Recommended Books — Preschool to Secondary

Pre-school/ Early Primary

Worm Loves Worm — J.J. Austrian, illus. by Mike Curato
Worm and Worm want to get married but cannot decide who is the bride and who is the groom. But does it matter? This sweet and beguiling picture book uses the natural world and the variance of gender in it to celebrate love in all its splendid forms.

Big Bob, Little Bob — James Howe, illus. by Laura Ellen Anderson
Three friends learn that gender doesn't matter when it comes to playing with toys.

I’m a Girl — Yasmeen Ismail
A spunky girl donkey is not afraid to be herself. She likes to play however she wants, whether it's loud or fast, whether she makes a mess, whether she's a little rough and tumble. But because of the things she likes to do, people keep thinking she's a boy.

*Introducing Teddy — Jessica Walton; illus. by Dougal MacPherson
When Errol's teddy bear tells them that they are actually a girl teddy bear called Tilly, Errol makes her bow-tie a hair bow. Everyone is happy and go off to play. This wonderful Australian book that deals with gender identity has been a huge hit with readers across the country. It's even been praised in Parliament.

Home at Last — Vera Williams and Chris Raschka
Lester hasn’t really belonged to anyone or anyplace for a long time. So when Daddy Albert and Daddy Rich adopt him, he is excited about his new life, his new toys and their big, fluffy dog, but Lester won’t feel really at home until he is no longer scared at night. This is a poignant, timely, and universal picture book about fear, adoption, family, and the joy of fatherhood.

Red: A Crayon’s Story — Michael Hall
The label on the crayon read “Red.” However, all of Red’s strawberries and hearts come out blue. Friends and family try to fix Red until new buddy Berry helps this crayon discover his true colour. This is a book that can be used to explain all sorts of difference, from gender identity to autism. Its simple story of labelling and the pain it can cause children who don’t fit the mould for whatever reason makes it a powerful teaching tool that invites a child’s own emotional response.

Princess Princess Ever After — Katie O’Neill
A graphic novel where girls are heroes, monsters just want to dance and two princesses find their happily ever after together. This very popular book deals with the power of love while challenging gender norms and body image stereotypes.

Classic Titles
It’s Ok to be Different/ The Family Book and lots more titles — Todd Parr. Ages 3–6.
Todd Parr is rightly one of the best-selling picture book authors. His bright and engaging artwork is melded with simple storylines that celebrate diversity in our world.

These two books let us look inside two non-traditional families: same sex couples and their children. As the children talk, it's clear these kids live in a nurturing environment where the biggest issues are the everyday challenges of growing up.

*Australian title
Recommended Books — Preschool to Secondary

Mums and dads and grandparents and cousins and stepbrothers and aunts and great-grandchildren...this is a laugh-out-loud introduction to all sorts of different families!

These Australian books have become classic stories that are co-written by Lesbian mum Vicki and her daughter Brenna.

Heather Has Two Mummies – Lesléa Newman, illus. by Laura Cornell
When Heather goes to preschool, she learns that not all families look alike, but that they all have one thing in common—love. New text and illustrations (also de-Americanised) make this classic bestseller accessible to a modern audience.

And Tango Makes Three – Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
Roy and Silo are just like the other penguin couples at the zoo - they bow to each other, walk and swim together. But Roy and Silo are a little bit different - they're both boys. When the zookeeper finds them trying to hatch a stone, he realises that it may be time for them to become parents for real.

Late Primary

Sex is a Funny Word: A Book about Bodies, Feelings, and YOU. – Cory Silverberg
2015. 159pp. Seven Stories, $AUS42.95 (9781609806064). Years 3–6.
For children with questions about bodies, gender, touch, sex, and love, this all-inclusive book guides conversation between children and trusted adults in an accessible graphic format. Gentle humour brings home the message of respect, joy and justice for everyone’s body. Stonewall Book Awards–Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's & Young Adult Award Honor Book.

