



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Book of the Month: 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 educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

When Aidan Became a Brother

Kyle Lukoff (Author), Kaylani Juanita (Illustrator)

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.

ISBN: 978-1620148372

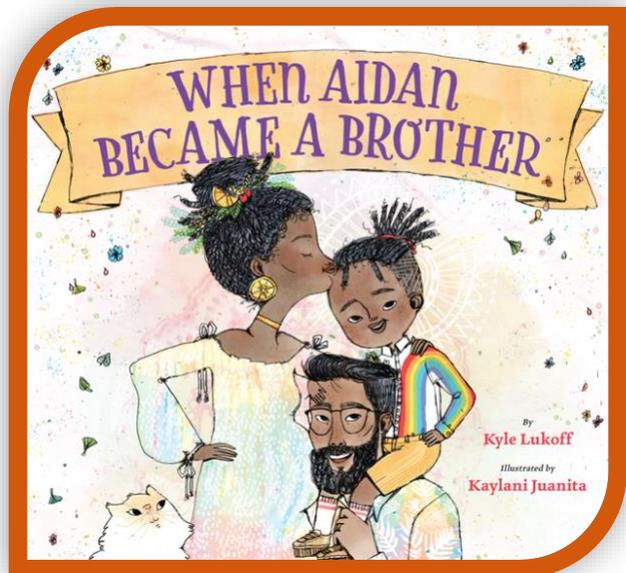
Publisher: Lee & Low Books

Year Published: 2019

Age Range: 5-8

Book Themes

Transgender Identity, Family, Gender Identity, Acceptance



Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Rather than focus on students' retention of all the words, make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind students of the words' meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and point out when they appear in the story. For definitions that are differentiated for young children, see ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).

- accidentally-on-purpose
- adjust
- belonged
- confused
- hardware
- important
- perfect
- practice
- sibling
- 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."*

Discussion Questions

Note: If you have students (or parents) in your class who may be gender non-conforming or transgender, be mindful not to call extra attention to those students and consider talking with them (or their parents) in advance of a discussion on transgender identity so they don't feel uncomfortable.

Before reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book?
- Who do you see on the cover of the book?
- What do you think the book might be about?
- Who is the author of the book? Who is the illustrator of the book?

As you read the book aloud, you can pause periodically to ask a few discussion questions that will check for comprehension and keep students engaged. Below are sample questions that correlate to specific page numbers.

- What did Aidan do to feel more like "another kind of boy?" (page 6)
- What colors are Aidan and his Dad going to paint the baby's room? (page 14)
- Where does Aidan practice reading to his baby brother? (page 20)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of the following discussion questions:

- What is the book about?
- Why does Aidan hate the sound of his name?
- Why do you think Aidan rips and stains his clothes "accidentally-on-purpose?"
- Even though everyone thinks Aidan is just "a different kind of girl," Aidan knows he is really "another kind of boy." What does this mean to you?

- How do Aidan's parents react when he tells them he is a boy? How does his family learn about what it means to be transgender?
- What does it mean to be transgender? (See Note above.)
- What are some ways that Aidan explores what it means to be a boy?
- How does Aidan feel when he finds out that his parents are having a baby?
- How does Aidan feel when people ask if the baby is a girl or a boy? How do you know he feels that way?
- How do Aidan and his family approach the gender of the baby differently than many people do? To what extent do you think this is because Aidan is transgender?
- Have you ever asked about the gender of a baby before the baby was born? After reading the book, do you think about that differently? Please explain.
- Why do you think Aidan looks for baby names "that could fit this new person no matter who they grew up to be?"
- How does Aidan practice being a big brother?
- Why does Aidan's Mom say they made some mistakes? How do you think Aidan's experience changed how she will think about the new baby?
- 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?

Extension Activities

Below are activities for students that can extend learning from the book.

1. Imagine what happens next in the book.

Remind students how the book ends by re-reading pages 28-31. Ask students: *What happens at the end of the book?* Remind students that the family's baby is born and Aidan is excited about being a big brother. Ask students: *What do you think happens after Aidan becomes a big brother? How does he feel about it? What happens next for Aidan in terms of being transgender?* Have students imagine what might happen if the book continues for a few more pages by brainstorming some ideas. Then, have them apply their ideas to writing and/or drawing the next few scenes and pages, as they imagine the book continuing. When completed, students can share their pages with the rest of the class by posting them on the wall and moving around the room gallery-style to see all the ways in which students imagined the story going on. You can also invite parents and family members in for a whole class reading of the book and include the students' additional pages.

2. Connect with the author.

Read the "Author's Note" in the back of the book (page 32). Talk with students about how the author's experience shaped the book. Ask: *Why do you think Kyle Lukoff wrote the book? How is his experience similar and different from Aidan's?* As a class, create a list of questions you might want to ask the author that can be used for a "mock interview" or for writing to the author. For mock interviews, have students work in pairs to create an interview where one student plays the role of interviewer and the other plays the role of the author. Have students work together to learn more about the author from his website and other internet research. Then have them come up with a list of questions and responses based on what they know or can guess about the author. Each pair can

then perform the interview for the class or have it recorded on video and shared with the rest of the school and families. You can also have students write to the author through [his website](#) contact information. In their letters, students can share what they like about the book, questions they have about it, what it made them think about, and questions they have for the author about himself. Work with students to edit and finalize their letters and send them to the author.

3. Discuss transgender identity.

Elicit from students that the book is about a boy who is transgender. Talk with students about what it means to be transgender. Ask students: *What does it mean to be transgender?* Talk about what it means to be transgender through the character of Aidan. You can explain that when Aidan was born, his parents and the doctors thought he was a girl—but Aidan knew he was a boy. You can say something like: “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” (or the other way around). You can also say that this feeling can occur at a very young age. Elicit and explain some of the challenges faced by people who are transgender, including: bullying, bias and discrimination, lack of visibility in media (television and movies) and even violence. Talk together about what you can do as a class or school to support and act as an ally to students who are transgender or students who don't conform to traditional gender roles. You can also read and discuss other [books about transgender and gender non-conforming identity](#).

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and educational resources on transgender identity, gender identity and gender roles.

Curriculum Resources

Diverse Books Matter, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter

Identity-Based Bullying, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/identity-based-bullying

Mo'Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/mone-davis-and-gender-stereotypes

Transgender Identity and Issues, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/transgender-identity-and-issues (Note that this is a high school lesson plan, but teachers can use for background information and context.)

Toys and Gender, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/toys-and-gender

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

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

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.

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

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.

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)