journey, The

By Francesca Sanna
Published by Flying Eye Books, London
2016
ISBN 9781909263994 (2016)

This is an atmospheric book with powerful illustrations that capture the sense and emotion of the story.

When war comes, soon there is nothing left but chaos. The child, who remains unnamed throughout the book, loses their father to the war, and then flees with their mother. A safe place is found, but then the journey continues, and as greater distances are covered so their possessions gradually dwindle. The family has to cope with trying to cross a closed border, and eventually after a treacherous sea crossing they are closer to safety.

The story ends with a picture of the family travelling with a diverse flock of migrating birds. This is a poignant end to the story, and may help the reader to consider what the word migrant means, and how it is used in different contexts and in positive and negative ways. This is certainly a very timely publication and will be of particular use to those working with children in Key Stage 2 who are discussing issues in the news.

The book is endorsed by *Amnesty International*, who also provide online notes to support use of the book in classrooms.



Jump!

By Michelle Magorian
Illustrated by Jan Ormerod
Published by Walker Books, London
1992
ISBN 0744520738 (Magorian, 1992)

This is a story about a boy, Steven, who watches his sister at ballet class every week. He longs to join in with the plieing and jumping. His mother thinks that *real boys* don't dance; they play sports like basketball. However, when Steven asks if he can play basketball his mum tells him that he will need to grow first and that, in any case, they don't have a hoop or a ball.

Steven gets the opportunity to take part in the ballet's performance and demonstrates his skill for jumping in a dance specially created around a basketball theme. Both his parents are extremely proud of him and his mum comes to believe that he will make a fine sports player or dancer one day.

This is a good book to use when addressing gender stereotyping and issues around acceptance. The book shows a mixture of boys and girls at the dance class – showing that this is normal practice.

The illustrations are clear and life-like. This book is suitable for use with children in Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2. In the edition that is in the collection, the illustrations within the book are better than the cover implies.



Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers

By Mairi Hedderwick

Published by Collins Picture Lions, London

1992

ISBN 000664273X (Hedderwick, 1992)

Katie Morag's two Grannies are like chalk and cheese and she is caught between the two when glamorous Grannie Mainland arrives for the fair. Grannie Island is plain and tough and thinks Grannie Mainland is silly for all of her "fancy ways" and the way the men fawn over her.

A dilemma arises when Grannie Island's prize sheep, Alecina, gets covered in mud just before she is due at the show field. Katie realises how her two very different Grannies can work together by using Grannie Mainland's cosmetics to clean up Alecina in time for the fair.

When Alecina wins the show, thanks to Grannie Mainland, Grannie Island realises that Grannie Mainland is not so silly after all, and stops mocking her "fancy ways".

A strength of this book is the range of female characters it presents. Although Grannie Mainland is portrayed as quite weak and "girly," and Grannie Island could be viewed as being too "hard", Katie Morag provides a strong female role model for young girls.

It is not clear how Mr and Mrs McColl are related to Katie; she appears to live with them at the Post Office. Whilst the family relationship is unclear, there is a positive sense of an extended family. This is an interesting and appealing story set on an island in Scotland.

The book shows how differences are valuable and that people should work together. This could have been developed further by Grannie Mainland playing a more active role in resolving the problem, as her only contribution was to provide the equipment and she was unaware of the plan. This interaction and cooperation between the two Grannies would have sent a stronger message.



Kicking a Ball

By Alan Ahlberg

Illustrated by Sébastien Braun

Published by Puffin Books, London

2014

ISBN 9780723293354 (Ahlberg, 2014)

This is the story of a boy whose main love in life is to kick a ball. Anywhere, at any time he loves kicking – not throwing, or bouncing, or bowling or pinging or bashing, just kicking. Although so many other activities and possibilities are available, kicking a ball is his passion: it is his purpose.

We see the boy grow and mature. As a man he still loves to kick a ball and does so with his friends. When he becomes a parent he “starts the ball rolling again” and we see his daughter picking up the family tradition.

This is an enthralling story of a father passing his enthusiasm for football to his child. The illustrations contain lots of detail, and are a very good accompaniment to the narrative. There is some humour, particularly through repetition and the use of lists. There is nothing that can replace the obsession with kicking a ball! This is a warm story about interests shared between generations.



King and King

By Linda de Haan & Stern Nijland
Illustrated by Linda de Haan & Stern Nijland
Published by Tricycle Press, Berkeley, CA
2000
ISBN 1582460612 (Haan & Nijland, 2000)

King and King looks at marriage from the point of view of a prince – turning around the focus of many traditional tales. When the queen insists that the prince get married and take over as king, there begins a search for a suitable partner, which does not turn out as expected.

A host of eligible princesses are presented to the prince but he is unmoved by any of them. When the final princess arrives she brings along her brother, and “it was love at first sight”.

One strength of the book is that it avoids stereotyping the princes; rather it shows them as any other prince in a story or traditional tale would be characterised. With regard to the story itself, more time could have been spent exploring the princes’ relationship and seeing them interact, but this is a minor criticism.

The sequel to the book, *King, King and Family*, has not been included in this collection as the reviewers did not find the story to be of such a high quality.

The illustrations in this book are original and attractive and will be enjoyed by children of various ages.

Companion books could include Babette Cole’s *Prince Cinders* and *Princess Smartyants*, both which provide an alternative take on a traditional tale.



Letters Around the World

By Thando Maclaren
Illustrated by Luz and Kate Pope
Published by Tango Books, London
2004
ISBN 1857076176 (Maclaren, 2004)

This is a beautifully presented book which shows families from around the world. It shows a child with pen pals in various places. Each pair of pages reveals a different pen pal family, their location, home, family members and hobbies. A special envelope contains a pen pal letter to accompany each entry.

Children from India, the Caribbean, Indonesia, New Zealand, and east Africa share correspondence. Each one corresponds more than once and shares aspects of their life and their interests.

The book ends with a Pen Pal Game which folds out from the back of the book. It provides the opportunity for children to explore the information from one country.

This is a highly engaging, bright and appealing book which will help children to appreciate the lives of children around the globe. The twelve letters are fascinating and are supported by other brief information and illustrations. This book is ideal for use with children in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. Teachers will be able to adapt the content to provide further differentiated activities and to promote research by their children.



Lion Who Wanted to Love, The

By Giles Andreae

Illustrated by David Wojtowycz

Published by Orchard Books, London

1999

ISBN 1860399134 (Andreae, 1999)

Presented in verse, *The Lion Who Wanted to Love* tells the story of Leo, a brave little lion who wants to look for love and to make friends with the other animals in the jungle. This attitude sets him apart from his pride, and Leo sets out on his own.

The story takes the reader along with Leo on his journey. He helps and makes friends with the other animals through his kindness. Daring to be different is a key theme and is shown to have its rewards in the end. When Leo is nearly swept over the waterfalls his new friends, who have been looking for a way to thank Leo, rush to his rescue and work together to pull him back from the edge.

A strength of this book is the moral/message that it conveys. The ending of the book offers a distinct way of thinking, showing the reader that they can be who they want to be and that they need not conform or act in a particular way because others tell them to do so. It teaches that as long as we can open our minds to accept the world, we will find much love and can make dreams come true. It is realistic in showing that this way is not always easy.

One disturbing point comes early on in the story when Leo's mother tells him that he has no place in the pride because he is unwilling to hunt. This raises issues of the rejection which can come through being different and would need to be addressed sensitively with children.

This story challenges stereotypes and presents opportunities for meaningful discussions about the value of being different.



Living with Mum and Living with Dad

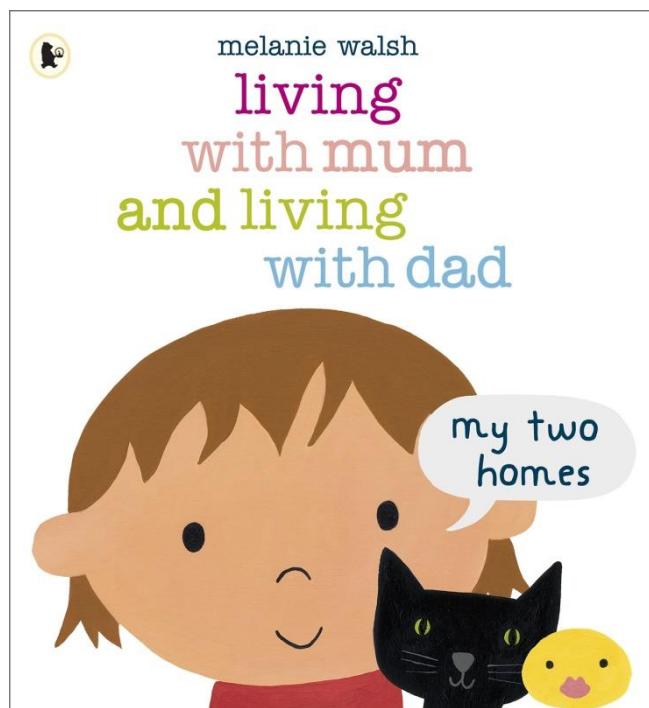
By Melanie Walsh
Published by Walker Books, London
2012
ISBN 9781406341768 (Walsh, 2012)

This is an interactive, “lift the flap”, book designed for younger children and dealing with parental separation.

A child explains that their parents do not live together any more, and they show us how life works now that they split their time between two homes. Using flaps, first one home and then the other is shown. This provides a very effective and highly engaging way of hearing about the child’s living arrangements. We see two bedrooms, how a birthday is celebrated in two different ways, and what happens when both parents attend the end of year play at school (separately).

The book ends with an affirmation that the child is loved by both parents, and also by a wider array of family members.

The illustrations are very simple, colourful and a perfect accompaniment to the story. This book would partner well with *Two Homes*, also in this resource list, which takes a similar approach.



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Lucy's Quarrel

By Jennifer Northway

Published by Scholastic Children's Books, London

1997

ISBN 0590542796 (Northway, 1997)

This is a beautifully illustrated story about two cousins who have a quarrel. Lucy has been talking about her forthcoming birthday party far too much and this has irritated Alice. When they quarrel and refuse to apologise to one another Lucy faces the prospect of holding her party without her best friend. One child is black and the other is white, although this is incidental to the story. The book illustrates an extended mixed 'race' family.

The book presents a realistic view of how friends relate to one another and some of trials that they face. Children will recognise the common experience of "falling out".

The text explores what a good relationship the children have and how they miss each other but find it difficult to say sorry. In the end they are reunited.

This book is particularly recommended for use with children in Key Stage 1.

Further texts by the same author and in the same series are:

Get Lost, Laura (1993 London: Scholastic) ISBN 0-590-54023-8

Lucy's Rabbit (1995 London: Scholastic) ISBN 0-590-13546-5



Lulu Reads to Zeki

By Anna McQuinn
 Illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw
 Published by Alana Books
 2011
 ISBN 9781907825040 (McQuinn, 2011)

Lulu's day always ends with a story, and this book starts with one about a girl and her new baby brother.

The family is getting ready for the birth of Lulu's brother, and we see mum, dad and Lulu making preparations around the house. When the baby is born Lulu is always there with a book to support each of her brother's activities, whether it be crying, bathing, eating or having his nappy changed. Lulu also has quality time with her parents, and thankfully when Zeki sleeps (which is quite a lot) Lulu is able to read for her own pleasure.

This is a reassuring story, where the child is accepting and supportive of this important event and the changes in life that follow. It will be very useful to read to children in a similar position. It is also an engaging story about a child who loves to read, and Lulu provides a positive role model for others.

Mabrook! A World of Muslim Weddings

By Na'ima B Robert
 Illustrated by Shirin Adl
 Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London
 2016
 ISBN 9781847805881 (Robert N. B., 2016)

Muslims are getting married around the world, whether in Morocco, Pakistan, Somalia or Great Britain. They celebrate in different ways in each geographical location, according to local practice and custom.

Stylised collage-style drawings accompany the text, showing celebrations and stories from each location. Whilst each context may have its distinctive practices, what is clear is that the rites and ceremonies are shared across the world: the Imam performs the marriage, and the witnesses testify to the sincerity of the occasion.

The book closes with a glossary of key vocabulary relating to Muslim weddings and culture, and a note about Muslim weddings, highlighting the author's intention to celebrate similarities and differences. The book offers congratulations: Mabrook!

Made By Raffi

By Craig Pomranz

Illustrated by Margaret Chamberlain

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London

2014

ISBN 9781847805966 (Pomranz, 2014)

Raffi lives with his mum, dad and dog. He likes to ask lots of questions, including why he feels different from other children. Is it because of his appearance, his choice of clothes, or something else? He likes to sit by himself, and this brings him to sit with a teacher who is knitting. He learns the skill and embarks upon a scarf for his father's birthday. His parents support the new hobby, although there is some teasing from other children at school.

That night he chats with his mum about why he is different. He wonders if there might be something called a *Tomgirl*. Mum affirms their love for him and how proud they are of him and his interests. Later, when the class put on a play, Raffi designs and makes a cloak for a main character, to general acclaim. Maybe he could become a famous designer one day?

When his own birthday arrives, his parents give him a gift of special labels that he can add to his clothing creations, identifying him as maker. This reinforces the unconditional love of the parents, and the support of Raffi's family.

This is an engaging story of a child who senses they might be different to some of those around them. It addresses teasing, how children have varied interests, and gives a sense of hope and a positive outcome as Raffi becomes accepted for his creative skills. Whether the knitting of a rainbow scarf implies a gay subtext is for the reader to determine. The overall message is one of gaining confidence and pride in one's own identity, skills, interests and differences.



Mama Loves Me From Away

By Pat Brisson

Illustrated by Laurie Caple

Published by Boyds Mills Press, Pennsylvania

2004

ISBN 9781563979668 (Brisson, 2004)

Sugar and her mother share the same birthday. Mama tells her the story how she was born. It is a story that Sugar has heard many times before, but she loves hearing it so much that she pretends she is hearing it for the first time. Mum is a great storyteller, and always provides a good tale just before bedtime.

After this positive scene setting, and establishing the bond between mother and daughter, the story takes a twist. Sugar now receives stories from her grandma, because mum has had to go away, and is now in prison. It takes three bus rides to go to visit her on Sundays.

When Sugar goes to visit the prison on their joint birthday, they are able to share stories and mum has prepared a special book of stories to give to her daughter. The longing to be together again "as soon as we can" is the refrain in this final part of the story.

This book provides an example of a child's experience when their mother is in prison, including visiting times, whilst initially establishing and maintaining their loving and positive relationship. This could provide positive support for a child in this situation, although the depiction of visiting times is quite brief and makes the experience seem extremely positive and pleasant.

The illustrations are lovely and detailed, and support the text effectively. The overarching message is of the loving and enduring bond between mother and daughter.



Mama Zooms

By Jane Cowen-Fletcher

Published by Scholastic, London

1993

ISBN 0590457756 (Cowen-Fletcher, 1993)

Mama Zooms is the story of a little boy and his mother, who is in a wheelchair. The boy tells of all the things he and his mum do together and the games they play using the wheelchair, which takes on a variety of roles including a racing car, ship, racehorse and aeroplane.

Mama Zooms presents a rare example of a parent using a wheelchair and shows that disability does not have to affect a person's capabilities as a mother or playmate.

The small amount of text follows a simple and repetitive pattern and is suitable for young children. The illustrations are attractive and go well with the text. This is a light-hearted book that may introduce the idea to children that some people use wheelchairs. It would be useful as a shared or independent text with children in the Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1.



Meet the Parents

By Peter Bently

Illustrated by Sara Ogilvie

Published by Simon and Schuster, London

2014

ISBN 9780857075826 (Bently, 2014)

This rhyming book explores the many purposes of parents: for mending things, playing games, sharing meals and cuddles and sorting things out when you get in a mess or a muddle.

The illustrations show a diverse range of parents. It could be used to discuss the roles of parent(s) and how they help and support us. The emphasis is on the positive part parents play in keeping children safe and enjoying life together with their children.

This book might be used to celebrate parenthood, to consider how and why we appreciate parents, and also to think of how unique each parent is. Throughout, the text refers to parents without defining what this means, making the book very inclusive. Only once does it refer specifically to mum or dad, which means that for the most part any child can identify with the ideas it includes, whether they have one, two or more parents/carers.

The illustrations add a colourful and humorous dimension to the book.