Can I Tell You About Gender Diversity? – C.J. Atkinson
Illustrated throughout, this is a great way to start conversations about gender diversity. In simple language told from the perspective of a 12-year-old, the book explains what it is like to transition and how his friends, family and teachers can help through talking, listening and being proactive.

The Hidden Oracle (The Trials of Apollo #1) – Rick Riordan
Apollo is in trouble with Zeus and has been banished to Earth as a mortal with none of his godly powers, so he makes his way to Camp Half-Blood before finding out about an all-new threat to Camp Half-Blood and the world.

Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard: The Hammer of Thor – Rick Riordan
Stonewall Book Awards–Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children’s Award Book
In Magnus's second adventure, Rick Riordan introduces readers to Alex Fierro, a gender-fluid teen who has ‘startling eyes, an impressive sweater-vest, and a tendency to hit people’ (54). Alex is a hero and represents the expansive possibilities of gender for future generations.

*Australian title
Recommended Books — Preschool to Secondary

Secondary
Young Adult Fiction

*The Sidekicks* – Will Kostakis
Ryan, Harley and Miles knew each other but all they had in common was Isaac. He was each of their best friend. When Isaac dies they must begin to trust each other and share their secrets. The book perfectly depicts the pain and pleasure of this teenage world, piecing together three points of view with intricate splendour.

*Ida* – Alison Evans
An intelligent, diverse and entertaining novel that explores gender identity, love, loss and longing, and speaks to the condition of having an array of overwhelming, and often illusory, choices.

*Georgia Peaches and Other Forbidden Fruit* – Jaye Robin Brown
2016. 419pp. HarperTeen. $34.95 (9780062270986) Years 10+.
When out and proud Jo is forced to move to small-town Georgia, she grants her father’s request to protect his ministry and new marriage by returning to the closet. But who will she meet in the closet?

*The Great American Whatever* – Tim Federle
After spending six months alone grieving over the loss of his sister, Quinn’s best friend forces him out to a party where he meets and falls for the older and more experienced Amir.

*Girl Mans Up* – M.E. Girard
Between her parent’s need for her to wear dresses and her best friend’s need for her to be one of the guys, Pen slowly loses herself. Will she man up?

*Dryland* – Sara Jaffe
Floating through life is something Julie excels at, until Alexis unexpectedly invites her to join the swim team. Is the invitation more than just a spot on the team?

*You Know Me Well* – David Levithan and Nina LaCour
Mark’s boyfriend ditches him to flirt with older guys, and Kate runs away from meeting the girl of her dreams. Instead of finding themselves alone, they find each other for the kick-off of San Francisco’s Pride Week.

*Juliet Takes a Breath* – Gabby Rivera
Juliet, a kick-ass Puerto Rican lesbian from the Bronx, heads to Portland, Oregon, for an internship with a bona fide celeb lesbian author. Through her experiences, she questions and unlocks the various intersectionalities that divide and bind.

*Boy Meets Boy* – David Levithan
Paul has been gay his whole life and he’s confident about almost everything. He doesn’t have to hide his feelings like best friend Tony or even cope with loving the wrong guy like his other best friend Joni. But heartbreak can happen to anyone. Falling in love changes everything. Other best-sellers by David Levithan include *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*; and *Two Boys Kissing*.

*Australian title
Recommended Books — Preschool to Secondary

*Release — by Patrick Ness
A startling and tender novel about how to let yourself love and set yourself free. Today will change Adam Thorn's life. Between his religious family, unpleasant boss and his ex-boyfriend, the bindings of his world are coming undone. And way across town, a ghost has risen from the lake. Is there time for Adam to find his release?

*Welcome to Orphancorp — Marlee Jane Ward
Winner of the 2015 Seizure Viva La Novella Prize and the 2016 Victorian Premier’s Literary Award for Young Adult, this is a sharp-edged semi-futuristic riff about a rebellious teenager's last week at an industrial orphanage. This is a compelling and brilliant novella which is soon to have its sequel.

