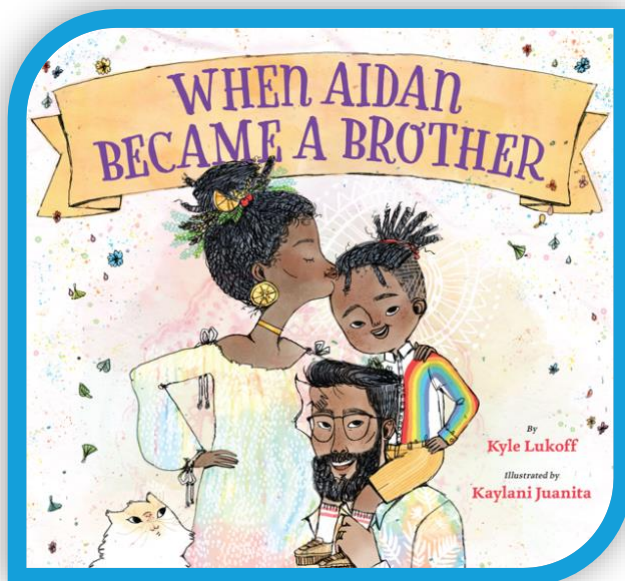




# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

**About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



## When Aidan Became a Brother

Kyle Lukoff (Author), Kaylani Juanita (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1620148372

Publisher: Lee & Low Books

Year Published: 2019

Age Range: 5-8

### Book Themes

Transgender Identity, Family, Gender Identity, Acceptance

### About the Book

When Aidan was born, everyone thought he was a girl. His parents gave him a pretty name, his room looked like a girl's room and he wore clothes that other girls liked wearing. After he realized he was a boy, Aidan and his parents fixed the parts of his life that didn't fit anymore, and he settled happily into his new life. Then Mom and Dad announce they're going to have another baby and Aidan wants to do everything he can to make things right for his new sibling from the beginning--from choosing the perfect name to creating a beautiful room to picking out the cutest onesie. But what does "making things right" actually mean? And what happens if he messes up? With a little help, Aidan comes to understand that mistakes can be fixed with honesty and communication, and that he already knows the most important thing about being a big brother: how to love with his whole self.

## Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the book?
- What did you learn about being transgender by reading the book?
- What happens when Aidan tells his parents that he is a boy?
- What do you think about his parent's response?
- How does Aidan explore "different ways of being a boy?"
- How does Aidan feel about becoming a big brother? What kind of big brother do you think Aidan will be?
- How does Aidan feel when people ask if the baby is a girl or a boy? How do you know he feels that way?
- Why do you think Aidan was looking for baby names "that could fit this new person no matter who they grew up to be?"
- What do you think it means when Aidan's Mom tells him that it is important to love someone for who they are?
- How did you feel when the book ended? What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think is the overall message of the book?

## Talking Points

Below are some important considerations that will make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

### 1. Transgender Identity

This book tells the story of Aidan, a transgender boy. If you haven't already discussed this, talk with your child about what it means to be transgender. You can explain what transgender means in simple terms. You might say something like: "When they were born, the doctors thought Aidan was a girl but he knew he was a boy" or "Being transgender means that when you were a baby, people thought you were a boy because of your body but later you told them you are actually a girl." You can also say that this feeling can occur at a very young age. You can talk about the bias and other challenges faced by people who are transgender and elicit ideas from them or share the following: bullying, bias and discrimination, lack of visibility in media (television and movies) and even violence. Talk together about what they might do to act as an ally to someone who is transgender (e.g., include them in a playground game) or share what you have done. You can also read together other [books about transgender and gender non-conforming identity](#).

### 2. Acceptance and Support

Talk with your child about understanding, acceptance and support. When Aidan tells his parents that he is a boy, it took "everyone some time to adjust" but his parents accept and embrace him. Then Aidan's family connects with other families with transgender children to learn and understand more. Point out how important it is to understand and accept people for who they are. In Aidan's case, it is

critical for his parents to accept who he is so they can learn how to support him and meet his needs as a transgender person. When it comes to gender identity and other kinds of differences, there may be family members and others who do not offer acceptance and support of the person's identity, and instead reject them. Explain that when we don't know or understand an aspect of someone's identity (gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, etc.), we want to be open-minded and learn about them; we don't want to be judgmental or biased. It is especially important to support people who face bias and discrimination, like transgender people and others. You can explain this to your child, ask questions about their experiences supporting others and share how you have supported others, especially those in marginalized groups.

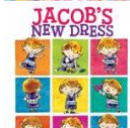
### 3. Gender Norms and Stereotypes

The book explores gender norms and stereotypes, such as what it means to act, dress and play "like a girl" or "like a boy." Talk with your child about how sometimes people and society in general try to tell people how to act, play, dress, decorate their room, etc. according to certain "assumptions" or "stereotypes" around gender. Define stereotype as: "the false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way." Talk with your child about gender roles and how girls and boys sometimes get messages about what they are "supposed" to like. This can limit children's ability to explore many different interests. Ask your child whether they have seen or experienced this themselves and remind them how important it is to follow their own likes, interests, style and dreams regardless of societal expectations and stereotypes. If you want to go further, you can also discuss how societal messages are very strong and conveyed in many ways (e.g., books, toys, media and other sources). For example, if we always see girls liking pink and purple in toys, clothes, etc. and we are a girl who doesn't like those colors, we might think there's something wrong with us and may feel pressure to conform. Explain that's why it's important to convey the message that we don't have to follow those "rules" or gender norms; we should be able to follow our own voices.

### Other Books You May Like



*I am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/i-am-jazz](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/i-am-jazz)



*Jacob's New Dress* by Sarah Hoffman and Ian Hoffman, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/jacobs-new-dress](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/jacobs-new-dress)



*Sparkle Boy* by Leslea Newman, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/sparkle-boy](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/sparkle-boy)



*They She He Me: Free to Be!* by Maya Christina Gonzalez and Matthew SG, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/they-she-he-me-free-to-be](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/they-she-he-me-free-to-be)

## ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on LGBTQ rights, identity and activism.

### Curriculum Resources

Who Am I? Identity Poems, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems)

### Websites

Beyond the Binary: Discussing Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Identity in K-12 Schools  
[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/beyond-the-binary-discussing-transgender-and-gender-non](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/beyond-the-binary-discussing-transgender-and-gender-non)

In order to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students, it is important to discuss transgender and gender non-conforming identity and issues in schools. This guide provides suggestions and resources.

Let's Get it Right: Using Correct Pronouns and Names

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/lets-get-it-right-using-correct-pronouns-and-names](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/lets-get-it-right-using-correct-pronouns-and-names)

Educator resource about using accurate pronouns and names to convey understanding and respect for all people, especially for those who are transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources)

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all)

This resource provides information about how to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school community.

The Question Corner: Early Childhood FAQs

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner)

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children.

See Question Corner [How Can I Prevent Gender Bias in Young Children?](#)

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk)

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources. See Table Talk [Why We Need Diverse Books](#)

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

LGBTQ People & Homophobia/Heterosexism: Transgender and Gender Non-Conformity Identity,  
[www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[199\]=199](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[199]=199)