**Engaging Children to Celebrate Respect and Individuality**

**through Literature**

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eading with children every day, even just 20 minutes, creates a long-lasting positive impact on children’s emotional, intellectual, and social development. Below is a list of carefully selected children’s books that specifically support the emotional and social development of children by encouraging children to respect others and challenge ‘traditional’ gender stereotypes.

In addition to reading these books to your own children, you can also utilize the resources in various ways:

* Encourage adults to read to their children while simultaneously instilling values to respect others and understand one’s self.
* Partner with local elementary schools to read aloud to a class and discuss the book theme with students and teachers.
* Some elementary schools host literacy nights for their families. Partner with those elementary schools to make these books available.
* Identify local pre-schools that you can introduce the books to for discussion and possibly make available for them.
* Host a book club for parents and young children, and be prepared to facilitate dialogue. In doing this, consider first hosting time with parents to discuss the books as a way for them to gauge their comfort level with the literature.
* Read aloud as part of a family night, and, again, be prepared to facilitate dialogue.

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| **Title and Author** | **Description** | **Recommended Age** |
| *Man’s Work* by Annie Kubler | “In this simple book without words, Dad and his little boy work on chores around the house, including dusting, scrubbing the floor, and cleaning the bathtub.” | 2 and up |
| *Super Daisy* by Kes Gray and Nick Shamatt | “Cripes! Planet Earth is in danger! It's on a fatal collision course with Planet Pea! If they crash then Planet Pea will explode into a gazillionpillionkillion peas, and that means only one thing ...there'll be peas ...with everything!!!! The fate of dinner-times world-wide rests with Super Daisy. This is a super-fun, action-packed story with flaps, split pages and pull tabs. Readers will love taking control of the action: Pull a tab to reveal the 'horror' of peas with pancakes, lemonade, chocolate mousse and trifle! Flip a flap to find out just how 'super' Super Daisy is. Turn the page to watch Super Daisy wreak havoc on all peas with a KER-POW, WHIZ-PING and BANG-SPLAT. With bold illustrations, and fun novelties, this book will provide hours of fun, again and again.” | 5 and up |
| *Bellybuttons Are Navels* by Mark Schoen | This book is “designed for use with young children. Cheerful artwork and gentle words frame this engagingly told story of two children taking a bath. As Mary and her brother Robert splash about and play, they not only discover that boys and girls have some of the same body parts, but also that boys and girls have some distinguishing features- that have accurate names.” | 3-8 years |
| *Rosie Revere, Engineer* by Andrea Beaty | “Rosie may seem quiet during the day, but at night she's a brilliant inventor of gizmos and gadgets who dreams of becoming a great engineer. When her great-great-aunt Rose (Rosie the Riveter) comes for a visit and mentions her one unfinished goal--to fly--Rosie sets to work building a contraption to make her aunt's dream come true. But when her contraption doesn't fly but rather hovers for a moment and then crashes, Rosie deems the invention a failure. On the contrary, Aunt Rose insists that Rosie's contraption was a raging success. You can only truly fail, she explains, if you quit.” | 5 and up |
| *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon* by Patty Lovell | "Leave it to Molly to transform all her 'faults' into marvelous talents... Catrow's pictures fill the pages with wild perspectives, goofy-looking kids, and hilarious details. . . . Leaves readers with the feeling that anything can be accomplished if you are the best person you can be and make the most of your gifts."  | 4-8 years |
| *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch | “The Princess Elizabeth is slated to marry Prince Ronald when a dragon attacks the castle and kidnaps Ronald. In resourceful and humorous fashion, Elizabeth finds the dragon, outsmarts him, and rescues Ronald --- who is less than pleased at her un-princess-like appearance.” | 4-7 years |
| *All I Want To Be Is Me* by Phyllis Rothblatt | “A beautifully illustrated children's book reflecting the diverse ways that young children experience and express their gender. The book gives voice to the feelings of children who don't fit into narrow gender stereotypes, and who just want to be free to be themselves. This book is a celebration of all children being who they are, and is a positive reflection of children, wherever they experience themselves on the gender spectrum. *All I Want To Be Is Me* offers a wonderful way for all children to learn about gender diversity, embracing different ways to be, and being a true friend.” | 5-10 years |
| *Today I Feel Silly: And Other Moods that Make My Day* by Jamie Lee Curtis | “Silly, cranky, excited, or sad--everyone has moods that can change each day. Jamie Lee Curtis's zany and touching verse, paired with Laura Cornell's whimsical and original illustrations, helps kids explore, identify, and, even have fun with their ever-changing moods.” | 4-8 years |
| *The Different Dragon* by Jennifer Bryan | “This bedtime story about bedtime stories shows how the wonderful curiosity and care of a little boy, with some help from one of his moms, can lead to magical and unexpected places. Join Noah and his cat, Diva, on this nighttime adventure and you too will leave with an unforgettable new dragon friend!” | 4 and up |