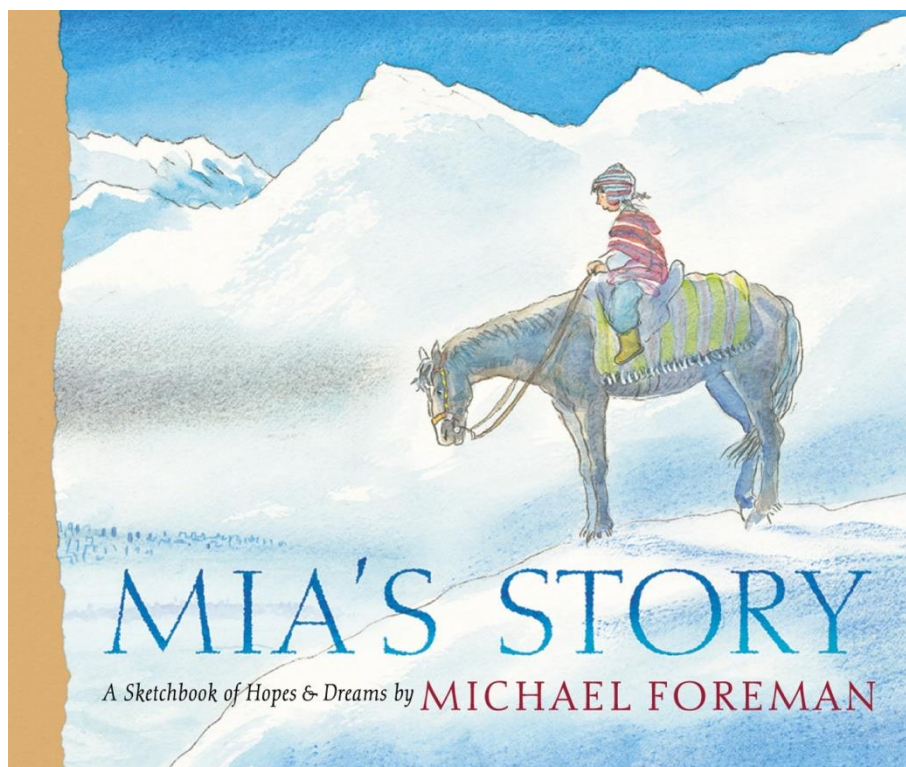
Mia's Story

By Michael Foreman
Published by Walker Books, London
2006
ISBN 9781844282784 (Foreman, 2006)

Mia lives in a village somewhere between the big city and the snowy mountains. Her father dreams of being able to build a house with bricks. One day he comes home with a puppy, which she names Poco. They enjoy life together, until one day Poco goes missing. Although she searches long and hard, Mia is unable to find him. On her way home, she passes from the snow covered ground to that covered by small white flowers. She gathers a clump to take home and plant, to remind her of the search for Poco.

Eventually Mia's flowers grow and multiply. She takes them to market, where dad has to help with the sales as they prove so popular. They continue to sell the flowers together, both dreaming of being able to build a house from bricks. One day a dog runs up to Mia and licks her face, it is almost as though he recognises her.

This is a hopeful story of life, in what appears to be a South American village. The story is augmented by detailed notes on each page: a format which helps the reader to explore Mia's life and to learn more about her. Overall a sensitive and warm story about a father and daughter, and how they come to share hopes for the future.



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Mice Next Door, The

By Anthony Knowles

Illustrated by Susan Edwards

Published by Macmillan Children's Books, London

1991

ISBN 0333449770 (Knowles, 1991)

This book tells the story of a group of mice, the Hardy family, which moves in next door to another family. The story outlines the stereotypes of having mice living next door – as perceived by the father and told by the children of the neighbouring family.

The father has a negative attitude to the new neighbours, because they are different, yet the mother seems more positive and welcoming. She sees ignorance and sometimes hypocrisy in what the father is saying.

In the end, because of the mice's helpfulness, the father's stance is altered and the families become friends. The mice could represent any new family moving into an area. The book challenges the stereotypes held by the father – and the focus on a family of mice makes it possible to apply the ideas to a range of settings and to discuss them in abstract ways which do not directly affect particular individuals.

The book needs to be used sensitively as some of the expressions used by the father may be a little "close to the bone" depending on the circumstances of the children reading the text. It may be best used as a shared text, rather than being read by individual children, so that a teacher can support discussion and address any stereotypes or prejudices held within a class.



Milly, Molly and Different Dads

By Gill Pittar

Illustrated by Chris Morrell

Published by MM House Publishing, Gisborne, New Zealand

2002

ISBN 1869720210 (Pittar, 2002)

Milly and Molly learn how different dads can be in a story with a message of acceptance of difference.

The story begins with Sophie, whose dad has left the family home. Prompted by this the other children in Sophie's class talk about their dads. In the pages that follow the reader is introduced to many different types of dads and family relationships, including: two dads, absent dads, stay-at-home dads, step-families, disabled dads and adoptive dads.

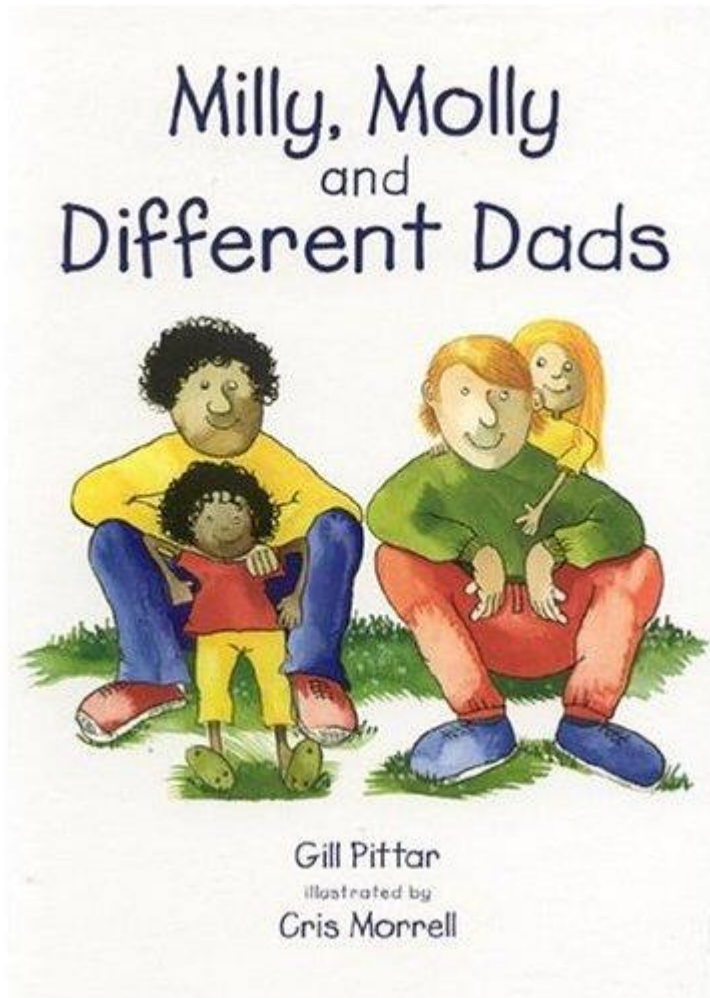
One strength of the story is that it presents this wide range of dads and family compositions as normal and acceptable, not as something different or unusual. The children share their own experiences of dads and no one is challenged if their experience is different (for example, Milly replies to Elizabeth, who has two dads, with the simple answer, "I've only got one dad").

The illustrations of the children and their dads represent a diverse range of ethnicities, and show all the children in happy scenes with their fathers. The children with absent or disabled dads appear content with their situations, which are perfectly normal to them.

Towards the end of the book there are some touching moments as Alf and Mrs Blythe confide that their dads have died, while Sophie squeezes into the group to "softly" say that her dad is deaf.

continued/...





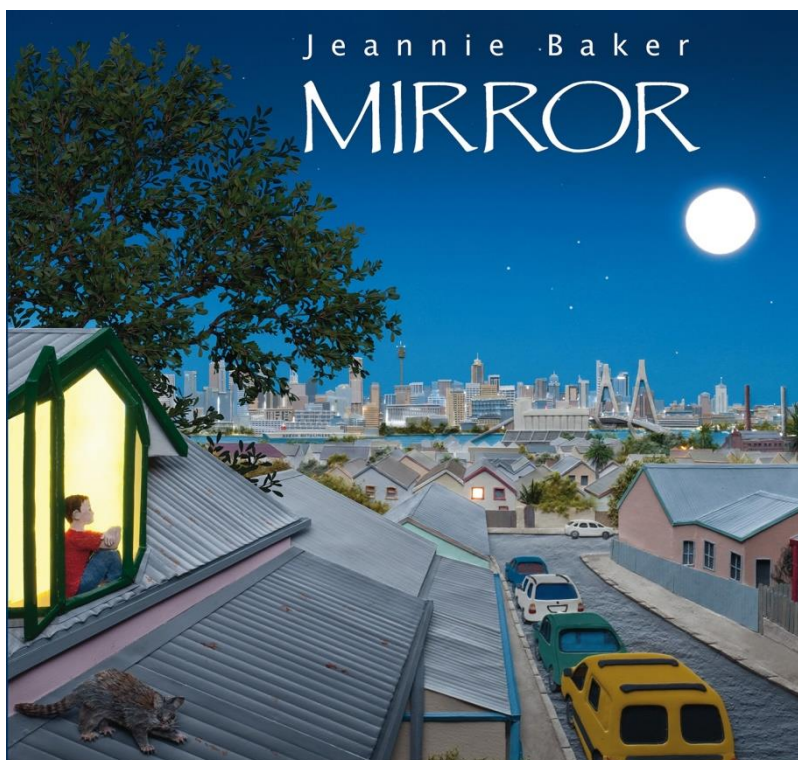
The book reaches its conclusion, however, without returning to the original issue of Sophie's dad. Perhaps this should have been returned to and addressed, possibly by the children offering advice to Sophie on how to deal with the change in her situation, especially as at least one of the children has already said their dad now has a new family. Whilst this lack of resolution is a potential weakness in the book, it will provide the opportunity for a teacher to develop a discussion with their class, possibly offering advice during a Circle Time activity. The sense of unity and togetherness within the class is a very positive aspect of the book.

Mirror

By Jeannie Baker
 Published by Walker Books, London
 2010
 ISBN 9781406309140 (Baker, 2010)

Mirror is really two books in one: the first, reading from right to left, illustrates the life of a boy and his family in Morocco; the second, reading from left to right, shows the life of a family in Sydney, Australia.

The book is designed so that both stories are read simultaneously. With no text, there is much to discuss drawn from inference and deduction from the beautiful and detailed collages. Baker, through an inspirational use of the picture book format, makes it possible for the reader to compare and contrast the lives of these two families and see that although there are differences they have a great deal in common. It is important that children not only see



their own families reflected in the books they read but also that they find books that take them outside their own experience to witness the families and lives of others. The brilliance of this book is that it does exactly that in just 48 pages.

A Country Far Away by Nigel Gray and Philip Dupasquier (1988: Andersen Press, London) uses a similar concept, using the upper and lower parts of a page and a single line of text to tell the parallel stories of a child in an African village and one in Britain. There is much to contrast between the locations, and indeed much that is similar. One limitation is the reference to “Africa” which is extremely general, when compared with the specific focus on Britain.

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Mommy, Mama and Me

By Leslea Newman

Illustrated by Carol Thompson

Published by Tricycle Press, Berkeley, CA

2009

ISBN 9781582462639 (Newman, 2009)

This very simple book looks at the lives of Mommy and Mama. Using alternating pages their interests and activities are presented as they interact with their daughter.

Designed for younger children, it presents a positive representation of everyday activities in the life of the family. The gentle rhyme is reassuring and enjoyable. The illustrations are colourful, and the presentation as a small book made on hardboard will make it suitable for little fingers.

A companion book *Daddy, Papa and Me* by the same author and illustrator (ISBN 978 1 58246 262 2) takes a similar path but with two fathers: Daddy and Papa cook, play make tea and play musical instruments with their child.

Both books present positive images of a child with their two parents. The relationship between the parents is not made overt, but is probably a same-sex couple in each case. However, a child might relate to having two dads or two mums in a variety of ways, and these books could also be helpful in those situations.



Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress

By Christine Baldacchino

Illustrated by Isabelle Malenfant

Published by Groundwood Books / House of Anasi Press, Toronto

2014

ISBN 9781554983476 (Baldacchino, 2014)

Morris Micklewhite lives with his mother Moira and their cat named Moo. He loves Sundays, because of the breakfast pancakes, and he enjoys Mondays because he goes to school. He enjoys many aspects of school, including singing, snack time, painting and puzzles.

Most of all, Morris likes to visit the dressing-up area, where the tangerine dress is his favourite attire. He likes the noise it makes, its feel, and the colour is a reminder of many special things. Perhaps this is a story about a boy who has well-developed or acute senses, and appreciates vibrant colours, sounds, textures and sensations.

Sometimes other boys and girls make fun of him when he wears the dress. Whilst he pretends that he cannot hear their comments, he can. Sometimes other children don't sit with him, and by Friday Morris has a tummy ache and spends the day at home in bed reading. This gives him the chance to gather his thoughts and prepare for the days ahead; the weekend gives the opportunity to build resilience. It may be that when the tangerine dress turns into a tiger, it is a representation of inner confidence coming to the fore. In Chinese culture, tangerine is a symbol of luck, but that may be reading too much into the colour chosen in this tale, although Morris' fortunes do improve during the story. In Europe and America this orange colour is sometimes associated with extraverts, the unconventional, warmth, fire and energy. Some of these facets certainly relate to Morris.

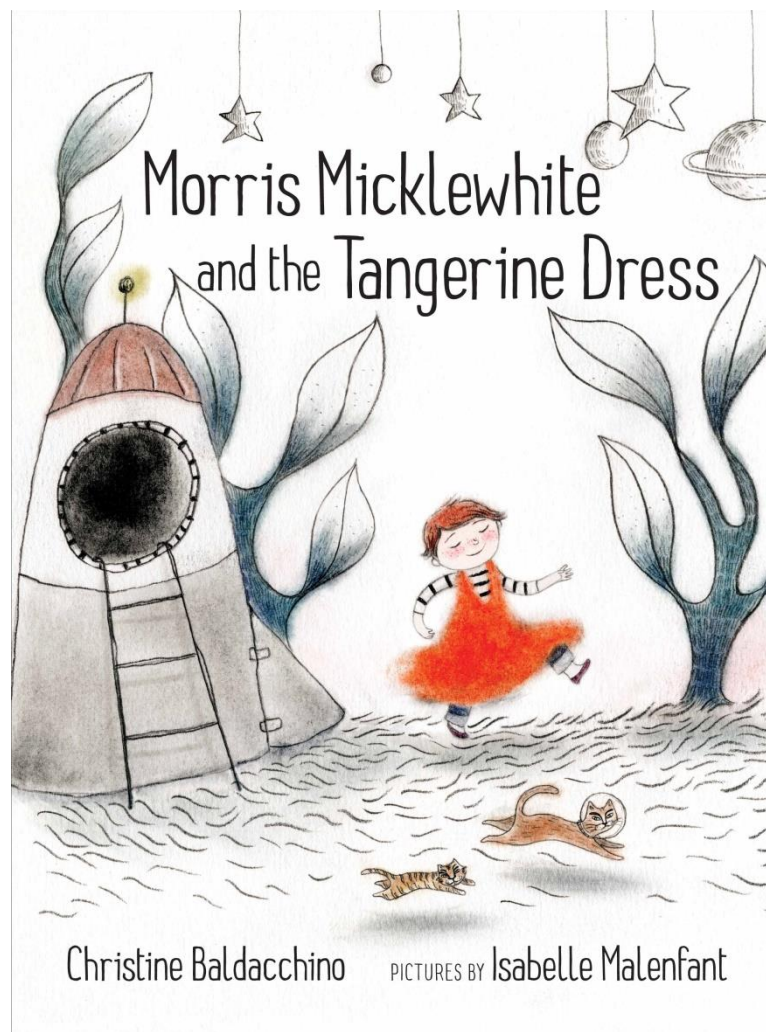
Morris creates a painting using ideas from his dreams and imagination. It shows him atop a huge blue elephant, wearing the tangerine dress. He takes the painting back to school, and creates imaginary situations that appeal to the other children. He might not have been allowed to play in the cardboard space ship by the other children, but now his space ship includes elephants and tigers: it is far more exciting and appealing. The dress suddenly becomes a side issue, if an issue at all, and the children benefit from Morris' imagination and creativity to enrich their play.

A point to note: when Eli and Henry decide that it does not matter whether astronauts wear dresses or not, this is more than a point about Morris. The children need to celebrate the achievements of astronauts across decades and to understand that gender is not a barrier to space travel. The point goes unchallenged in the book, but it needs to be discussed.

This book is essentially about a boy who likes to wear a dress. It may be about gender identity, traditional expectations, or pressure to conform (although the girls wearing trousers seem to be accepted without question). Perhaps this story is really about having the choice to express yourself in the way that you wish, and about developing resilience. As the story unfolds, the dress becomes less of an issue, and Morris' personality and talents come to the fore and are appreciated by the other children. Furthermore, the fact that Morris takes some time out to reflect, recover and recharge is important. This stresses the

need to find ways to cope when times become difficult or we are challenged, and the resilience and confidence that is built through this process is an important life skill for all people to learn.

Readers will want to consider whether this story is about a boy wearing a dress, or whether it is an allegory about difference, acceptance, resilience, gaining self-belief, self-value and self-acceptance, and being able to face the world and to make a positive difference when those around you lack such capabilities.



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Most Important Gift of All, The

By David Conway

Illustrated by Karin Littlewood

Published by Gingham Dog Press, Columbus, Ohio

2006

ISBN 0769646182 (Conway, 2006)

Ama lives in a village on the edge of a great valley in Africa. News reaches her that she has a new baby brother; she is very excited. Members of the local community bring gifts for the baby, and Ama also wants to give a gift. "Give him love," her grandmother advises. After dreaming about this gift, Ama sets out to find it. She encounters birds and animals who she asks for its source. Eventually a wise lion advises her that she will know when she has found it.