What We Left Behind — Robin Talley
Toni and Gretchen have been a couple since school. When Toni identifies as genderqueer and develops friendships with a trans group at her university, challenges arise for the couple. Also available: Lies We Tell Ourselves.

I am J — Chris Beam
The story of a trans male teen faced with the choice of hiding his true self or fearlessly embracing his gender identity.

Annie on My Mind — Nancy Garden
This groundbreaking book, first published in 1982, is the story of two teenage girls whose friendship blossoms into love and who, despite pressures from family and school that threaten their relationship, promise to be true to each other and their feelings. It features a full-length interview with the author, who answers such revealing questions as how she knew she was gay, why she wrote the book, censorship and the book's impact on readers then and now.

*Clancy of the Undertow — Christopher Currie
Set in a small Australian country town, Clancy is a 16-year-old girl with a crush on the local hot girl. She feels like a freak with a capital F, but a new friendship might just save her from loneliness and turn her life around.

Young Adult Non-Fiction

*Finding Nevo — Nevo Zisin
Meet Nevo: girl, boy, he, she, him, her, they, them, daughter, son, teacher, student, friend, gay, bi, lesbian, trans, homo, Jew, dyke, masculine, feminine, androgynous, queer. Nevo was not born in the wrong body. Nevo just wants everyone to catch up with all that Nevo is. Personal, political and passionate, Finding Nevo is an autobiography about gender and everything that comes with it.

Saving Alex: When I Was Fifteen I Told My Mormon Parents I Was Gay, and That’s When My Nightmare Began — Alex Cooper
Alex Cooper tells the true story of her time in an unlicensed conversion program and the fight to live openly gay in her conservative surroundings.

*Australian title
Recommended Books — Preschool to Secondary

Being Jazz: My life as a (Transgender) Teen – Jazz Jennings
Jazz Jennings recounts growing up trans, becoming a national spokesperson and role model.

This is a workbook designed to help young adults explore gender identity and its intersectionalities.

Branded by the Pink Triangle – Ken Setterington
A 2014 Stonewall Children’s & Young Adult Literature Honor Book. In Nazi Germany, the pink triangle sewed onto prison uniforms became the symbol of the persecution of homosexuals. A mix of historical research, first-person accounts and individual stories brings this time to life for young readers. Stories of bravery in the face of inhuman cruelty, friendship found in the depths of despair in the camps and the perseverance of the human spirit will educate and inspire.

The Letter Q: Queer Writers’ Notes to their Younger Selves – Sarah Moon (Editor)
Life-saving letters from a glittering wishlist of top authors. In this anthology, sixty-three award-winning authors such as Michael Cunningham, Amy Bloom, Jacqueline Woodson, Gregory Maguire, David Levithan, and Armistead Maupin make imaginative journeys into their pasts, telling their younger selves what they would have liked to know then about their lives as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgendered people.

Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen — Arin Andrews
Seventeen-year-old Arin Andrews shares all the hilarious, painful, and poignant details of undergoing gender reassignment as a high school student in this winning first-of-its-kind memoir. It is a reminder that self-acceptance does not come ready made with a manual and spare parts. Rather, some assembly is always required. Now with a reading group guide and an all-new afterword from the author!

Rethinking Normal — Katie Rain Hill
In her unique, generous and affecting voice, 19-year-old Katie Rain Hill shares her personal journey of undergoing gender reassignment. A coming-of-age story about transcending physical appearances and redefining the parameters of “normalcy” to embody one’s true self. Now with a reading group guide!

Cupboards are For Clothes: A History of Queer Australia — Rachel Cook
Some of the very first Australians were gay and lesbian: they arrived on convict ships or as free settlers and forged their own colourful and intriguing history. At times shunned from society, they fought to be treated as equals. From mollies to queers, gays and lesbians have contributed to Australian history in a most unique way.

*Australian title