

# AMVZE works



## PRIDE Resources for Caregivers Understanding Gender Diversity For ages 3 - 12

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# AMAZE works

Dear Caregivers,

This collection of lessons helps guide conversations with children on gender diversity, including gender identity and expression. We know that PRIDE is about celebrating all LGBTQ+ people. We also know that sexual orientation and gender diversity are often conflated. For this reason, we are dedicating this resource to gender diversity, and we have created a separate PRIDE resource guide on gay and lesbian families.

Many children who are gender expansive, who do not express gender according to stereotypical gender roles, and who are gender non-binary or transgender experience bias, teasing, mistreatment, and exclusion because of their gender identity and expression. At AMAZEworks, we know that honest, intentional conversations about identity, difference, and bias reduce bias levels in children.

We also know the power of sharing stories. When we listen to each other's stories, we build empathy. This empathy is necessary if we want to shift our thinking from "their issue" to "our issue." When we take time to understand bias, prejudice, and discrimination in all its forms, including around gender diversity, we are better equipped to stand up to it.

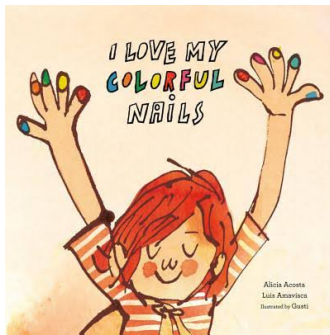
This work requires time and dedication. These books and lessons are a starting point for sharing stories and engaging in discussions. If you have additional questions or want more resources, we encourage you to visit our website: [www.amazeworks.org](http://www.amazeworks.org).

In solidarity with all who strive for equity and belonging,  
AMAZEworks

## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers

### Book Title

*I Love My Colorful Nails* by Alicia Acosta and Luis Amavisca, illustrated by Gusti



### Recommended Ages

3 and up

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*Ben is a boy who loves to paint his nails different colors. One day at school, some boys start teasing him because they don't think that boys should paint their nails. Let's read to find out what happens to Ben and his colorful nails.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- What were you taught about what girls and boys should like or how they should act?
- How might these childhood messages affect the way you interact with your child?
- How do you feel about your child not following societal gender roles? How can you affirm the gender identity of your child?

### Reader's Note

This book allows children who are gender creative or gender non-binary to see someone like them in literature with a positive message about who they are. It also allows children who follow traditional gender roles to see a child who is non-traditional with a loving family and helps them know how to be a friend. It shows a loving, accepting family while also showing the pain felt when others do not accept the child. The book asks children to decide how they would act toward the child in the book.

Our society tends to expect children to act in rigid and specific ways based on gender. Many children don't want to be boxed in by gender roles. Not all children are transgender who are experimenting with actions and clothing that don't fit with adults' expectations related to gender. But some of them are and don't always have the words (or the comfort level) to talk with anyone about this important part of their identity.

Many people are threatened, bullied, and injured about being transgender, gender non-conforming, or gender non-binary, so it's helpful for families to bring up the topic even if they aren't aware of any children they know who are questioning their gender. Talking about gender differences also creates more room for all of our children to talk about how they feel when someone tries to limit what they can do, say, or feel based on gender.

In this way, we can make our communities safer places for all of our children. If your child questions another child's gender expression, you could say, "Well, \_\_\_\_\_ knows themselves better than we do, so \_\_\_\_\_ gets to decide how they dress and act and what they want to be called, just like you do." You could also say, "Yes, that might be a little different than how you've thought about girls and boys before. Whether we think of ourselves as a boy or a girl or something in between comes from a lot of places. We see what our body looks like, and we pay attention to who we feel we are in our hearts. Then we decide what to show other people about who we are by how we dress and act."

## Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

### SEL

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-Management

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Relationship Skills

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

### ABE

EMPATHY AND BELONGING

HEALTHY, COMPLEX IDENTITY

RESPECT ACROSS DIFFERENCES

NOTICE, NAME, AND REJECT BIAS

RESPONSIVENESS AND ACTION

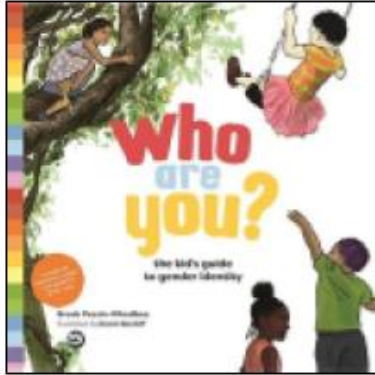
### Discussion Questions

1. Why does Ben paint his nails?
  - a. What do Ben's family and friends think about him painting his nails?
  - b. What do you think about Ben painting his nails?
2. What happens when Ben goes to school with his red nails?
  - a. How does Ben feel about this?
  - b. How would you feel?
3. How do Ben's family and friend, Margarita, try to help him feel better?
4. How did Ben change after being teased by the boys at school?
5. What do you think of the ending of the book?
6. What are some other things that Ben could have done or said to the mean boys who teased him?
  - a. If you had seen the boys teasing Ben, what would you have said or done?