Ama's father comes to meet her as she walks back to the village, and they return home for a celebratory meal. As they clap and sing Ama experiences the gift of love with her family and new baby brother.

This is a beautifully illustrated book which captures the joy of the experiences of a young girl and her family. It would provide a good starting point for discussing feelings on the birth of a sibling, and for talking about gifts and their meaning.



Most Precious Present in the World, The

By Becky Edwards

Illustrated by Louise Comfort

Published by British Association for Adoption and Fostering
2010

ISBN 978 1 905664 73 3 (Edwards, 2010)

This is the story of Mia, and her questions about being adopted. Early in the story there is repetition of the fact that Mia is adopted, in an affirmative and positive manner. Mia discusses the differences between her and her adoptive mum and dad, and questions why her birth parents did not keep her. The adoptive process itself is presented positively, with Mia's birth parents wanting her to be safe and happy.

The story includes some of Mia's feelings about being confused, her sadness, wishing she wasn't adopted and occasional anger. This provides some realism about the feelings that can be faced, which stands in contrast to the ideal life presented in some other books. Mia's mum is positive about these challenges, and acknowledges that being adopted isn't easy. This is a reassuring story about Mia being a special gift to both sets of parents.

It ends optimistically, with Mia affirming some positive aspects of being adopted. Louise Comfort's colourful and appealing illustrations mirror the content of the story effectively.



Motherbridge of Love

Illustrated by Josee Masse

Published by Barefoot Books, Bath

2007

ISBN 978 1 84686 047 8 (Masse, 2007)

This book presents a poem (authored anonymously) considering the contribution to life made by a birth mother and an adoptive mother. The two are considered in tandem. It is particularly positive how the birth mother is included, which is a distinctive strength of this book.

The illustrations are beautiful, with plenty of detail to explore. This is a life-affirming book, which celebrates the bonds between parents and children. It can also be used to consider links to different cultures, if a child has been adopted from a different country.



Mum and Dad Glue

By Kes Gray

Illustrated by Lee Wildish

Published by Hodder Children's Books, London

2009

ISBN 978 0 340 95710 3 (Gray K. , 2009)

This rhyming book reads with good pace and an engaging lilt that addresses the difficult issue of parents divorcing in a thoughtful and sensitive manner.

The main character is a young boy who seeks a pot of glue to mend his parents' relationship. He considers lots of options, and ends up in a glue shop where the wise shopkeeper offers advice and support. The boy realises that whilst his parents' relationship may be broken, their love for him is not. This is an affirming realisation in amongst the other difficulties he is facing.

The illustrations support the story very well, with all the initial pages showing images that are broken or cracked, in line with the boy's experience. This is a powerful account of a child's thoughts and perceptions that both parents and children may find helpful. The high quality illustrations add to the content of the story and also give some sense of reassurance about the boy's developing positive understanding of his situation.

Clearly children in the UK are not permitted to buy glue, but as a metaphor this book provides plenty of opportunity for reflection and developing perspectives on separation and divorce.



Mummy for Owen, A

By Marion Dane Bauer

Illustrated by John Butler

Published by Simon and Schuster, London

2007

ISBN 978 1 84738 095 1 (Bauer, 2007)

This is the true story of a young hippopotamus, Owen, who is separated from his family when the rains wash them all out to sea. Once safe back on a beach, Owen finds Mzee a giant tortoise who becomes his new parent.

This story tackles the change in Owen's life in a sensitive way, without avoiding the emotion felt at the point of losing his family. The illustrations emphasise his sense of being alone, whilst also reinforcing the connection he has with both his birth and adoptive parents. It shows that change can come out of the blue, which is an important element not covered in other books on adoption. The inference may be that this is an example of adoption following bereavement.

It may be useful to consider the idea that Owen chooses or finds his own adoptive parent, although this need not be a weakness in the story. There is also the change from living in a close-knit extended family, to having a single parent, which might reflect the experience of some children. The use of animal characters provides a useful distancing technique to help address issues of loss, change and adoption with children.



Mum's Late

By Elizabeth Hawkins

Illustrated by Pamela Venus

Published by Tamarind Ltd, Sine Loco

1999

ISBN 1-870516 40-0 (Hawkins, 1999)

Mum's Late is a story about a group of children waiting to be collected from school by brothers, carers, mothers and fathers. This positively highlights family diversity. However, it doesn't explicitly state whether or not the mother and father are single parents.

A further strength of this book is that the author cleverly weaves a story around the topic of family diversity. The main story is about a boy waiting for his mother to pick him up from school and although she is only five minutes late his imagination conjures up many reasons why she has not yet arrived. The story ends reassuringly when Jerome's mum arrives.

The boy's thoughts are highlighted through blue/grey illustrations which contrast with the colour ones which demonstrate reality. The illustrations are life-like, delicate and highlight family diversity. They particularly concentrate on families from different ethnic backgrounds. This is a further strength of this children's book. Furthermore, there is a balance of pictures and text per page making it an ideal book to read with a class. The pictures support and add meaning to the text which also means that the book lends itself to independent reading.

Some ideas are amusing e.g. the idea that Jerome's mum has been squashed by an elephant. However one is more disturbing, playing on the teacher's suggestion that mum has been "held up". Jerome imagines her being held up by robbers, although their gun is clearly a toy. The book shows children that it is ok to worry if their parent/carer is late and suggests that other children experience the same feelings. In the end there is a positive outcome and reassurance. The text is quite simple and generally composed of monosyllabic vocabulary and simple sentences, aiming it at a younger reader.



My Daddy's Going Away

By Christopher MacGregor

Published by Giddy Mangoes Limited, Brighton

2009

ISBN 9780956465108 (MacGregor, 2009)

This book was written with the intention of supporting families who are facing temporary parental separation.

The illustrations show an alien family facing the departure of dad. Each colourful page is accompanied by brief text in rhyme, with one verse per page. There is some gentle humour, a sense of how busy dad will be and ways in which the family will keep in touch.

The book considers the feelings encountered during separation, looking forward to being reunited, and the celebration on daddy's return home. At the back of the book is a place for the children to draw or insert a photograph of their own family. The space-age theme may provide a useful distancing technique when discussing separation, and means that the content of the book can be applied to a range of contexts.

The book has a foreword by HRH Prince of Wales.



My Dadima Wears a Sari

By Kashmira Sheth

Illustrated by Yoshiko Jaeggi

Published by Peachtree, Atlanta, GA

2007

ISBN 9781561453924 (Sheth, 2007)

Rupa's Dadima wears a sari every day, whether morning or evening, in the house or in town, made from cotton or silk, worn tight or loose.

They discuss the sari, and whether the grandmother ever considers wearing different clothing, like Rupa or her mother; the grandmother indicates that she has never really considered that as an option. She explains that a sari can be useful as a fan when the weather is hot, as a pouch when collecting things on the seashore, or as a canopy when the rain starts. It is a versatile piece of clothing.

Dadima explains that a sari is a special piece of cloth that you wrap around yourself. Rupa and her sister look at different designs from grandma's wardrobe. Three are particularly important: one because it was her first sari; another because she wore it on her journey from India to her new home (in America); and a third because she wore it on her wedding day. Both Rupa and her sister want to try wearing a sari, and Dadima helps.

The soft watercolour paintings provide a beautiful accompaniment to the story.

The book has an endnote from the author, explaining her own experience of wearing saris, and why they have importance for her. There is a series of photographs showing how to put on a sari, with accompanying instructions.



My Dads

By Kelly Bennett

Illustrated by Paul Meisel

Published by Walker Books

2010

ISBN 978 1 4063 3207 0 (Bennett, 2010)

This is one girl's account of her two fathers: Dad and Pa. Across each double page spread we see the things that Dad and Pa do, their hobbies, dress sense, interests and attributes. They are both different and distinctive, but the thing that they have in common is that they both love their daughter.

The brief text on each page presents the two parents in a punchy and to-the-point manner, focussing on their differences. The illustrations are colourful and detailed, and it would be easy to use this book without referring to the text. The distinctive aspect of the book is that it does not identify the relationship between the two fathers: they could be biological and adopted dads, a married couple, one could be step-father, the story does not tie down the relationship. The key thing is that the girl has two dads who both love her.

This book would work with children with a range of experiences of family life, and provides a useful way of discussing different ways of being family. It could also helpfully encourage children not to make assumptions about other children's families.



My Dad Used to Be so Cool

By Keith Negley

Published by Flying Eye Books, London

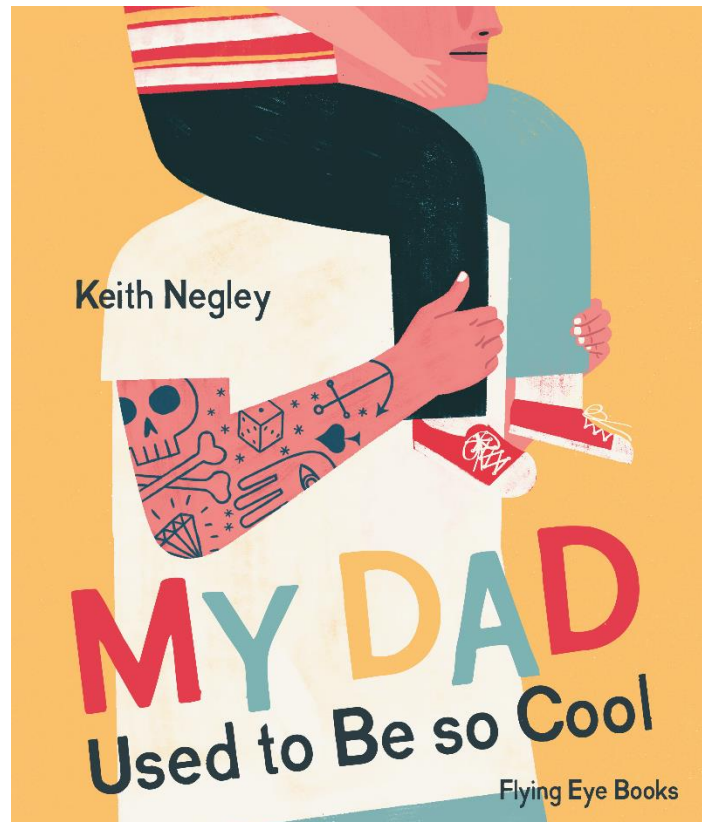
2016

ISBN 9781909263949 (Negley, 2016)

A boy introduces his dad who used to be in a rock band and was really cool. We see dad in the past, with his drum kit, guitar and microphone, as well as with his motorbike. We also see him with a basket of clothes to be washed, the vacuum cleaner and tying his son's shoelaces.

The son wonders what might have happened to make such a change in his dad's life: from being cool to being quite serious. The reader will see that having a son has made the difference to dad. We also see them playing in the park and having fun in a fold-out double spread page spread in the centre of the book.

This is a thoughtful book considering how life changes through different stages, the difference having a child can make, and the special relationship between a parent and child. The illustrations have a retro feel, reminiscent of the days when dad "used to be cool".



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My Family is Forever

By Nancy Carlson

Published by Puffin Books, London

2006

ISBN 0-14-240561-2 (Carlson, 2006)

This book shows the life of a young girl who has been adopted. She wonders about her birth parents and details how she was chosen specially by her parents. The main message is that it is not looking similar that makes a family – it is the love and care shared with one another. The child feels very positive about her adoptive family and her life.

The book shows that families care for each other in good times and bad. It touches on the adoption process. The book also addressed gender stereotypes – showing mum and dad undertaking a range of roles.

The book is well illustrated with a range of bright and appealing pictures.



My Mum and Our Dad

By Rose Impey

Illustrated by Maureen Galvani

Published by Penguin, London

1990

ISBN 0-670-82561-1 (Impey, 1990)

This book is really clever and imaginative - providing a witty and honest portrayal of family life. It outlines two different families: one with a boy and his mum and one with a dad and his two daughters. The text does not overtly state that the mum and dad in this instance are single parents, however with no mention of another parent and illustrations that only portray one mum and one dad it implies that in both cases that they are single parents. One strength of this book is that it presents two families within one story.

The story is about the perspectives of both the children and the adults. The first part of the story outlines what the boy and mum do not like about each other and this theme continues into the second half of the story with the dad and the two girls. Ironically, the qualities that the children don't like about their parents and the qualities that the parents don't like about their children are the same. This adds a hint of humour and realism to the story. Furthermore the realistic and delicate illustrations add meaning to the text.

The shape that the words form on the page mirrors what the words suggest. So when the story gives images of children rushing, the text itself rushes across the page. This adds interest to the text and hopefully will encourage reading.

The gentle rhyme inserted into sections of the story and its abundance of interesting verbs would make this story lovely to read aloud with children. Furthermore, its collection of simple sentences and monosyllabic vocabulary would most probably appeal to boys and girls within Key Stage 1 or early Key Stage 2. The book subtly shows how families can be different in terms of who is in a family, but at the same time demonstrates the love that they share.



My Mum Goes to Work

By Kes Gray

Illustrated by David Milgrim

Published by Hodder Children's Books

2006

ISBN 978 0340 88368 6 (Gray K. , 2006)

Kes Gray's book provides reassurance for a child when their parent goes to work. In simple short sentences it affirms that when mum is away she still thinks about, cares for and wants to engage with her child. How does the child know this? Because when she comes home she shows affection, care and joins in with play and activities. In fact, there is so much going on that the child is happy to wave her off to work again – which we infer brings some respite from all the love!

This is an amusing book, with engaging and lively pictures that give a strong sense of the bond between mother and child. It is written by Kes Gray, an award-winning children's author.

This book would pair well with *The First Day of School*, which is on a similar topic.



My Mum is a Wonder

By Michèle Messaoudi

Published by The Islamic Foundation

1999

ISBN 0 86037 298 7 (Messaoudi, 1999)

This is the story of a boy and the admiration he feels for his mother. It shows their life through a single day, from the start when she is reading the Qur'an, to helping him dress, meal times, praying and learning together and looking after others. They celebrate Eid with friends and relatives.

The boy tells how his mum cares for him when he is unwell, and that he does his best to help when she needs it. He looks forward in time to when their roles will change, and as they grow older he will be responsible for caring for her.

This is a positive and accessible story about a Muslim family, focussing on the relationship between mother and son. The illustrations show their home life and happiness together.



My Two Grannies

By Floella Benjamin

Illustrated by Margaret Chamberlain

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books

2007

ISBN 978 1 84507 643 6 (Benjamin, 2007)

This is the story of a girl and her two grandmothers: one from Trinidad and one from Barnsley. Alvina asks her grandmas about their respective locations, their favourite music and food. When Alvina's parents go away to celebrate their wedding anniversary, the grandparents argue about who will take care of her. They each have ideas for games, visits and meals, but as their ideas are so different Alvina ends up doing none of them. When they disagree about who will tell a bedtime story, she falls asleep waiting.

Alvina diplomatically gets the grannies to take turns in leading a day. They all enjoy the experience and learn much about each other's cultures and backgrounds. This is an affirming story about how members of a family can learn from one another. The book might pair well with *Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers* (also contained in this resource list).

There is a similar book by the same author and illustrator, *My Two Grandads* (ISBN 978 1 84780 060 2). This shows the story of Aston and his grandads from Rochdale and Trinidad. They are both musicians, and end up combining their bands to play at Aston's school.



Nadia's Hands

By Karen English

Illustrated by Jonathan Walker

Published by Boyds Mill Press, Pennsylvania

1999

ISBN 978 1 59078 784 7 (English, 1999)

Nadia is to be the flower girl at her aunt's wedding. She is given advice by family members, drawn from their experience of having made mistakes in the role in the past. She prepares for the special day, and experiences apprehension, particularly about having mehndi patterns on her hands.

This book gives a good sense of the warmth and love of an extended family, and of some of the preparations and practices relating to a wedding within a family from Pakistan. The pastel illustrations add warmth to the text, and are a perfect accompaniment to the story.

Overall, Nadia comes to appreciate the specialness of the ceremony and the place of traditional practices that accompany it. Having faced up to her fears, she experiences the joy of the occasion and her achievement: she accepts cultural practices as being a part of her own life and heritage.