| *It’s Not the Stork!: A Book About Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families and Friends* by Robie H. Harris | “Young children are curious about almost everything, especially their bodies. And young children are not afraid to ask questions. What makes me a girl? What makes me a boy? Why are some parts of girls' and boys' bodies the same and why are some parts different? How was I made? Where do babies come from? Is it true that a stork brings babies to mommies and daddies? *It’s Not the Stork!* helps answer these endless and perfectly normal questions that preschool, kindergarten, and early elementary school children ask about how they began. Through lively, comfortable language and sensitive, engaging artwork, Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley address readers in a reassuring way, mindful of a child's healthy desire for straightforward information. Two irresistible cartoon characters, a curious bird and a squeamish bee, provide comic relief and give voice to the full range of emotions and reactions children may experience while learning about their amazing bodies. Vetted and approved by science, health, and child development experts, the information is up-to-date, age-appropriate, and scientifically accurate, and always aimed at helping kids feel proud, knowledgeable, and comfortable about their own bodies, about how they were born, and about the family they are part of.” | 4-8 years |
| *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell | “In the zoo there are all kinds of animal families. But Tango's family is not like any of the others.” | 4-8 years |
| *What’s the Big Secret?: Talking about Sex with Girls and Boys* by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown | “Are boys and girls different on the inside? How do you tell girls and boys apart? Do girls and boys have the same feelings? Is sex a dirty word? Where do babies come from? What does being pregnant mean? How do you get a belly button? Tell me about when I was a baby...” | 4 and up |
| *Stephanie’s Ponytail* by Robert Munsch | “A little girl who is determined to strike a blow for nonconformity manages to arrive at school every day with a hairdo more outrageous than the day before. And each time, the cast of copycats grows and grows --- until the day she threatens to shave her head! The strong female voice will speak to many, asserting the importance of individuality and independent thought.” | 4-7 years |
| *The Sissy Duckling* by Harvey Fierstein | “Elmer is not like the other boy ducklings. While they like to build forts, he loves to bake cakes. While they like to play baseball, he wants to put on the halftime show. Elmer is a great big sissy. But when his father is wounded by a hunter's shot, Elmer proves that the biggest sissy can also be the greatest hero. Acclaimed actor and playwright Harvey Fierstein has crafted a heartwarming story, based on his award-winning HBO animated special, about learning to embrace the special qualities we all possess. Henry Cole's gently humorous illustrations give it a new vitality. This is a book to share with all children, to help them understand that each one of them is unique and valuable.” | 5-8 years |
| *10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewert | “Every night, Bailey dreams about magical dresses: dresses made of crystals and rainbows, dresses made of flowers, dresses made of windows. . . . Unfortunately, when Bailey's awake, no one wants to hear about these beautiful dreams. Quite the contrary. "You're a BOY!" Mother and Father tell Bailey. "You shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all." Then Bailey meets Laurel, an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's imagination and courage. In friendship, the two of them begin making dresses together. And Bailey's dreams come true! This gorgeous picture book—a modern fairy tale about becoming the person you feel you are inside—will delight people of all ages.” | 5-9 years |
| *My Princess Boy* by Cheryl Kilodavis | “Dyson loves pink, sparkly things. Sometimes he wears dresses. Sometimes he wears jeans. He likes to wear his princess tiara, even when climbing trees. He's a Princess Boy. Inspired by the author's son, and by her own initial struggles to understand, this is a heart-warming book about unconditional love and one remarkable family. It is also a call for tolerance and an end to bullying and judgments. The world is a brighter place when we accept everyone for who they are.” | 4-8 years |
| *It’s Okay to be Different* by Todd Parr | “It's Okay to Be Different cleverly delivers the important messages of acceptance, understanding, and confidence in an accessible, child-friendly format featuring Todd Parr's trademark bold, bright colors and silly scenes. Targeted to young children first beginning to read, this book will inspire kids to celebrate their individuality through acceptance of others and self-confidence*. It's Okay to be Different* is designed to encourage early literacy, enhance emotional development, celebrate multiculturalism, and promote character growth.” | 3-6 years |
| *Not All Princesses Dress in Pink* by Jane Yolen and Heidi Y. Stemple | “Princesses come in all kinds. Exuberant text from Jane Yolen and her daughter Heidi Yolen Stemple paired with charming illustrations prove that girls can jump in mud puddles and climb trees, play sports and make messes—all while wearing their tiaras! Not every girl has a passion for pink, but all young ladies will love this empowering affirmation of their importance and unlimited potential.” | 3-8 years |
| *The Odd Egg* by Emily Gravett | “Each of the birds has an egg...except for Duck. So when Duck finds a beautiful egg of his own he's delighted -- even though the other birds make fun of it. But everyone's in for a BIG surprise when his egg finally hatches! The witty text and playful illustrations appear on cleverly designed cut pages that allow the visual jokes to unfold.” | 4-8 years |
| *William’s Doll* by Charlotte Zolotow | “More than anything, William wants a doll.” Don't be a creep," says his brother. "Sissy, sissy," chants the boy next door. Then one day someone really understands William's wish, and makes it easy for others to understand, too.” | 4-8 years |
| *The Boy with Pink Hair* by Perez Hilton | “He was born that way-The Boy with Pink Hair. He had a cotton candy colored mop that no one had ever seen before . . . Life is not easy being pink. Adults stare at you, little children giggle behind your back and some kids are just mean. But when you have a best friend who appreciates your uniqueness and parents who are loving and supportive, you can do just about anything. From blogger-extraordinaire, Perez Hilton, comes the story of a boy who is not afraid to be who he is and how his difference makes a difference.” | 3-5 years |
| Goldie Blox books and construction sets | “A book series plus construction set where Goldie and friends devise a plan to get Nacho clean in time for the carnival.” This set “builds spatial skills, engineering principles (hinges and levers) and confidence in problem-solving” and “comes equipped with [a number of] design ideas and unlimited building possibilities.” | 4-9 years |