### Journal Questions/Activities

- What do you think about the idea that there are boy activities and girl activities? Do you agree with that? What things do you like to do that may be considered boy activities? What things do you like to do that may be considered girl activities?
- Write or draw about a time when you helped a friend who was sad or a friend helped you like how Ben's family and friends helped Ben in the story.

## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



### Book Title

*Who Are You?* by Brook Pessin-Whedbee, illustrated by Naomi Bardoff

### Recommended Ages

4 and up

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*Gender is personal, and it is part of our identity. People experience gender in many different ways. This book explains some of the many different ways people experience gender and how they may identify.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Thinking back to your childhood, what did you learn about gender identity and expression?
- How has your understanding of gender expression, gender stereotypes, and gender identity changed as an adult?
- What might you need to consider before having conversations about gender with your child?

### Reader's Note

As children continue to explore their identity, including gender, they will have questions about their own and other's identities. Gender is experienced by people in many different ways, and it's important for children to see different gender identities reflected positively in order to affirm each child's own identity and build respect across different identities. This book can be one tool to discuss gender diversity with your child. These discussions help foster healthy, complex identities, respect across differences, and give children language to notice, name, and reject bias when it comes to gender diversity.

Read "A Note for the Grown-ups" on page 1 of the book. Also, note the variety of resources in the back of the book, including the gender wheel.

This book focuses on unpacking gender identity and expression. To learn more about gender diversity and the difference between gender stereotypes, gender expression, and gender identity, check out [www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org).

**Discussion Hint:** It's important to point out respectful language to use when talking about people's bodies and their identities, like not asking people about their body unless they tell you they are comfortable talking about it and believing people when they say who they are and respecting their pronouns. Talk about how they are likely to make mistakes and what to do if that happens.

## Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

### SEL

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-Management

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision-Making

### ABE

EMPATHY AND BELONGING

HEALTHY, COMPLEX IDENTITY

RESPECT ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Notice, Name, and Reject Bias

Responsiveness and Action

## Discussion Questions

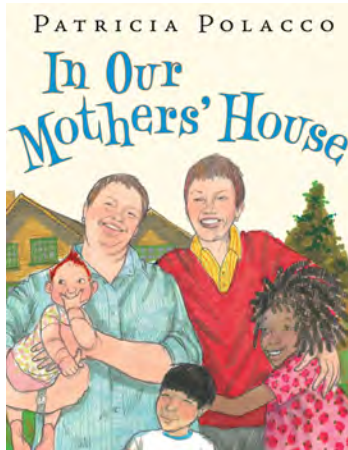
1. What is sex assigned at birth? How is this different from gender?
2. What is the gender spectrum?
3. The book talks about how there are many genders. What does this mean?
4. What does it mean to be cisgender? Transgender (Trans)? Non-binary? Both a boy and a girl? Neither a boy nor a girl?
5. What do you like? (page 10) How have the things you like changed as you've gotten older?
6. What do you think the authors mean when they say that "gender is much more than the body you were born with (p. 7)"?
7. What is identity? (p. 15) How is gender one part of your identity? What are other parts of your identity?
8. What do the authors mean when they say, "You say who you say you are, because YOU know you best"?
9. Some people say there are only two genders. What can you say to someone who says this?
10. How could your classroom and school community be more understanding of gender identity?

## Journal Questions/Activities

- What are the parts of your identity that you're still trying to figure out?
- Who can you talk to in your life about your gender identity?
- Use paper plates (and/or round pieces of paper) and a brad to have your child create their own wheel like the one in the back of the book.
  - For the "I have/Body" section, your child can fill in physical characteristics about themselves.
  - For the "I am/Identity" section, your child can write words or phrases that describe their identity (including but not limited to gender).
  - For the "I like/Expression" section, your child can fill in all the things they like to do.



## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



### Book Title

*In Our Mother's House* written and illustrated by Patricia Polacco

### Recommended Ages

6 and up

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*Marmee's and Meema's house is full of love, much like the other families on their block. However, one neighbor doesn't accept them, maybe because she thinks they are different. How can a family have two moms and no dad?*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Think back to when you first noticed people as “others” (a group of people who were very different from what you were used to). How did you feel about yourself in relation to “others”? How did you feel about them as compared to you?
- How can you use this story as a challenge to find and discover the accurate information out there about other people's lived identities and experiences, while also naming and unpacking misconceptions and stereotypes when they arise?
- How can you use this story to support and strengthen your child's innate sense of justice and their capacity to change unfair situations to fair ones?

### Reader's Note

This book provides an example of a healthy, diverse, loving family. Children with gay and lesbian family members rarely see their family experience represented in books or learning materials. At the same time, they experience many intolerant and biased messages about their families. When children are given the opportunity to see realistic and healthy portrayals of different kinds of families, they can develop the ability to recognize and question unfair depictions.

### Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

#### SEL

SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL AWARENESS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

#### ABE

EMPATHY AND BELONGING

HEALTHY, COMPLEX IDENTITY

RESPECT ACROSS DIFFERENCES

NOTICE, NAME, AND REJECT BIAS

RESPONSIVENESS AND ACTION

## Discussion Questions

1. What is this story about?
2. How are Marmee and Meema different? How are they alike?
3. How are the siblings different? How are they alike?
4. How does the family in this story show love for each other?
5. What do you think Mrs. Lockner meant when she said, "I don't appreciate what you two are" to Marmee and Meema?
6. How do you think Mrs. Lockner's feelings impacted her children?
7. There were several instances where Mrs. Lockner was negative towards this family. What were some of the ways the mothers responded to the biases Mrs. Locker had about their family? (A bias is a preference for or against something or someone.)
  - a. What do you think of their responses?
  - b. How would you have responded?
8. Describe ways in which this neighborhood came together to form community and show support. What are some ways you could come together to create community in your family, neighborhood, and community?
9. Why do you think the author wrote this story? What are the key messages she shared?

## Journal Questions/Activities

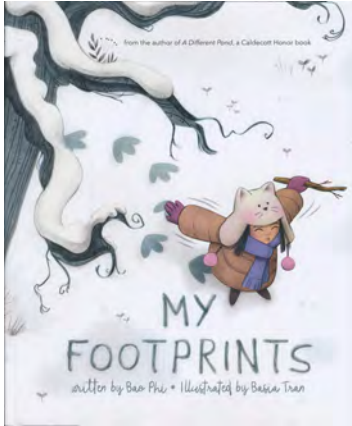
- Describe the similarities and differences between the family in the book and your family.
- In the story, the grandparents shared stories from their past. What stories have been shared with you by your relatives?



## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers

### Book Title

*My Footprints* by Bao Phi, illustrated by Basia Tran



### Recommended Ages

7 and up

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*Thuy experiences teasing and mistreatment from other kids at school because she has two moms. When her moms ask her how her day at school was, Thuy struggles to express her emotions. The family uses their imagination, inspired by their footprints in the snow, to tap into inner strength and courage to help Thuy feel empowered and proud of her family.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Growing up, when did you experience teasing and mistreatment about a part of your identity, or witness someone else being teased about their identity? How did that experience feel? How did you find strength, hope, and courage in that moment and afterwards?
- How can you help your child to feel proud of your family while also building empathy and understanding for how every family is different?

### Reader's Note

We live in an increasingly diverse world, and that includes diverse family structures. Even so, some children are uncomfortable sharing about their family at school because of the bias, prejudices, and stereotypes around family structures that don't look like the traditional "nuclear" family. It is important to discuss and share about different family structures, so children can learn to have respect across differences and be able to notice, name, and reject bias.

The book does not end with a satisfying resolution in which Thuy returns to school and never experiences teasing and mistreatment from classmates about her family structure. This is an important point to discuss with your child because life usually does not have simplistic resolutions to bias, prejudice, and stereotypes. Instead, the book inspires a discussion on resilience, coping skills, and turning to loved ones for support and care, all of which help children learn to move through the challenges that they may experience in life, especially around their identities.

## Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

### SEL

SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL AWARENESS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

### ABE

EMPATHY AND BELONGING

HEALTHY, COMPLEX IDENTITY

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NOTICE, NAME, AND REJECT BIAS

RESPONSIVENESS AND ACTION

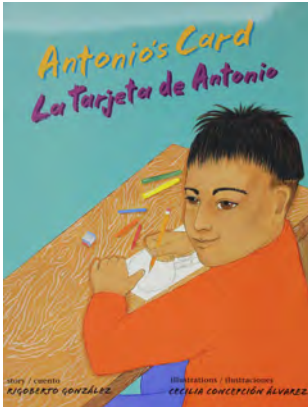
## Discussion Questions

1. At the beginning of the book, why is Thuy upset as she leaves school?
2. What are some of the emotions that Thuy experiences throughout the book?
  - a. How does she manage her emotions?
3. What is the significance of the different animals Thuy sees and imagines?
4. What animals would you choose to represent:
  - a. Strength
  - b. Courage
  - c. Hope
  - d. Resilience
  - e. Justice
5. Momma Arti says, "There are lots of different ways to be strong." What are some examples of different ways to be strong? In what ways have you shown strength?
6. What is the significance of footprints in the story?
7. The story does not end by solving Thuy's problems with being teased about having two moms. Why do you think that is?
  - a. How do you feel about the ending?
  - b. What do you think Thuy can or should do to deal with the teasing?
8. How does Thuy feel about her family at the end of the book?

## Journal Questions/Activities

- Thuy and her moms used their imagination to conquer Thuy's frustrations and anger about being teased at school. Tell about a time when you used (or could use) creativity to overcome something you were upset about.
- Create an animal like Thuy does in the book to represent something important about yourself or your family. Describe what it looks like, sounds like, feels like, and illustrate it. Don't forget to give it a name.
- Write a new ending for the book that focuses on Thuy's next day at school and how she deals with the teasing. Does she find comfort and support from a friend? Does she get an adult involved? Does she stand up for herself? If so, how? Try to imagine what you might do if you were Thuy or were a friend who witnessed the teasing.

## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



### Book Title

*Antonio's Card (La Tarjeta de Antonio)* by Rigoberto González, illustrated by Ceilia Concepción Álvarez

### Recommended Ages

7 and up

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*Antonio made a beautiful Mother's Day card for his mom and her partner, Leslie. When kids at school say hurtful things about Leslie, Antonio becomes embarrassed and worried about what other children will say when Leslie comes to school to see the card on display. He has to make an important decision about whether or not he wants Leslie to come see it.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Reflect on your family. Who makes up your family? What makes your family unique?
- How do you talk about and show different family structures in the books and media you share with your child?
- What bias exists in the messages your school and community send to families about who truly belongs and who doesn't?

### Reader's Note

We live in an increasingly diverse world, and that includes diverse family structures. Even so, some children are uncomfortable sharing about their family at school because of the bias, prejudices, and stereotypes around family structures that don't look like the traditional "nuclear" family. It is important to discuss and share about different family structures, so children can learn to have respect across differences and be able to notice, name, and reject bias. The positive relationships in Antonio's family encourages children to recognize that everyone's families can look different. What truly matters are the actions we take to care for one another and meet each other's needs, which help us discover belonging.

### Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

#### **SEL**

SELF-AWARENESS  
 SELF-MANAGEMENT  
 SOCIAL AWARENESS  
 RELATIONSHIP SKILLS  
 RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

#### **ABE**

EMPATHY AND BELONGING  
 HEALTHY, COMPLEX IDENTITY  
 RESPECT ACROSS DIFFERENCES  
 NOTICE, NAME, AND REJECT BIAS  
 RESPONSIVENESS AND ACTION

## Discussion Questions

1. What does the word family mean to you?
2. Describe Antonio's relationship with Leslie.
3. What happens when Leslie picks Antonio up from school?
4. How does Antonio feel when the other kids make negative comments about her?
5. How does he respond?
6. What emotions and thoughts does Antonio have about the card he made for his mother and Leslie? What is he worried about?
7. Why does Antonio's mother tell Antonio, "Well, I'll leave it up to you. You're old enough now to decide what to do"?
8. How does Antonio act the next day when Leslie comes to pick him up?
9. What does Antonio realize about his family when he sees the painting that Leslie made for his mother for Mother's Day?
10. How do you think Leslie will feel when she sees Antonio's card? How would you feel if you were Leslie? If you were Antonio?
11. What are some ways that Antonio could say to respond to the hurtful things his classmates may say about Leslie after this?
12. Why is it important to learn about different types of families?

## Journal Questions/Activities

- Draw or write about what is unique about your family?
- Draw or write about a time when have you felt embarrassed to share something about your family with others? What did you do?
- Discuss the different ways families can look and that who makes up one's family is up to each individual. Then create a portrait of your family. You can draw, use photographs, use symbols to represent each person or the family as a whole, make a sculpture, include words or phrases, or use a variety of mediums.