New Year's Reunion, A

By Yu Li-Qiong

Illustrated by Zhu Cheng-Liang

Published by Walker Books, London

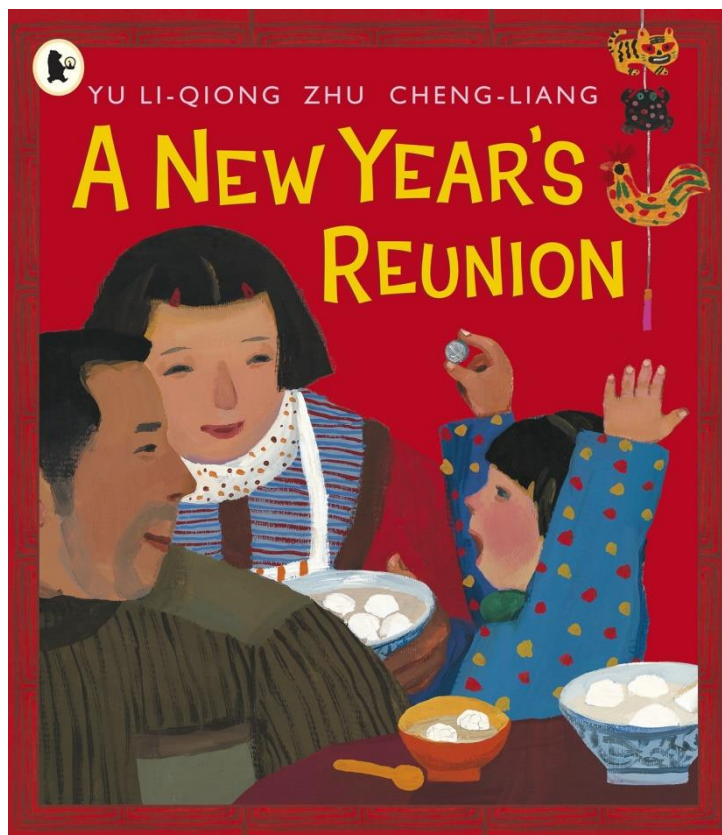
2008

ISBN 978 1 4063 3857 7 (Li-Qiong, 2008)

Maomao's father works many miles away, but is coming home after a long absence to celebrate Chinese New Year. This is his once-a-year visit.

The family enjoys the celebrations together, take time to pay visits and see the dragon dance in local streets. Maomao finds a lucky coin in a rice ball, and treasures it. After losing it for a while it is found safe and sound, and given to dad as a parting gift when he heads back to work.

The illustrations in this book are detailed and eye-catching. There is lots to see and the joy of the story comes across effectively. This book may be useful when working with children whose parents work away, particularly for extended periods of time. It also shows a family reunion, a time of celebration, and some New Year's traditions. Whilst the story is fictional, it is based on the reality faced by many families in China where migrant workers only return home for a few days each year.



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No Mirrors in My Nana's House

By Ysaye M Barnwell

Illustrated by Synthia Saint James

Published by Voyager Books, London

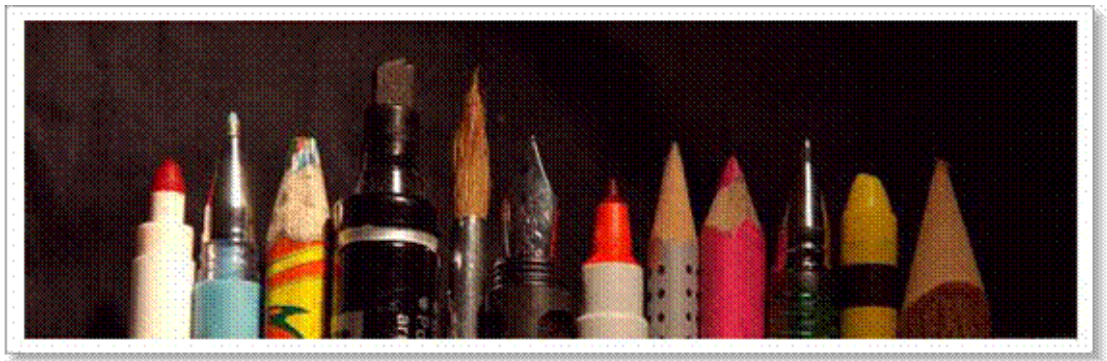
2005

ISBN 0 15 205243 7 (Barnwell, 2005)

Nana does not have any mirrors in her house. Her grandchild sees beauty reflected in Nana's eyes, rather than being able to look in a mirror. The child is not able to see what they look like physically or how their clothes fit and hang; but does see the cracks in the wall, hear the noise in the hall and feel the rubbish beneath their feet. All these are taken in a positive manner. They do find the world outside a magical place and it seems that the child is able to find beauty in the small things in life, and is not vain or obsessed with material things.

This book emphasises how important it is for children to sense love and affirmation from those around them, in this case Nana. There is a sense of innocence rather than vanity, from a child who knows only how to love and not to hate: this is Nana's gift to the child.

The illustrations are bold, often very colourful and have impact. They were prepared in acrylic paint on canvas. The book includes a CD of the accompanying song.



Nutmeg Gets Adopted

By Judith Foxon

Illustrated by Sarah Rawlings

Published by British Adoption and Fostering Association

2007

ISBN 978 1873 868997 (Foxon, 2007)

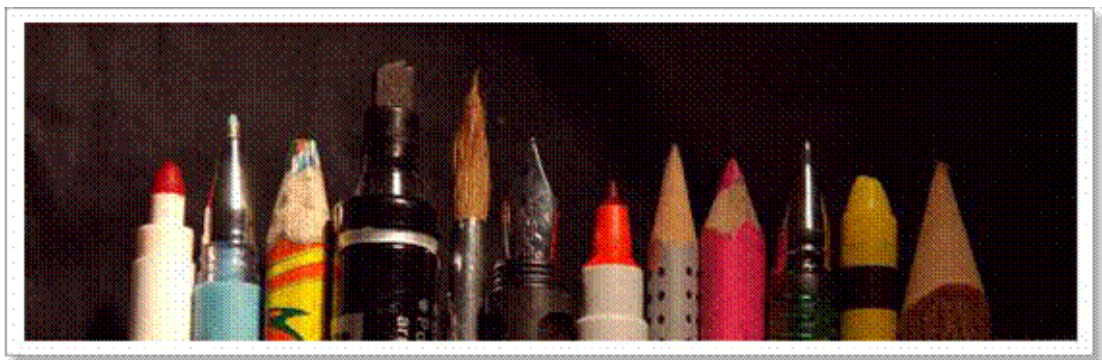
Nutmeg the squirrel lives with his family in a nest in a large tree. His mother finds it hard to keep the family safe, and sometimes Nutmeg needs support from his friends. Sometimes Nutmeg is hungry or cold, hurt by visitors to his home or upset when his parents argue.

Nutmeg's mummy goes to Beth Badger to ask for help, and she arranges for them to visit a family centre in order to gain support. Eventually daddy leaves home, and after things become more difficult for the family mummy asks for someone to help to look after the children and give them a safe home where they are loved just as much as she loves them.

This book is probably best used as a shared text. The illustrations suggest that the story is aimed at younger children, but there is a significant amount of text on each page. The story considers a range of issues that might be faced in a home when various pressures and changes are experienced. There is an emphasis on how much the mother loves the children, although she is not in a position to provide them with the care they need. A significant feature of the book is that there is no immediate happy ending, and the children's developing care is seen more as a process.

This book is distinctive in its approach, because it shows how the mother loves the children very much, but finds it increasingly difficult to care for them. It shows fostering and adoption, including a sense that there is a legal process to the latter, in more detail than other books.

This book includes Practice Guidelines as an additional document. These pick out key themes from within the book, as well as giving a model for a Family Tree. Again this is different to other books, as this guidance can be removed when the book is used with children.



On the Day His Daddy Left

By Eric J Adams and Kathleen Adams

Illustrated by Layne Johnson

Published by Albert Whitman & Company, Morton Grove, Illinois

2000

ISBN 0-8075-6072-3 (Adams & Adams, 2000)

On the Day His Daddy Left is a story that addresses divorce and family separation. It is based around a boy, Danny, who asks a variety of people whether his parents' divorce is his fault. He presents this 'secret question' on a piece of paper. The answers to this question are all 'No'. However, this does not stop him questioning his parents' divorce. The choice of characters illustrates who children could talk to when going through a similar experience to Danny. One of the most interesting, perhaps, is his friend Cindy whose parents are also divorced; he finds he is not alone in his situation.

When Danny gives his mum the piece of paper she writes 'No' on to the back and she says every time he needs to ask this question he should turn it over and read the answer. Because Danny asks himself this question a lot during the days and weeks after his daddy left, it eventually falls apart and floats away in the wind. This presents a hopeful and positive image to the reader.

However, the writer shows the complexity of a child's thoughts and feelings in relation to divorce and states: 'he kept on asking questions about the day his daddy left. Lots of questions. And he always will.' This adds a hint of realism to the story and suggests that although one question has blown away with the wind, it does not prevent others from being asked. The realism is definitely one of the strengths of this book as it makes it more true to life and allows children who have parents who are divorced or separated to feel that they are not alone. The final lines suggest that there will always be questions about the day Danny's father left; this leaves the story unresolved, but perhaps this also adds to the realism of the situation.

The last page contains advice on talking to children about divorce. This may be of use to parents, carers and teachers. The illustrations are realistic and support the text displaying the boy's emotions successfully. The text employs a range of sentence types and descriptive vocabulary, which engage the reader effectively. The repetition of the phrase 'on the day his daddy left' reinforces how much the issue is on Danny's mind.

This book would be a useful classroom text when addressing the topic of divorce and feelings, but could also be read independently.

One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads

By Johnny Valentine

Illustrated by Melody Sarecky

Published by Alyson Wonderland, Los Angeles, CA

1994

ISBN 1-55583-848-0 (Valentine, 1994)

The book refers to the parents of Lou, who are both male and blue. The dads are shown engaging in a range of day to day activities. The fact that Lou has two dads is not an issue in the story. Throughout the book Lou is asked by his friend if his dads are different to her dad, and then his friend wonders why they are blue. The answer is simple: they just are. At the end an additional character appears whose name is Jean: her dads are green.

The book is cleverly written so that the issue is that the dads are blue. The fact that they are both male is incidental. This makes it possible to consider diversity in families, focusing on an aspect of difference which does not require an immediate consideration of sexual orientation or gender.

The book shows that two parents can be of any gender and colour and still be good parents. It has appealing illustrations and the rhyming is engaging and reminiscent of the Dr Seuss series.

The book will be enjoyable for children to read or to hear read aloud. It is suitable for inclusion in a collection of picture books; older children will find it useful as a starter for discussion and reflection. It provides a positive and humorous illustration of same-sex parents with which some children will identify.

The book is American and includes the US spelling of “mom”.



Ossiri and the Bala Mengru

By Richard O'Neill and Katharine Quarmby
Illustrated by Hannah Tolson
Published by Child's Play (International), Swindon
2016
ISBN 9781846439247 (O'Neill & Quarmby, 2016)

Ossiri is a traveller girl with an ambition to be a musician.

Despite reminders that they are “rag and bone people” and not musicians, Ossiri heads into the woods to make her own instrument, using willow and a variety of recycled items, and to practice. She plays with enthusiasm, but unfortunately the sound is not melodious! When they set up camp in Lancashire she is warned that the noise will wake the ogre in the hills, but she fails to take heed.

When the noise does wake up the ogre he is not best pleased. However, he requests a further performance and begins to join in singing and dancing. The ogre gives Ossiri a silver chain as a token of his thanks, and when she returns a day later she receives a gold coin.

Although her family still think the music is a terrible noise, they have to admit that no one has ever become so rich so quickly, and that she certainly has a calming effect on the ogre. When a visitor arrives at the camp, Ossiri admires his shiny leather boots. Later he steals her instrument and goes to the ogre to play. By the time the family get to the location, all that is left are the boots and the musical instrument. The moral of the story is that the ogre enjoyed the music when played from the heart, but not when played for gain.

This authentic tale, told by a Romani storyteller and picture book author, gives a very interesting insight into traveller life and culture.

There is a brief glossary of key words and phrases at the start of the book.



Our Gracie Aunt

By Jacqueline Woodson

Illustrated by Jon J Muth

Published by Hyperion Books for Children, New York, NY

2002

ISBN 0-7868-0620-6 (Woodson, 2002)

When a brother and sister are taken to stay with their mother's sister because their mother neglects them, they wonder if they will ever see their mother again.

This is an atmospheric book with appealing illustrations. It is written from the point of view of Johnson, the young brother of Beebie. The children consider whether to open the door to Miss Roy (a social worker), and show a sense of loyalty to their mother; they are used to being left alone for prolonged periods.

The children are cared for by their aunt, Gracie, who lives in a lovely home with toys. They quickly warm to her. She had lost touch with her sister after an argument, but is willing to accommodate the two children.

Later, there is a reunion with their mother, who explains that even when you love someone you can't always take care of them. The text raises a wide variety of issues about why families can't always live together, although the specific reasons are not made clear; mum clearly has difficulties which mean that she cannot care for the children at the present time. The issues are handled very sensitively and the mother is not characterised as a *bad* parent. This is a tender and caring story which might be particularly useful when supporting looked after children.

Some of the spelling is American e.g. neighbor and tire (tyre). The book is particularly suitable for children in Key Stage 2.



Our House on the Hill

By Philippe Dupasquier
Published by Andersen Press, London
1997
ISBN 0-86264-167-5 (Dupasquier, 1997)

Each double page spread in this book presents a month of the year. Alongside a large general view that shows the changing seasons are smaller illustrations showing family life in a home. The illustrations are based on the author's own home.

A family of four is shown living and celebrating different points in the year. It might be interesting to consider with children what the relationships between the different people are – as the lack of text means that these are implicit rather than overt. *Mum* cooks, *dad* bathes the children, *mum* cleans the car, and *dad* gardens (although the adults could be uncles, aunts, step parents, or carers).

This book provides a great deal of potential for discussion, particularly as it does not include any text except for the names of the months of the year. The illustrations are detailed and appealing to the eye. This book is suitable for all ages.

This book might pair well with *Mirror*, which is also a book without words looking at people's homes and environments.



Pass it, Polly

By Sarah Garland

Published by The Bodley Head, London

1994

ISBN 0-370-31858-7 (Garland, 1994)

Pass it, Polly tackles the stereotype that girls should not (or cannot) play football. The characters in the story and the illustrations represent different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, although these are not referred to overtly. The text addresses inclusion on a range of levels.

Polly and her best friend, Nisha, are the only girls to sign up to play in the school's forthcoming football match. The practice goes badly and both girls are disheartened. After unsuccessfully trying to learn more about football in books at the library, Nisha's Grandpa shows them how to play. Polly and Nisha work hard and the boys come to see them as valuable members of the team. In the end Grandpa, Mr Patel, is invited to help to coach the team and lots more girls want to join in.

Appropriate football vocabulary is used. The text is divided between the typed narration and handwritten speech bubbles. This would appeal to an independent reader, but less confident readers might struggle with some aspects. It will interest both boys and girls and can be used as a shared or independent reader for children in upper Key Stage 1 or with children in Key Stage 2.



Pearl Power

By Mel Elliott

Published by I LOVE MEL, Hastings

2014

ISBN 978 0992 8544 1 6 (Elliott, 2014)

Pearl Power is apprehensive: she is moving house because mum has received an important promotion at work. She thinks about the things and people she will miss, but also of the new possibilities that are opening up. Pearl and mum set out on their new adventure together. Their new house is bigger than before, with a beautiful garden. They are both nervous as they head to their new school and new place of work.

Pearl is a firm believer in girl and boy equality. When she faces challenges in her new school and is mocked by Sebastian (a boy in her class) she responds positively, and with confidence. Later when she finds Sebastian upset and on his own at home time her sympathy for his predicament highlights how wrong his earlier irrational behaviour was.

This book has a very positive approach to change, to facing challenges and occasional failure, and to dealing with difficult situations. Pearl is the main character, and it is interesting that the illustrations show very few others: we see their feet or legs, but only the faces of other children. It explores how a mother and daughter embrace change together, but the star of the story is Pearl who shows persistence and resilience.



Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek

By Minfong Ho

Illustrated by Holly Meade

Published by Candlewick Press, Cambridge, MA

2004

ISBN 978 0763 620417 (Ho, 2004)

It is morning, and dad comes to play “Jut-ay” with his daughter (the expression that Thai people use when playing peek-a-boo with their children). However, she is nowhere to be found! The reader need not be concerned, as the initial pages show her hiding outside the bedroom window, but dad needs to find his daughter. This rhyming book shows the game unfolding, with the father asking the dragonflies, rooster, green-backed turtle and other animals where his daughter might be. Children can enjoy spotting where the daughter is hiding in the detailed and colourful illustrations.

The book ends with the daughter declaring “peek-a-boo” and that she found dad! A final double-page spread shows their garden, all the animals, and all the places she has been hiding.

This is a lovely story of a father and his daughter playing a game. The illustrations provide plenty of opportunity to join in with the adventure – searching for the daughter throughout the book. It is an ideal text to read aloud and to share with groups of children.



Petar's Song

By Pratima Mitchell

Illustrated by Caroline Binch

Published by Frances Lincoln, London

2003

ISBN 9781845073527 (Mitchell, 2003)

Petar loves to play the violin. Whenever he plays everyone listens; whatever the season or celebration there is joy at the sound of his music-making. However, when war breaks out Petar, his mother and sister have to evacuate, leaving his father behind. They travel on foot for three days over the mountains and cross the border to reach safety. They are tired, cold and hungry; they find a place in a doorway to sleep. A local man gives the mother work in his café and provides a shed in which they can live. Petar does not feel creative and cannot play his violin. However, this changes suddenly one evening. He returns home and plays a new tune – a tune of hope that one day he will be reunited with his father. The book ends with a double-page illustration of a ruined village.

This is an endearing story of a boy's sadness at the loss of his home and separation from his father. It does not end with a happy reunion, although there is some sense of hopefulness. Caroline Binch's illustrations are rich in detail and add significantly to the expression of emotion. This book would be ideal to use when discussing issues relating to separation, displacement and refugees.



Picnic in the Park

By Joe Griffiths and Tony Pilgrim

Illustrated by Lucy Pearce

Published by British Association of Adoption and Fostering, London

2007

ISBN 978-1-905664-08-5 (Griffiths & Pilgrim, 2007)

It is Jason's fifth birthday and he is going to have a picnic party in the local park. He has invited all his friends and their families.

David and his dad arrive with a special birthday cake; Raj and Anita arrive with their daughter Sheila; Jack and Debbie arrive with their two foster children; Mark arrives with his mum and dad; James and Ellie arrive with their two dads; Antonio arrives with his mum and a gift of a balloon; Matt arrives with his dog; Amber arrives with her two mums; Jane and Peter arrive with their children and stepchildren; Lindon and Sandra arrive with their new baby; and Nicola and Carmen arrive with their mum and dad. The picnic turns out to be a celebration of diverse families.

This book is very appealing for children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The illustrations are simple and colourful. The families represented are diverse and include those from different ethnic backgrounds, adoptive and foster families, a child using a wheelchair, children with one and two parents and a single person.

The book includes a place for children to list the members of their family and a template to use to add their own family to the picnic in the park. Overall, this is a very affirming and positive resource.



Piggybook

By Anthony Browne
 Published by Walker Books, London
 1996
 ISBN 0-7445-3301-X (Browne, 1996)

Anthony Browne has created a hilarious and engaging story of family life.

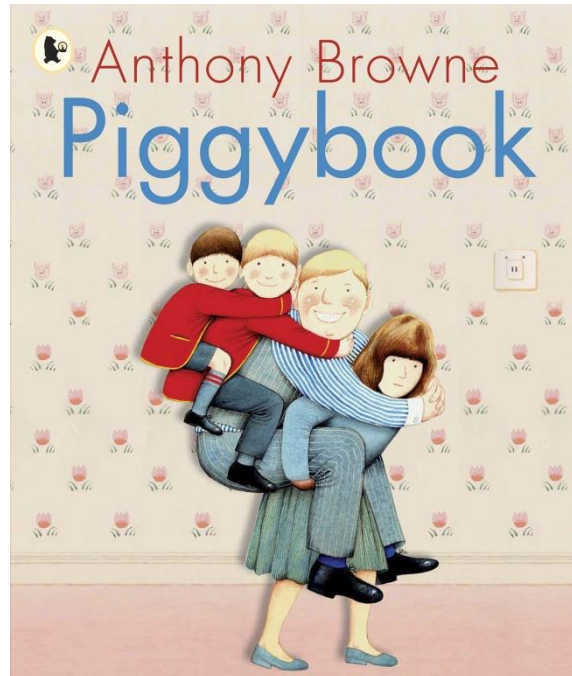
Mr Piggott and his two sons live as a traditional nuclear family with Mrs Piggott. They have a nice house with a nice garden, a nice car and a nice garage. However, Mrs Piggott has to run the house, feed the family, deal with all the daily chores and fulfil her own responsibilities at work.

When Mrs Piggott does not come home one evening, the family routines fall into disarray and eventually the male family members end up foraging for crumbs of food along the skirting boards!

This is a very amusing story which challenges male chauvinism. Eventually the family is reunited: the children learn to make their own beds, and Mr Piggott and his sons learn to help to run the house. They reform from being pigs to appreciating the shared experience of being a family.

This is a salutary tale challenging traditional male stereotypes. It certainly caused discussion about family roles and values amongst the reviewers and other colleagues.

Anthony Browne's illustrations warrant close examination (spot the pigs!) and add to the hilarity (despite the seriousness of the issues raised). This book will promote both humour and serious discussion. It is most appropriate for use with older children as very young children may worry that if they have left their own house in a mess and not helped with the housework that Mum might not be there when they get home.



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Prince Cinders

By Babette Cole
Published by Puffin Books, London
1997
ISBN 0-14-055525-0 (Cole, 1997)

Prince Cinders is a gender-stereotype-challenging retelling of the story of Cinderella.

In short, the story demonstrates that it is not always the handsome prince who finds his princess. Babette Cole never fails to make the reader smile, and every page will cause the reader to grin.

The book effectively challenges a range of stereotypes, but turning the three brothers/bullies into housework 'fairies' may well reinforce a stereotype in its own way. There is certainly plenty of material to discuss.

This book is recommended as an independent reader for children in Key Stage 2 and as a story for a class to share. Children throughout primary school will find it amusing. The illustrations are detailed and add to the humour.

For a companion book see Babette Cole's *Princess Smartypants*.



Princess and the Castle, The

By Caroline Binch

Illustrated by Caroline Binch

Published by Jonathon Cape, London

2004

ISBN 0-224-06461-4 (Binch, 2004)

This book is effective in addressing different issues. Not only does it focus upon the death of a parent but it also addresses the process of coming to terms with it. When Genevieve's father is lost at sea and does not return, Genevieve, her mum and her new brother grieve and then begin to accept his death. When Genevieve's mum introduces Cedric to her children their relationship develops. Death, grief, single parenthood and step families are topics addressed within the story. The strength of this story is that these topics are not focused upon explicitly. Instead, a story is woven around the issues to engage the reader, whilst subtly addressing several issues.

The main story involves Genevieve imagining that she is a princess of the castle across the sea. However, her fear of water – a result of her father's death - prevents her from going onto the beach. Cedric builds up her confidence and takes her and her family to the castle where she set all her stories. This makes for a positive ending. The book could provide a stimulus for discussing different types of family, although this is not the main focus of the story.

The watercolour illustrations are lovely and demonstrate the relationship between the members of the family, whilst also supporting the text. They bring the story to life. This book would be suitable to read with a whole class or for children to read independently.

The story may appeal more to girls because of the princess theme, however the wider topics presented within the story will hopefully interest all children. The themes are broad and apply universally.



Princess Smartypants

By Babette Cole

Translated by Kanai Datta

Published by Magi Publications, London

1992

ISBN 1-85430-295-7 (Bengali and English) (Cole, 1992)

As with *Prince Cinders*, *Princess Smartypants* challenges gender stereotypes and promotes individuality and difference. This traditional-tale-with-a-difference describes how Smartypants fights to preserve her independence. This particular edition is a dual language book written in English and Bengali.

Princess Smartypants does not want to get married and enjoys being a Ms. Her parents have other ideas however, and present her with a stream of suitors. Eventually, the princess decides to set the princes tasks in order to decide on a husband. The reviewers had much discussion about the relative ages of the princess and the princes: in general, the suitors seemed to be older.

Children will enjoy the weird and wonderful pets that Princess Smartypants has and the exciting, amusing plot. The text is suitable for children in lower Key Stage 2 as an independent reader, or for use with children in Key Stage 1 as a shared text. The illustrations are attractive and humorous – matching the story effectively.



Purim Superhero, The

By Elisabeth Kushner

Illustrated by Mike Byrne

Published by Kar-Ben Publishing, Minneapolis, MN

2013

ISBN 97807601390626 (Kushner, 2013)

Nate wants to dress up as an Alien to celebrate the Jewish festival of Purim. All the other boys in his class have planned to go as superheroes. But Nate loves aliens, whether it be reading about them, drawing them or looking out of the window to try to spot them in the night sky.

Over dinner, Nate talks with his dads about costume options. He will need to make a decision soon as the costume will need to be made. He discusses his options with one of his dads, and considers the Purim story of Queen Esther, who saved the Jewish people by being true to who she was. Nate reflects on the story, and realises that being different can sometimes be a lonely experience.

At the party his superhero costume wins the prize for being the most original. He attends as "Super Alien" combining the theme taken by all his friends with a unique twist of his own. This book will be a good resource when children are celebrating or learning about Purim. Its strength is that it shows a boy considering the implications of choosing to be different, and realising that whilst there can be consequences there are also decisions about being true to oneself.



Ramadan Moon

By Na'ima B Robert

Illustrated by Shirin Adl

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books

2009

ISBN 978 84507 922 2 (Robert N. B., 2009)

As the month of Ramadan begins, the family look out for the crescent moon. There is a real sense of anticipation. Their excitement grows and the time of prayer, fasting, visiting the Mosque and undertaking good deeds begins.

The book shows many of the activities of Ramadan with some good detail. The pictures are bright and eye catching, and the impact of the experience on the family is communicated clearly. It gives an interesting insight into how a family marks Ramadan and some of the practices they undertake. This is followed by Eid, which is a time for new clothes, prayers, charity and gathering with family and friends. A very useful introduction to Ramadan and Eid for those experiencing them for the first time, or learning about them in school.



Rauni and the Rye

By Gordon Boswell

Published by Cowbit St Mary's Literacy Project and Lincolnshire Traveler Education Service
2002

ISBN N/A (Boswell, 2002)

This is the story of Rauni the lurcher who lives with a traveller family. The family has three children, who attend a local school during the winter months when they are settled on a site. The children enjoy walking Rauni.

When Rauni goes missing everyone is worried, and days pass without her returning. Then she is discovered in a quiet horse box, where she has given birth to a litter of puppies. The family takes good care of her, but she also goes out hunting in order to provide for the new puppies herself.

This is an engaging story that gives some insight into the life of a traveller family. It uses some Romany (Romnus) words within the text, and provides a glossary to help those readers unfamiliar with them. Despite the cover, which looks dated, the pictures are a good accompaniment to the story and the photograph on the back shows what the characters look like in real life.



Rebecca's Passover

By Adele Geras

Illustrated by Sheila Moxley

Published by Frances Lincoln, London

2003

ISBN 9780711219595 (Geras, 2003)

Rebecca's family is preparing to celebrate Passover. They will sit down on the first two evenings for a special meal called a Seder and eat Matzah for eight days. They will ask special questions and sing songs as well as listening to the amazing story of Moses and the Israelites escaping from slavery in Egypt many years ago.

This book provides a very good resource to support learning about this Jewish festival with children. The amount of text and detail might make it particularly appeal to older children. The illustrations combine the story of the family with this account of Moses. It also includes additional details about Passover and a recipe for Haroset (an apple and cinnamon mixture eaten during the special meal).



Ringo the Flamingo

By Neil Griffiths

Illustrated by Judith Blake

Published by Red Robin Books, Swindon

2006

ISBN 1-905434-06-5 (Griffiths N. , 2006)

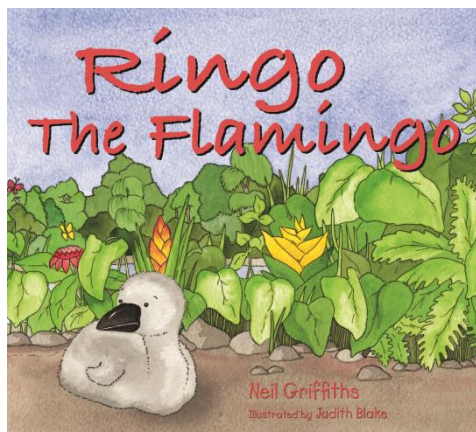
When Ringo is born, his parents know that something is different. Even with significant help, his mum and dad are unable to help him to walk. As the days, weeks and years pass his parents provide a high level of care. He becomes a popular member of the flock and has a positive attitude to life. Occasionally he feels sad – when he sees the other flamingos racing or flying – but at other times he is happy to be alone and enjoys his own company.

One day a new flamingo arrives and begins to make fun of Ringo because of his differences. The flock chases the stranger away. Later, when fire engulfs the woodland, the birds panic and fly away – leaving Ringo alone. He notices a chick has also been left behind – and uses all his strength to make his way to provide care.

When the flock returns Ringo's bravery is acknowledged and is never forgotten. He becomes the chief egg and chick sitter.

This sensitive and imaginative story addresses a range of issues. Ringo's disability and the ways in which he is appreciated and valued by the flock provide a range of points for discussion. The fact that he becomes a protector and subsequently a surrogate father also adds an additional positive message.

The book is well presented with a range of attractive illustrations. The story is dramatic and engaging and will appeal to children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It provides a positive image of bravery from one who has previously been assumed to need protection.



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Dr Neil Griffiths is an Honorary Graduate of Bishop Grosseteste University.

Rosie Revere, Engineer

By Andrea Beaty

Illustrated by David Roberts

Published by Abrams Books for Young Readers, New York NY

2013

ISBN 9781419708459 (Beaty, 2013)

Rosie Revere is inspired by the junk that she finds around her. Where others may see rubbish, she sees the opportunity to be creative, to design and to make. Rosie makes things secretly, although when she was younger she had been braver making hot dog dispensers and helium pants for her uncles and aunts.

We also hear of her relatives, including Aunt Rose who used to build aeroplanes: Rosie has positive role models from other generations who have challenged gender stereotypes. Her aunt teaches her that failure is a part of the learning process and a platform on which to build future success.

Written in rhyme the story is accompanied by colourful and extremely detailed illustrations which repay closer inspection. On the final page of the book is a brief historical note, indicating the roles played by women in industry during World War 2.



Silence Seeker, The

By Ben Morley

Illustrated by Carl Pearce

Published by Tamarind Books, London

2009

ISBN 978 1848 530034 (Morley, 2009)

Joe has new neighbours. His mum explains that they are asylum seekers, but Joe mishears and thinks that they are “silence seekers”. When he meets the new boy next door, he offers to take him to find some silence. They explore the laundry in the basement, the canal bank and the local dump, but none turn out to be quiet. They share a sandwich, and the boy takes Joe’s hand. Perhaps they will explore further tomorrow.

The next day the boy and his family have gone. Joe checks all the haunts that they visited, but there is no sign of him. He hopes that they have moved on to find the silence they sought.

This is a quirky book, which takes a misheard phrase and uses it to very good effect. The boy may not really be looking for silence, but certainly his quest will be one for peace and stability. It is a heart-warming story of how one neighbour tries to help another, and shows the brief experience of a family displaced and seeking asylum.

The pictures are warm and in a style that will probably appeal to some older readers in Key Stage 2. They show some of the low-level disruption that may be faced by Joe in his life (e.g. young people misbehaving by the canal, or noisy people in the laundry), which stand in contrast to the situation his new friend has escaped from.



Silver Shoes

By Caroline Binch

Published by Dorling Kindersley Limited, London

2001

ISBN 0-7513-2754-9 (Binch, 2001)

This book is about a young girl, called Molly, who loves to dance and often wears her Grandmother's silver shoes. However, when she starts a dance class she can no longer wear her Grandmother's shoes because they are too big and the dance teacher is worried she will hurt herself. All Molly wants is a pair of silver shoes of her own so that she can be a 'proper dancer'.

This book is excellent in illustrating family diversity. Different families and their ethnic backgrounds are mentioned in the story and shown in the illustrations, but the main focus is on being different, accepted and included: this arises from the issue of the need for the dancing shoes.

The illustrations are excellent and delicately drawn, taking up almost the whole of each page. They are detailed and lifelike. In some places the sense of movement portrayed is very effective. The illustrations coincide with the text, mirroring what the text suggests. This would make it ideal for independent reading. The relatively large text and illustrations make this book suitable for whole class use.



So Much

By Trish Cooke

Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury

Published by Walker Books, London

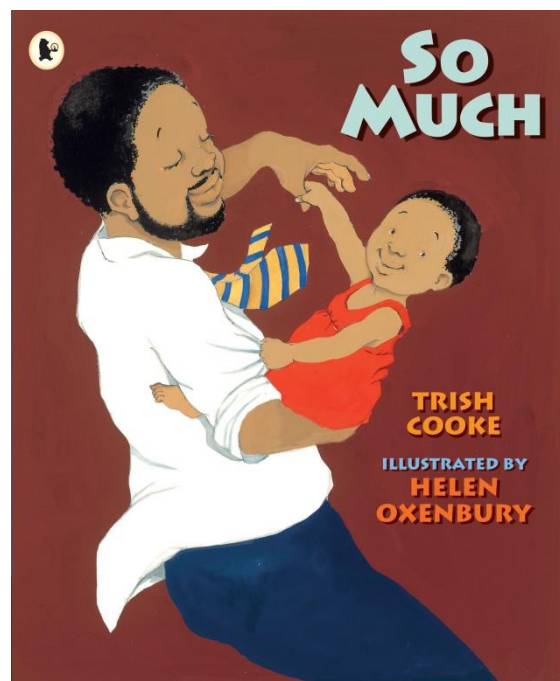
1996

ISBN 0-7445-4396-7 (Cooke, 1996)

This book is based around an Afro-Caribbean family that is getting ready for a surprise party. Everyone that rings the doorbell comes in and sees the baby and wants to kiss, play with or squeeze the baby so much. Gradually, the family gathers together until finally dad comes home and discovers a surprise party is being held for his birthday. When the baby goes to bed at the end of the story s/he realises that s/he is loved so much. A range of family relationships is represented.

The book has wonderful, bright and happy illustrations that make the reader smile as it is being read. The text uses phrases that may reflect the background of the family. This reflects the language pattern used by the family, but might reinforce stereotypes about the ways in which different people speak. This would be an interesting point for discussion.

The book is suitable for children in Key Stage 1 or for younger children. There is some good use of onomatopoeia. It is a lovely story to show how a baby is loved by a variety of members in the family and there is a very positive and warm feel to the narrative.



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Something Else

By Kathryn Cave

Illustrated by Chris Riddell

Published by Puffin Books, London

1995

ISBN 0-14-054907-2 (Cave, 1995)

Something Else tells the story of a creature called Something Else who is excluded from his neighbours' activities because he behaves and looks different. Something Else desperately wants to be like the others, but somehow can never belong, until one day when Something appears on Something Else's doorstep. Could it be that there are others who don't quite fit in? And could it be that he has finally found a friend after all?

One strength of the book is the complexity it shows in the character Something Else. Instead of being a stereotypically good character, Something Else shows that he has his own prejudices. When Something tries to make friends with Something Else, he initially doesn't want to know. Something Else excludes the creature, seemingly unknowingly, for the same reasons the others excluded him. In the end, Something Else recognises himself in the sad face of the creature, and has a change of heart.

The story ends on a lovely note when a human arrives. In comparison to the other characters in the book he really does look unusual. They move up and make room for him straight away: showing what has been learned about inclusion and acceptance through the story.

This story gently helps children understand how people can be different as well as showing them ways to accept others who are different to them. It is a charming story with beautiful illustrations. Cute, funny and extremely well done, it communicates an important message in an engaging and attractive way.



Standing on My Own Two Feet

By Tamara Schmitz

Published by Price, Stern, Sloan / Penguin Books

2008

ISBN 978 0 8431 3221 2 (Schmitz, 2008)

Addison shares his town with the reader, a town where he has two homes. His mom and dad are divorced, and he explains how he lives parallel lives with his parents.

The story stresses that the reasons that his parents do not always get on well, or share the same house are not because of Addison. He realises that they are very unlikely to live together again, but that does not stop them each being his parent. The main thing is that they each love him, and nothing will ever change that.

This book provides a positive image of a child's life after his parents' divorce. It acknowledges that there are tensions and some complexities, but the main message is that divorce has not affected their love for him. This provides a feeling of security. Whilst this is not the experience of all children following divorce, this book offers positive messages to discuss with a child, particularly if they are living between two homes. It would link well with *Do You Sing Twinkle* where the parents start to live further apart and this impacts on the children's living arrangements.

This book may be particularly useful for children who only remember their parents as being divorced, where the divorce happened when they were very young.



Stella Brings the Family

By Miriam B Schiffer

Illustrated by Holly Clifton-Brown

Published by Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA

2015

ISBN 9781452111902 (Schiffer, 2015)

This story explores how to celebrate Mother's Day when you have two dads. Stella arrives at school to discover that a party is being planned to celebrate Mother's Day. She becomes very concerned and anxious about what she can do about this, as she does not have a mother to invite, which affects her concentration and her appetite.

She discusses the situation with her friends, explaining that her two dads look after her in all the ways that a mum might do. The solution is suggested by one of her friends: to invite all those in her life who are special. She asks daddy, papa, uncles and aunts and her cousin. At the party children arrive with different family make-ups – one child has two mums, another comes with grandma (as mum is currently away). Stella's teacher is exhausted by the whole experience, but Stella reassures her: for Father's Day she will only need to bring two guests!

This book would couple well with *Josh and Jazz Have Three Mums*, in which the children are faced with a dilemma when their family tree is different from their classmates.



Story of Ferdinand, The

By Munro Leaf

Illustrated by Robert Lawson

Published by Hamish Hamilton, London

1966 (first published 1937)

ISBN 0-241-90177-4 (Leaf, 1966)

This book appears a little dated, and indeed, it was first published in 1937. It contains monochrome drawings which are quite simple and appealing. It considers the story of Ferdinand, a little bull who lives in Spain. Ferdinand is a bit of a loner and prefers to do his own thing, rather than play with the other bulls. His mother is worried that he will be lonely all by himself. When the men come looking for a bull to take part in a bull fight Ferdinand sits on a bee, and the sting causes him to run around, jump and snort. This reaction means that he is mistakenly chosen as being suitable to go to Madrid for a bull fight!

Once in Madrid, Ferdinand does not rise to the occasion. He prefers to sit in the middle of the ring and smell the flowers. The matadors have to take him back home where he is happy once again.

This is an interesting story about being different, which will attract children of different ages and particularly younger children. Although the illustrations are simple, they support the story effectively. The book might be a good discussion starter to consider issues around being different, being separate from the crowd or enjoying activities different from others.

The original publication date shows how issues of difference and diversity have been explored in children's literature over a number of years.



Supermum

By Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom

Published by Franklin Watts, London

2014

ISBN 9781445128856 (Manning & Granstrom, 2014)

Supermum is everywhere! We see her swinging, swooping, swimming and scooting... because every mum is a Supermum.

This book shows human and animal mothers in a range of situations. It explains that some mothers can have several babies, talk to their babies in many different ways, can travel long distances to find food for their offspring, and are very protective of their young ones. Supermums keep their children clean and tidy in various ways, to keep them healthy.

The illustrations are varied, and include additional notes to explain how mothers care for their children. This is a very informative book, which will be of particular relevance to children with an interest in the natural world. It addresses issues of human reproduction, and the need for warmth, food and shelter in a sensitive way. It may link well to discussions within the science curriculum with younger children.



Teazles' Baby Bunny, The

By Susan Bagnall

Illustrated by Tommaso Levente Tani

Published by British Association of Adoption and Fostering

2008 (reprinted 2015)

ISBN 9781905664498 (Bagnall, 2008)

The Teazles live in a happy, cosy burrow near the woods. They have a lovely life together, but long to have a baby bunny of their own in order to make their family complete. One night, Mr McBadger visits to tell them that he has news of a baby bunny needing a new home. They make careful plans and prepare their home for the new arrival. When the baby arrives they are happy as can be.

This simply illustrated story will be helpful when talking to young children about adoption. It has a gently rhyming lilt and is very accessible and clear.



Tell Me Again

By Jamie Lee Curtis

Illustrated by Laura Cornell

Published by Joanna Cotler Books

1996

ISBN 978 0 06 024528 3 (Curtis, 1996)

A child asks to hear again the story of the night she was born. The parents recount the story, which is no doubt well-known to the child and regularly enjoyed. It tells of how mum and dad received a 'phone call saying that their baby was being born. They travelled by aeroplane to meet her. The child asks lots of questions about the process of coming home and about how special the creation of their new family was. The story ends with the child asking to hear the story again: in fact she has identified its main elements through her own questions.

This story could be about adoption, or possibly about a surrogate mother. There appears to have been an agreement well ahead of the birth that the adoption would take place. The parents take a short flight (there is no film – only peanuts) and so it is likely that the child is born in the same country.

The illustrations are colourful, very active and almost cartoon-like. They add life to the questions being posed by the child – effectively explaining the story.



That's My Mum

By Henriette Barkow

Illustrated by Derek Brazell

Translated by Surinder Singh Arrariwala

Published by Mantra, London

2005

ISBN 1-85269-602-8 (Panjabi and English) (Barkow, 2005)

That's My Mum provides a positive look at some of the thoughts and concerns children might have if they have a parent who does not look like them. When Mia and Kai go out people confuse which is their mum. Based on a true story, this book explores the experience of being judged by the colour of your skin.

The book considers the idea of changing to fit others' stereotypes and assumptions, but the characters finally decide that they do not need to change. They make badges to celebrate their experience of family life.

This book might be particularly useful as a part of Circle Time activities. It will provide a positive illustration of family life for children who have parents with different racial or ethnic backgrounds.



There For You

By Annette Aubrey
Illustrated by Patrice Barton
Published by QED Publishing, London
2007
ISBN 978 1 84835 002 1 (Aubrey, 2007)

Mum and dad break the news to their son, Jonathan, that they are going to split up. Jonathan is concerned what will happen to dad when he moves out of the family home, and also what will happen to him and mum. He also starts to worry that their separation might be because of something he has said or done.

Mum and dad take care to explain the situation to Jonathan, and assure him that they are both still his parents. He is encouraged to ask questions when he needs to. They also try to reassure him that the turmoil that he feels at the moment will change over time.

The illustrations enhance this book and seek to capture Jonathan's emotions, both through their external appearance and internal feeling (e.g. feeling a knot in his stomach). This makes Jonathan a helpful role model for children in similar circumstances, revealing his emotions and articulating them to his parents. The concern of the parents is also shown effectively in the illustrations. At the end of the story Jonathan feels better having listened to his parents' explanations. The fact that the story is written in rhyme throughout reinforces the sense of reassurance and constancy that the message seeks to convey.

The final page of the book contains notes for parents and teachers.



There's Going to be a Baby

By John Burningham

Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury

Published by Walker Books, London

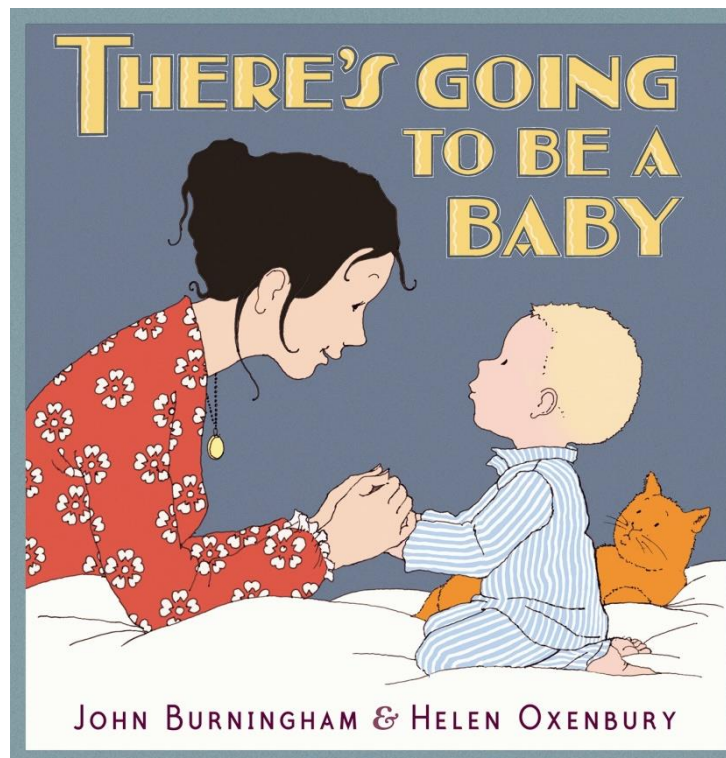
2010

ISBN 978074454996690100 (Burningham, 2010)

This book begins with a conversation between mother and child: there is going to be a baby; what will it be called; will it be a girl or a boy? They consider what the baby might grow up to be: a chef, an artist, a gardener, a zoo-keeper, or a sailor. Each idea is followed by a double-page spread showing the baby performing the task (as a baby). Some show it facing dangers and perils, reflecting the boy's nervousness at the arrival of a new sibling.

The story ends with the boy and his granddad heading to the hospital to visit mum and the baby. They know that they are going to love the new member of their family very much.

This humorous and warm story follows a child's questions leading up to the birth of a sibling. It will help children in such a situation and might take away some of their apprehensions, or at least open up conversations so that they can think through the changes ahead. The illustrations – in a distinctive *Art Deco* style - provide a great deal to discuss, and are particularly accessible to those not yet able to read text.



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Those Messy Hempels

By Brigitte Luciani

Illustrated by Vanessa Hié

Translated by J. Alison James

Published by North-South Books, London

2004

ISBN 0 7358 1909 2 (Luciani, 2004)

The Hempels are a very messy family. One day, when they decide to make a cake, they cannot find the whisk. So they embark on a process of spring cleaning. In each room that they re-organise they end up finding an object that is totally out of place, which leads them to start tidying the next location. Eventually they complete the process and finally find the whisk. The cake can now be made, although this does lead to the creation of some mess!

This is an amusing book, which draws the reader in through the treasure-hunt style of the storyline. The stylised illustrations add to the fun of the book, and include plenty of detail to engage readers at various levels. You may look out for the duck in the washing machine, and the cat in the bath! This family is certainly erring towards eccentricity.

Overall, this proves a light-hearted look at the way in which one happy-go-lucky family lives together.



Thunder Boy Jr.

By Sherman Alexie

Illustrated by Yuyi Morales

Published by Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY

2016

ISBN 9780316013727 (Alexie, 2016)

Thunder Boy Smith is named after his dad. His mom had wanted to call him Sam, a name he quite likes, but instead a family naming tradition was followed. The problem is that whilst dad is Big Thunder, the child is known as Little Thunder which sounds more like a burp!

Confiding in the reader he reveals that he hates his name and longs for one of his own. The boy suggests a variety of options, using things that interest him or achievements he has made.

Eventually dad decides that the boy should have a new name: one of his own. He suggests *Lightning*, as together they will be loud and bright, making amazing weather. The illustrations are dynamic and colourful. They are highly distinctive and sometimes unusual, providing the reader with a great deal to examine and enjoy.

This book explores the sense of identity and belonging that comes from a family name. It is very affirming and positive, and celebrates being part of a family, the tensions this sometimes entails, and the strong bond between a father and son.



Toby's Doll's House

By Ragnhild Scamell

Illustrated by Adrian Reynolds

Published by Levinson Books, London

1998

ISBN 1-86233-026-3 (Scamell, 1998)

For his birthday, Toby wants a doll's house. Other members of his family think that they all know what Toby really wants – and they ignore his request. Although he is grateful for and happy with his presents, he makes his own doll's house and incorporates his other presents within it.

This is an interesting and engaging story which can be read alone or shared with a class, perhaps as part of Circle Time. It looks at stereotypical boys' toys and demonstrates the importance of individual choice.

Toby is very diplomatic and avoids hurting people's feelings - by using the gifts they have bought for him. In doing so, he makes everyone happy.

The book is very well presented with colourful and interesting pictures which support the text effectively. It is notable that there is no mother figure in the story.



Two Dads

By Carolyn Robertson
Illustrated by Sophie Humphreys
Published by Sparklypoo Publications, London
2014
ISBN 978993115301 (Robertson, 2014)

A child shares their experience of having two dads. Both dads are different, and both are special because they chose to adopt the child.

The dads are very active and enthusiastic – enjoying chasing, ducking, diving, playing on the swings and trampolines, cooking, swimming and generally providing the double fun that having two dads affords. Only rarely do they get tired and need to rest. In fact the main difficulty in having two dads is deciding which one to be by their side.

This colourfully illustrated story is presented in rhyme, which adds to the overall positive feel and tone. It shows two dads from different ethnic backgrounds.

This book will link well with *Two Mums and a Menagerie*, by the same author.



Two Eggs, Please

By Sarah Weeks

Illustrated by Betsy Lewin

Published by Athenium Books for Younger Readers, London

2003

ISBN 0-689-83196-X (Weeks, 2003)

Two Eggs, Please shows a range of animal characters visiting an American Diner to order a meal. Each one orders two eggs: fried, poached, boiled, raw, in a sandwich and as part of a full breakfast. As each character places their order the others note how “different” it is from their own.

This is a colourful and beautifully illustrated book which will appeal to children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It is ideal for exploring issues relating to similarity and difference.

When all the meals arrive at the same time carried expertly by Fox, the waitress, the announcement is “Two eggs coming up!” The animals realise that all the meals are different, but are also the same: they all include two eggs.

This is a highly enjoyable and humorous book and is highly recommended.



Two Homes

By Claire Masurel

Illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton

Published by Walker Books, London

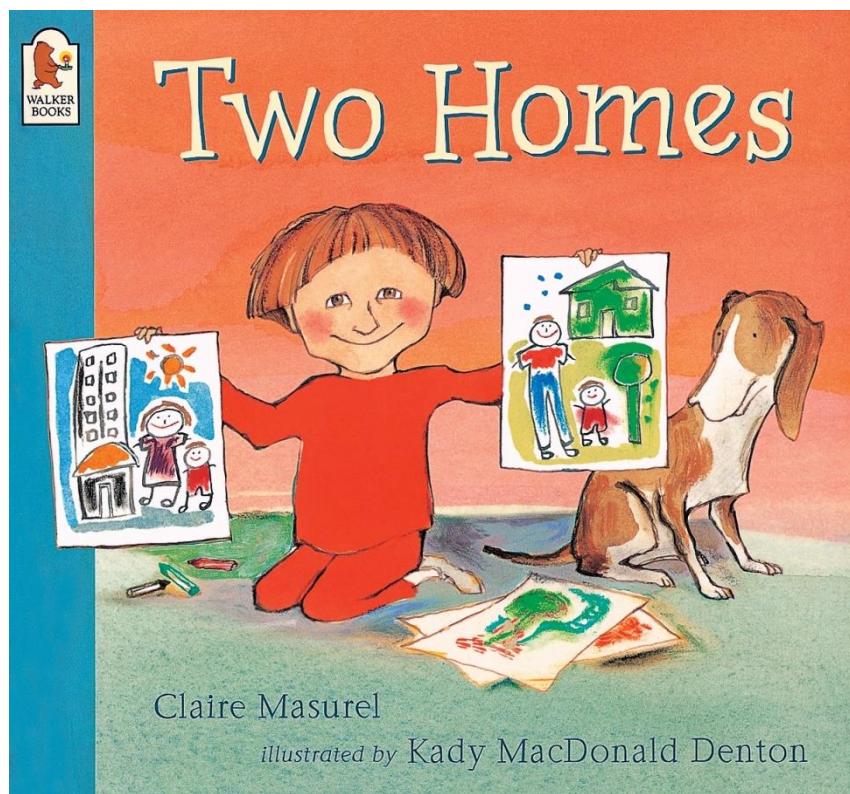
2001

ISBN 0-7445-8925-8 (Masurel, 2001)

Two Homes is a story about Alex, who has two parents who are separated. Alex tells how s/he feels at home with either parent, and that s/he accepts having two places to hang a coat, two bedrooms and two parents. Alex explains that s/he loves his/her mum and his/her dad equally, and that both of them love him/her equally.

One weakness is that the story seems quite idealistic. Although the intention is to encourage children to embrace the idea of having separated parents, the book does not explore any of the drawbacks or complexities of the situation. Children from separated families may not experience the balance of contact that Alex experiences: they may also experience mum or dad meeting a new partner and possibly of other children coming into the family.

This book is recommended but would need to be used sensitively with children. The overall message is positive: that because parents separate doesn't mean a child is loved any less.



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Two Left Feet

By Adam Stower

Published by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London

2004

ISBN 0-7475-6896-0 (Stower, 2004)

This is a great text to highlight that everyone is different.

Two Left Feet is a story about a group of monster friends. Rufus is different to all of his friends. Although he loves to dance, he has two left feet and always falls over. His friends are always very supportive and pick him up when he falls – effectively demonstrating acceptance and care for others.

When a dance competition is announced, Rufus is left feeling lonely and sad because none of his friends pick him because he can't dance as well as them. Rufus finds a partner - Maddie - who is also feeling sad because she can't dance. However, when coupled together they dance perfectly and win the competition. Rufus later realizes that Maddie has two right feet, showing that differences are valuable and important to us all as a society.

This book has large, quirky and detailed illustrations, accompanied by text on each page. Because the characters are 'monsters' it might possibly appeal more to some children than others, depending on personal taste. However, it would be an extremely good text for classroom use, especially to prompt discussion about feelings, acceptance and inclusion. The vocabulary is accessible with some polysyllabic words and so may be of more interest to an older child when read independently.

The fact that the characters are monsters also promotes discussion about stereotypes: does the book portray monsters as we might expect them to be?

This story can be enjoyed by both boys and girls and by children of all ages. Its comments on being different and being accepted/included mean that it is suitable to be used in whole class situations as well as being enjoyed by individual children.



Two Mums and a Menagerie

By Carolyn Robertson

Illustrated by Patricia de Villiers

Published by Sparklypoo Publications, London

2015

ISBN 9780993115318 (Robertson, 2015)

Two mums live on the edge of a city with their first son, who was adopted. They are very happy as a family of three, but decide that they have enough love for one more family member. They adopt son number two.

When a neighbour comes round with an injured kitten, the boys convince their mums to take it in. When an uncle arrives with a dog needing a home, again the boys manage to get their way. The story continues with the list of animals gradually growing. Eventually they decide to move to the countryside in order to have more room to house the menagerie.

This is a very positive story about adoption, first as the two boys are adopted by the mums, and then as the boys encourage their parents to adopt all the animals in need of care.

The illustrations are colourful and provide an effective accompaniment to the story. The text rhymes, which adds to the sense of positivity. The mums are from different ethnic backgrounds.

This book will pair well with *Two Dads* by the same author.



Two Nests

By Laurence Anholt

Illustrated by Jim Coplestone

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books

2013

ISBN 978 1 84780 323 8 (Anholt, 2013)

Betty and Paul are two birds who decide, one autumn, to build a nest and settle down together. Later Betty lays an egg, and Baby Bird is born. However, the nest is not really big enough for the whole family and the parents begin to argue. It is decided that Paul should move out and build a new nest. Eventually Baby Bird learns how to fly, and is able to travel from nest to nest, spending time with each parent.

This story is written in rhyme, which allows a sensitive topic to be handled with a positive tone. It may reflect the experience of some children, who will be familiar with the idea of travelling from one parent's home to another. However, it could be inferred that the parents were happy until Baby Bird made the nest too small for comfort, and it will be important to ensure that children do not deduce from this that their presence might have been to blame for the separation of the adults. There is also the question of why Paul built a new nest, when if the need was for more space he could have enlarged or annexed the existing one.

The illustrations provide plenty of detail to engage children's attention and enhance the storyline. The conclusion is positive in some ways, as Baby Bird is able to fly between her parents' homes. However, in real life there is not always a happy ending, and it might be useful to use this book alongside others on divorce and separation from this resource list.



Visitors Who Came to Stay, The

By Annalena McAfee

Illustrated by Anthony Browne

Published by Walker Books Ltd, London

2000

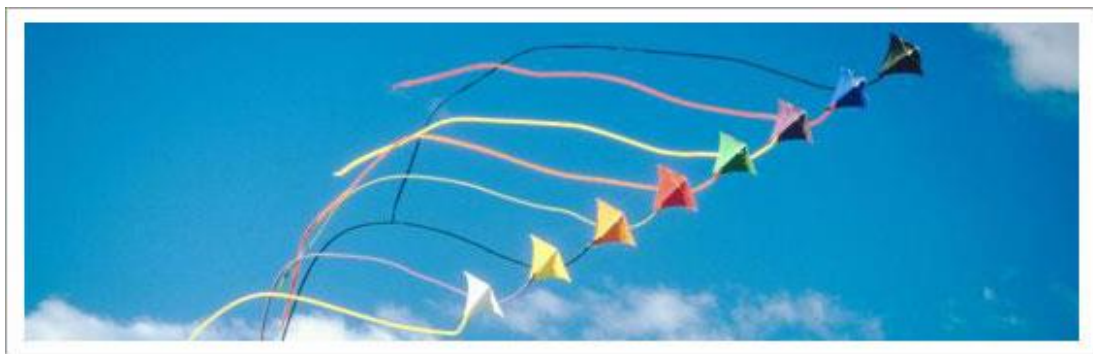
ISBN 0-7445-6773-4 (McAfee, 2000)

This is a story about a girl, Katy, who lives with her dad and occasionally visits her mum at weekends.

This story highlights the close relationship between daughter and father, which is a particular strength of the book. However, when Katy is introduced to Mary and to Mary's son, Sean, she begins to feel lonely and left out. Although Katy likes the 'visitors' she doesn't like the fact that she has to share her dad. This adds a hint of realism to the story as it explores Katy's anxiety about becoming part of a step-family.

When Mary and Sean leave, Katy begins to realise that something is missing. Only when her dad suggests that they should go and visit Mary and Sean does Katy realise that she has been missing them. This creates a really reassuring ending.

The illustrations support the text and take up the whole page, making it an ideal classroom text. The text is composed mainly of simple sentences, but also contains a variety of complex sentences and vocabulary which would probably make it most appropriate to use with children in upper Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.



Way Home

By Libby Hathorn

Illustrated by Gregory Rogers

Published by Andersen Press, London

1994

ISBN 0-86264-541-7 (Hathorn, 1994)

Shane is homeless and roams the streets. He meets a cat and befriends it. The story is not told by Shane, but by a narrator in the third person and there is a sense of detachment from the main character possibly reflecting the way in which he is detached from people and his own family home. This could be a point for discussion on authorial style and effect, with older children.

Shane takes the cat “home” and reflects on other homes on the way. Although his homelessness is not apparent until the close of the book, there are many issues to consider as his thoughts are recorded during his journey. At times he faces potentially dangerous situations.

Shane considers purchasing an expensive car – the dialogue enabled through his conversation with the cat. A “girl” (who looks as though she is working on the street) speaks with him. The book maintains its detachment from the boy called Shane, and yet he is a warm character that the reader will care about. Always he is heading home... and the reader will wonder where this will be.

Shane shows great care for the cat. However, having given it a variety of names along the way, in the end he refers to it as “Noname” – anonymous and alone like him; until he calls it “Mycat.” Again, this would make an interesting point for discussion.

The book raises a range of issues about relationships, homes and danger. It would be most appropriate for children in upper Key Stage 2 as a shared text or as an independent reader.

This book is illustrated to a high standard with pencil drawings which use light and texture to excellent effect. It is very appealing and atmospheric. Children in upper Key Stage 2 may enjoy its illustrations and text, and it might be useful in considering homes, empathy and families. Shane finds friendship with the cat, and this contrasts with the harsh urban environment in which he survives/lives. The book may be useful in raising awareness of social issues and particularly homelessness. Whilst a single person may not constitute a family, it was felt to be important to include images of single living in this resource.

We Are Adopted

By Jennifer Moore-Mallinos

Illustrated by Rosa M Curto

Published by Barron's, Hauppauge, NY

2007

ISBN 978 0 7641 3787 7 (Moore-Mallinos, 2007)

Mom and dad arrive at the airport with their newly adopted son, from Russia. He meets his new sister, who was also adopted from Russia.

Mom and dad have been keen to make sure that their daughter knows about Russian customs, food and language. She also attends a picnic, where other adopted children from around the world celebrate their cultural backgrounds and differences.

One aspect that is not addressed in the book is why the parents came to adopt a child from Russia, or why a child from Russia would need to be adopted by a family in another country.

This book is a part of Barron's *What Do You Know About* series. It is accompanied by suggested activities to undertake with children, and guidance for parents on the adoptive process and speaking about it with children.



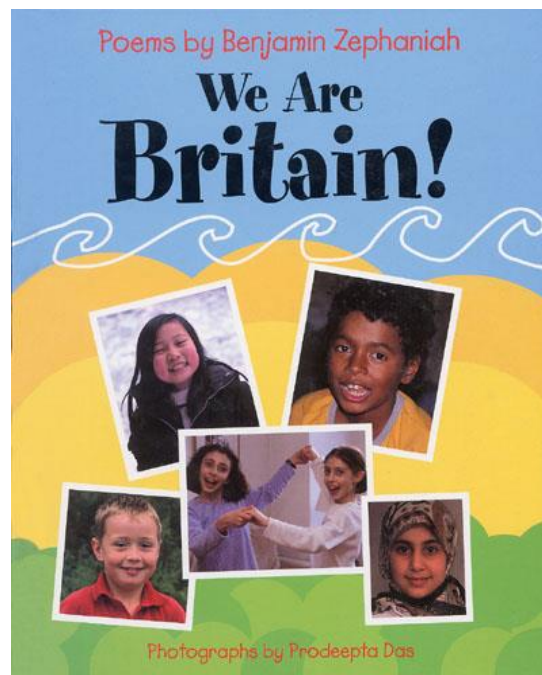
We Are Britain!

By Benjamin Zephaniah
 Photographs by Prodeepta Das
 Published by Francis Lincoln Children's Books, London
 2003
 ISBN 9781845071431 (Zephaniah, 2003)

This is an excellent resource for looking at the diversity of British society. It attempts to get children to understand that Britain is a multicultural society and that this idea should be embraced. The foreword from the author is particularly inspiring – through its innate enthusiasm.

Zephaniah uses poetry to describe the lives of the thirteen children included in the book. The children are of various religious and ethnic backgrounds – all are British children who want to live in a multicultural society where every child is equal and where every child matters.

This book is ideal for use with children in Key Stage 2. The use of poetry, rapping and rhyming make it accessible to children in an engaging and contemporary way.



Cover illustration used with permission:
We Are Britain by Benjamin Zephaniah with photographs by Prodeepta Das, published by Francis Lincoln Children's Books, London © 2003.

We Belong Together

By Todd Parr

Published by Little, Brown and Company

2007

ISBN 978 0 316 01668 1 (Parr, 2007)

Presented in Todd Parr's distinctive and colourful style this book considers the reasons why "we belong together..."

It's strength is that it does not just focus on adoption, but does this in amongst other ways in which we connect with one another to make a family, e.g. sharing learning, travel or pets. It also gives a sense of how coming together as a family completes the unit, with the child and parent(s) each offering something to enrich one another's lives.

The book includes diverse models of family, and could be used to discuss how different families come together.



Welcome to the Family

By Mary Hoffman

Illustrated by Ros Asquith

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books

2014

ISBN 978 1 84780 461 7 (Hoffman, 2014)

Welcome to the Family shows that there are lots of different ways that people come to be families. Some like company, and others prefer to be alone. Some live with friends, and others with just one person. Others may wish to have children together, and when a baby is born it is “usually” very welcome. Two people can also adopt a baby or a child, and so can one person. Sometimes children live with foster families. Some, for lots of different reasons, have more than one mum or dad. Sometimes doctors need to help someone have a baby, and mothers might need help getting a male cell from a friend or a special clinic.

There are all kinds of ways to be a family, and sometimes families grow when parents find a new partner and a blended family develops. The book concludes with the question: “How did you come into YOUR family?”

This is a very inclusive book, which celebrates the diversity of family life. It admits that having a baby is not always a welcome event, and avoids some of the idealism or over-positivity found in some other texts in this resource pack. A very broad world is portrayed, and hopefully all children will be able to find elements of their own experience within its pages.



Welcome to the World Baby

By Na'ima bint Robert

Illustrated by Derek Brazell

Published by Manta Lingua, London

2005

ISBN 1-84444-275-6 (Robert N. b., 2005)

This book is available in 28 dual language editions. The one being reviewed is in French and English.

Tariq comes to school and announces that his new baby brother was born at the weekend. He is delighted. The children in his class are asked to think about how they welcome new babies into their families, and to bring something to do with the five senses to support a discussion.

The variety of ideas shared in the subsequent pages provide some good opportunities for discussion, and exemplify a range of cultural approaches to celebrating a birth.

The book is well illustrated and appealing showing a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and some traditional dress. The text is appropriate to read with younger children, or for older children to share or to read alone. The teacher may need some prior knowledge, or to do some research, to identify which cultures/traditions are represented throughout the book and to identify the meaning behind some of the objects and rituals.

The book concludes with a five senses party – where all the children come together to celebrate the birth of Tariq's brother.



What Are You Playing At?

By Marie-Sabine Roger and Anne Sol

Published by Alanna Books

2013

ISBN 978 1907 825026 (Roger & Sol, 2013)

What Are You Playing At? uses high quality photographs and a fold-out format to address some issues around gender stereotyping. It suggests that boys don't dance, play kitchens or play with dollies, skip or cry and girls do not play football, play with cars, build things or fly 'planes. Each assertion is matched with a single photo of the stereotype, and a double fold photograph showing a powerful and positive role model refuting the stereotype. The final positive affirmation is that everything is possible – we can be what we want to be.

This will be a very useful book to use when addressing the stereotypes that children can face within their family environments or classrooms. It has the potential to raise aspirations and affirm that children's ambitions need not be defined by their gender.



What Does Daddy Do?

By Rachel Bright

Published by Puffin Books, London

2009

ISBN 978 80 141 50264 9 (Bright, 2009)

Every day (except Wednesday) Daisy's father takes her to Nursery. She always waves enthusiastically as he leaves, having enjoyed the journey together. At Nursery Daisy has a few good friends. One day they start to talk about what their dads do for a living. Various examples are given, but Daisy realises that she does not know what job her father does. She provides some convincing, and very humorous answers, which any adult reading this story to children will appreciate on their own level. Finally, she concludes that her daddy's job is to be her daddy – and that is absolutely good enough.

This is a super book for children to share with their dads, or other male role models, and will prompt conversations about what dad does (in whatever role) whilst the child is in nursery or school. It is also a lovely way to help children to celebrate and appreciate the things their parents do in order to provide and care for them. The illustrations provide an excellent backdrop to the story, and their large, bold, colourful format would make this a very good book to share with a group of children.



What Shall I Make?

By Nandini Nayar

Illustrated by Proiti Roy

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books

2006

ISBN 978 1 84507 978 9 (Nayar, 2006)

Neeraj's mother is kneading dough to make chapattis. He is given some dough to play with, and makes a variety of animals. Initially he produces a snake, but this turns into a mouse, then a cat, a lion and finally becomes a chapatti.

This is a charming short story about a boy and his mother cooking together. It is interesting that we never fully see the mother: she is on the periphery of the illustrations. The focus is on Neeraj and his imaginative play with the dough: it seems like it can almost become anything! At the end of the book is a recipe for chapattis.



When Dad Was Away

By Liz Weir

Illustrated by Karin Littlewood

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London

2012

ISBN 978 1 84507 913 0 (Weir, 2012)

This story opens with Milly being taunted on the street by other children, because her dad is in prison. When she gets home she raises the matter with mum and nan, who tell her the truth: dad stole something and now nan is going to stay with them to help look after the family.

Milly feels confused and angry. She questions whether it is her fault that dad has gone away. The next day at school her teacher reminds the class that they need to support one another.

Mum visits dad, and she initiates the process of the children keeping in touch with him by sending drawings and paintings. In due course they go to the prison to visit dad. The story gives some sense of the overpowering size of the prison, the process of being searched and visiting their parent. Their time together passes quickly, and soon it is time to leave. Later dad sends a voice-recorded message to Millie and her brother Sam, and they are able to listen to it again and again. Later, they visit the prison for a Christmas party for children, before later receiving the news that dad is coming home.

This book presents some of the key elements a child may face if their dad is in prison, including visiting time. The illustrations are detailed and add a great deal to the text of the story. Some aspects are a little idealistic, including the return of dad on Milly's birthday. Such coincidences make for effective plot lines, but will probably not reflect the experience of children and could raise false hope.

In an area where few books are published, this is of very good quality with both an engaging story line and very effective illustrations.



When Daddy's Truck Picks Me Up

By Jana Novothy Hunter

Illustrated by Carol Thompson

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, London

2010

ISBN 978 1 84780 092 3 (Hunter, 2010)

It is daddy's day to pick his child up from school. He is coming a long, long way in his truck. The story shows the child's excitement and anticipation and daddy's long journey to keep the appointment. Stuck in traffic, the tension mounts as his child waits at school, but the waiting is well worth it given the joy of their reunion.

This book is beautifully illustrated, with plenty of detail for children to explore and discuss.

The emotions felt by the child are clearly expressed, and may provide a role model for children who experience their parent working away for extended periods of time. It is not stated whether the child is a girl or a boy (although on first reading it may be assumed that it is a boy) nor is it clear how long daddy has been away, whether the child lives with the father or whether this is an occasional visit, or quite what the family situation is. This can be a strength of the book, as it can be used in a variety of ways.

The bounce of the rhythm adds to the pace of the story, as daddy tries to push on to his destination.



Where's Jamela

By Niki Daly

Published by Frances Lincoln, London

2004

ISBN 9781845070311 (Daly, 2004)

When Jamela has to move home with Mama and Gogo she decides that she would rather stay where she is. Mama, however, is excited to have a new job and the prospect of a new place to live. At first, Jamela struggles to help with the packing. When she becomes weary she climbs into a cardboard box and falls asleep, only to end up being packed on the back of the truck along with all the household contents! Needless to say, the adults engage in a frantic search for her and end up calling the police. The story ends with Jamela safe and happy in her new home.

This is an endearing story, set in a South African township, which affirms the notion that home is where the heart is. The illustrations add a great deal of colour to the story and show in detail the varied emotions of the characters.



Where's My Teddy?

By Margaret Hockey

Published by Durham and Darlington Education Service for Travelling Children, Sine Loco

Undated

ISBN 0-9538322-1-X (Hockey, Undated)

This is a lovely small spiral-bound book of photographs showing a family of a mum and two daughters.

One child has lost her teddy and the family explores inside and outside their home to discover where it has gone. It is not in the van, behind the shed, in the den or in front of the washing machine. Having looked everywhere, Teddy is found outside their trailer.

This book will appeal to children in the Foundation Stage or lower Key Stage 1. It shows a traveller family in their home surroundings. The photographs are interesting and informative.

Children will be able to relate to this simple story, considering the times when they have lost special toys and how they have searched for them.



Who's In My Family

By Robie H Harris

Illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott

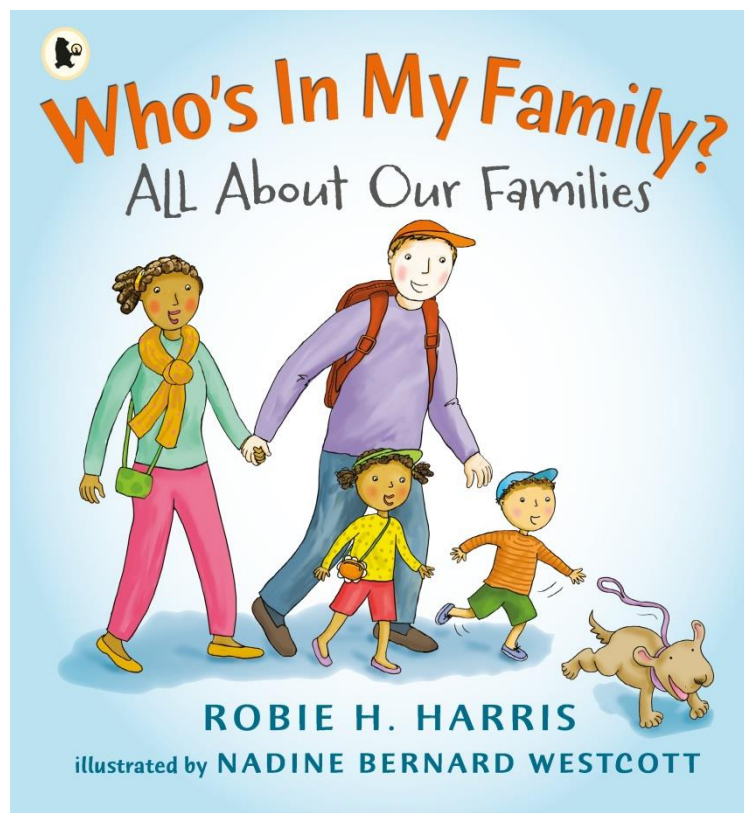
Published by Walker Books, London

2012

ISBN 9781406345407 (Harris, 2012)

Nellie and Gus are excited by the prospect of a visit to the zoo. They anticipate seeing all kinds of families in the different animal enclosures. They talk about the different things that families have for breakfast, the places they visit and transport they use. Families can be different because of the number of adults or children that they contain; some families only contain adults, some only include members of the same gender. Families can sometimes be extended, including several generations. At times they have fun, but sometimes they may disagree. Families are there if you are poorly or get hurt, and they help one another.

The illustrations add an extra dimension to the book, showing a diversity of families including those from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. These will provide extensive opportunities for discussion with children. The overall feel of the book is very inclusive, and there is a realistic celebration of family life.



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Will there be a Lap for Me?

By Dorothy Corey

Illustrated by Nancy Poydar

Published by Albert Whitman and Company, Morton Grove, Illinois

1992

ISBN 0-807-59110-6 (Corey, 1992)

Kyle is a young child, from an African-American family, who misses his special place on mum's lap as her pregnancy advances and the new baby is born. He finds that no other laps are as good.

Kyle is sad because the baby needs to feed so often and this means that he has less time enjoying his mother's undivided attention. A full page illustration shows mother nursing the new baby with Kyle beside her on the sofa. In the end mum makes room for him on her lap and creates special time for him in her day.

This is a colourful and attractive book that is suitable for young children and those in Key Stage 1. It would be particularly useful when supporting a child who is preparing for, or who has recently had, a new baby in the family. The child's experience would be a good support for discussion and the positive ending will bring reassurance.



William's Doll

By Charlotte Zolotow

Illustrated by William Pene du Bois

Published by Harper Trophy, Sine Loco

1972

ISBN 0-06-443067-7 (Zolotow, 1972)

William's Doll takes a look at gender stereotypes and the pressures these can place on children. William is a boy struggling with the stigma attached to his wanting a doll, and the negative reaction he receives from his family and neighbours.

One strength of the book is that it is careful to show how William also enjoys (and is good at) traditional 'boy' pastimes. Through his father's attempts to encourage William's masculinity and 'boyishness' we see that he is good at basketball and enjoys his train set. This point is an important one to present to children, to demonstrate that although William might be different in one way, he is still very much like them in other ways, and is certainly no 'less' of a boy. William can be similar and different at the same time.

The conclusion to the story shows William's grandma buying him a doll and explaining to his dad why she has done so. Her explanation (that William needs it so that when he is a dad he will know how to take care of his baby) is a nice touch that also serves to highlight the irrationality of gender stereotypes. This ending makes an assumption about William's future life, and could reinforce a different expectation or stereotype. However, it provides an interesting discussion starter for the consideration of gender stereotyping.

The book is particularly appropriate for children in Key Stage 2. It is notable that no mother figure appears in the story.

Although some readers may find this book a little dated, it does show how issues have been addressed across past decades.



Yokki and the Parno Gry

By Richard O'Neill and Katharine Quarmby
Illustrated by Marieke Nelissen
Published by Child's Play (International), Swindon
2016
ISBN 9781846439261 (O'Neill & Quarmby, 2016)

This is the story of a traveller boy named Yokki. He lives with his family in canvas tents and works with them in different ways at various times of year. Periodically they move on to find new work. Yokki enjoys selling the spoons he has made, and the conversations he has with all sorts of people.

When times get hard, Yokki's storytelling brings a sense of hope and optimism. Especially the story of the Parno Gry, a magic white horse who comes to show the way to productive work and times of plenty.

When the Parno Gry does come, it leads the family to a new place where they can settle and work and enjoy good food.

This authentic traditional Romani tale brings a reminder that sometimes it is the hope fuelled by children's imaginations that bring the positivity and creativity needed to move forward. Told by a Romani storyteller and picture book author, it gives a very interesting insight into traveller life and culture.

There is a brief glossary of key words and phrases at the start of the book.



You're Different and that's Super

By Carson Kressley

Illustrated by Jared Lee

Published by Simon and Schuster, London

2005

ISBN 9781416917373 (Kressley, 2005)

The style of this book belies its relatively recent publication date. The black and white line drawings in cartoon style provide a humorous accompaniment to the story.

When the new foals are both in the paddock, no one knows where the new colt, Trumpet, has come from. He is different, with his white coat. The other horses take him in, and he joins in lots of activities with them. He is treated like a brother, and is easily is the most popular colt in the group.

However, around his first birthday a lump starts to grow on his forehead, and gradually it becomes a fully-fledged horn. This causes problems, as it gets in the way when playing games, and gradually Trumpet is shunned by the others. However, when the barn catches fire, Trumpet is the one to save all the other animals. The farmer finally notices his difference and Trumpet heads for the red carpet as a superstar – unicorn.

Things are not the same in the paddock without him, but the story ends with the optimistic thought that perhaps another “different” colt will come along next spring.

This is a gently and amusing book about difference, acceptance and how being a unique individual can make a very special impact within a friendship group.



You're Too Big!

By Simon Puttock
Illustrated by Emily Bolam
Published by Picture Corgi, London
2003
ISBN 0-552-54828-6 (Puttock, 2003)

You're Too Big! is a sensitive and reassuring story for younger children about valuing differences.

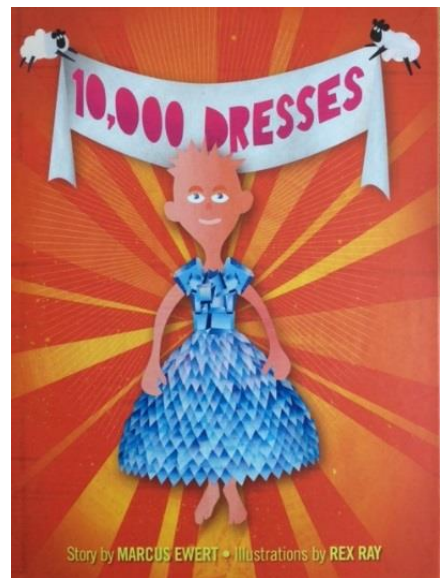
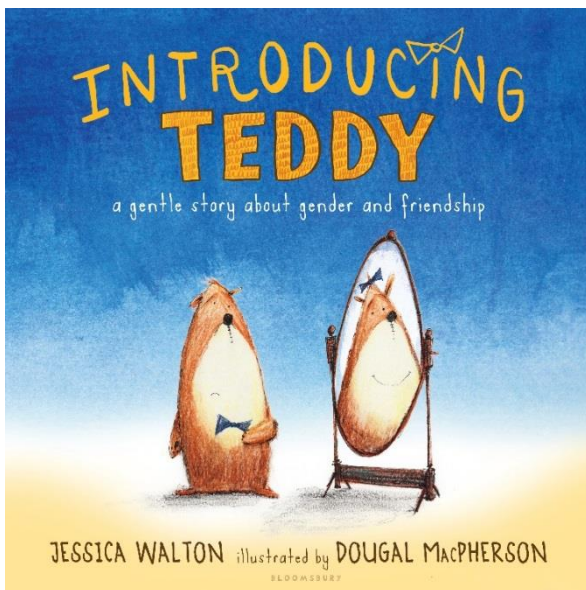
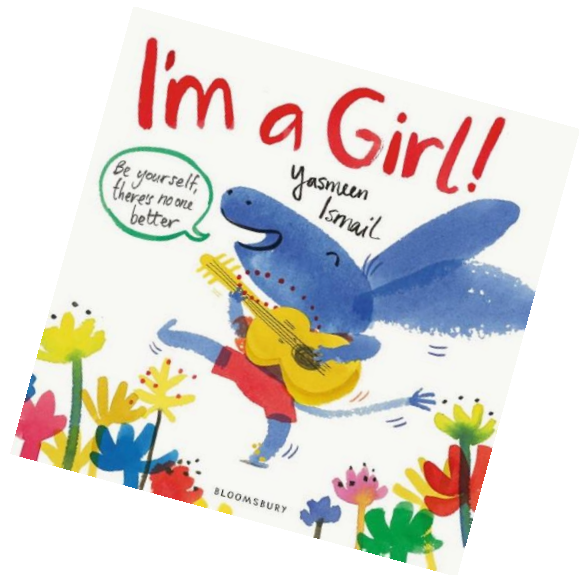
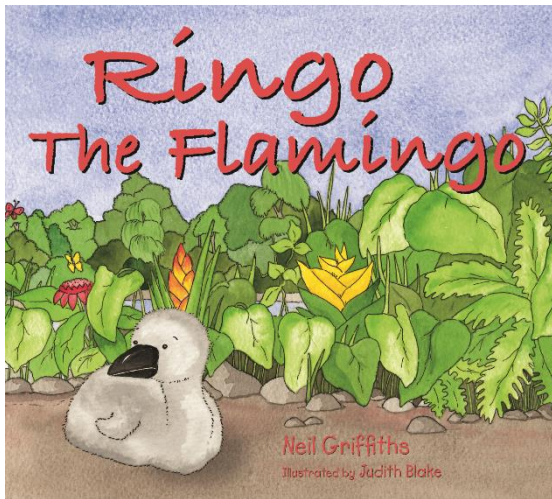
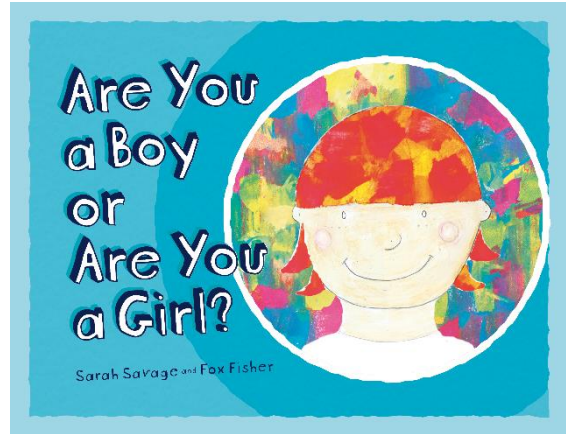
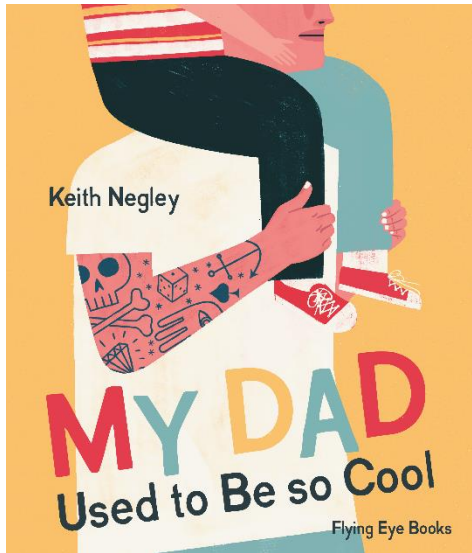
Elephant is looking forward to his first day at nursery school, despite his nervousness, but soon realises that he is too big and clumsy to join in games with the other animals, who chastise him for being "TOO BIG".

Elephant soon feels very "small and sad inside" but perseveres in his efforts to join in the games and make friends. It is this sort of characterisation that makes Elephant a very endearing character, whilst his experience of difference is presented in a way many children will be able to empathise with.

Towards the end of the story Mrs Gnu, the teacher, says it is time for a song. Here is something that Elephant can do beautifully and the other animals are impressed. Even Mouse, who up until now has been Elephant's biggest critic, has a kind word to say. The story ends when Elephant's mum arrives to take him home and everyone realises that he *is* just the right size after all.

This is a charming story for young children about how we all have our own strengths and things to offer. This could have been shown even more by developing the character of the other animals to show their talents and skills. This would have been particularly appropriate for Mouse.





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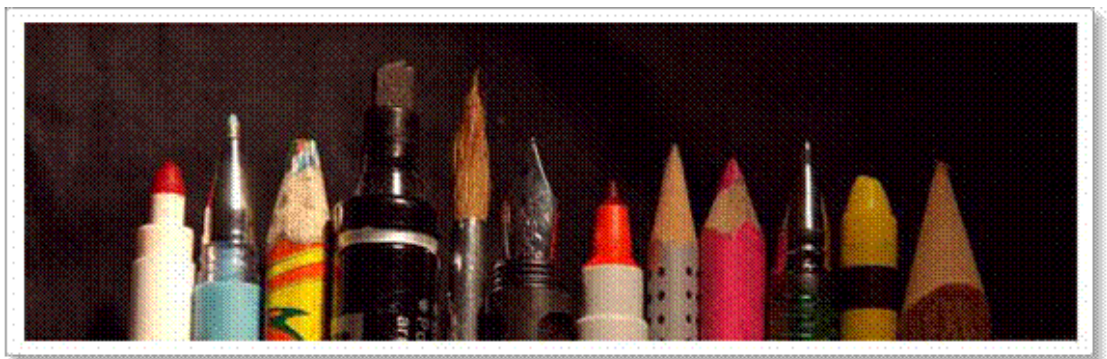
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