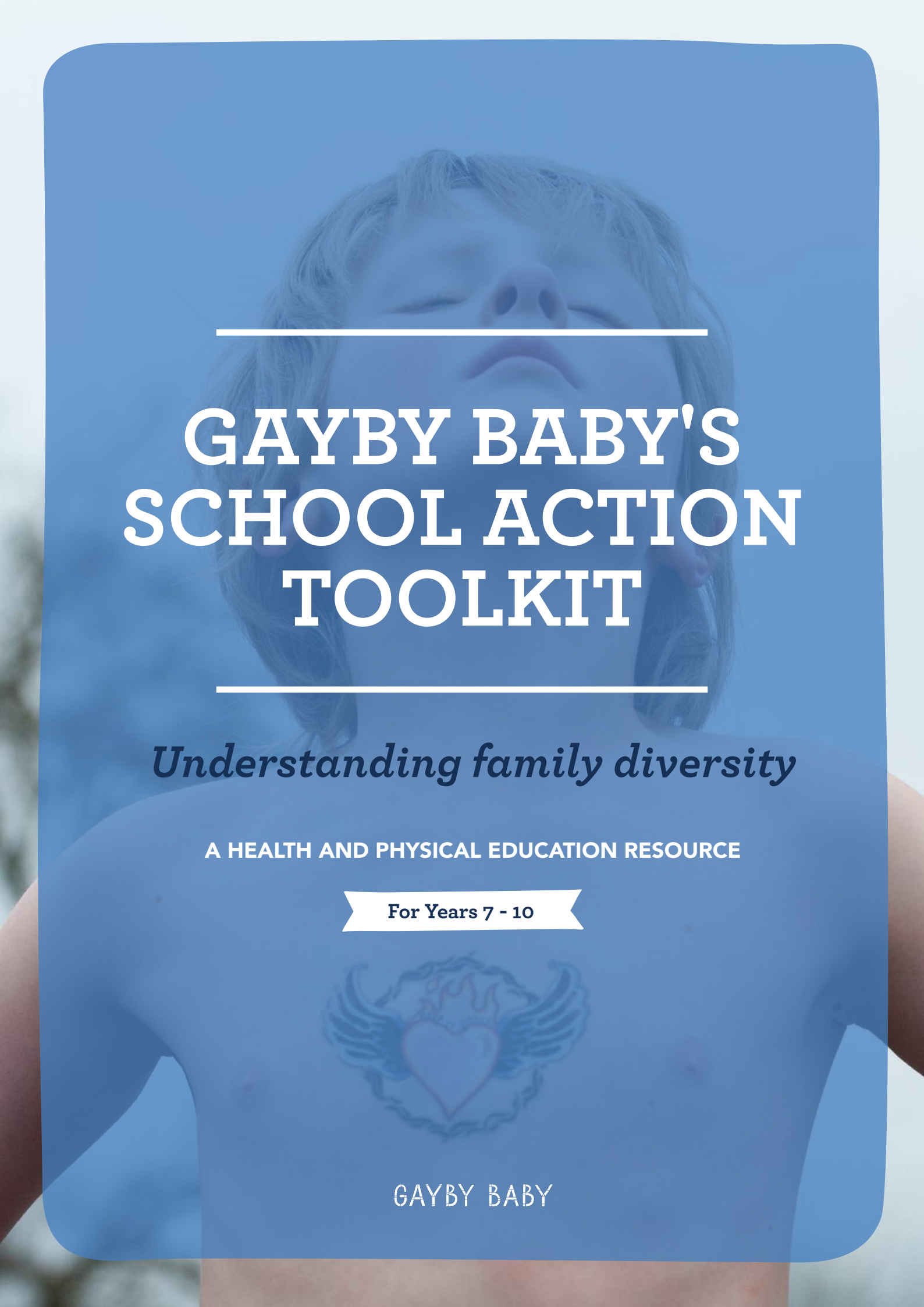

GAYBY BABY'S SCHOOL ACTION TOOLKIT

Understanding family diversity

A HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION RESOURCE

For Years 7 - 10

GAYBY BABY

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Foreword

GAYBY BABY's *School Action Toolkit* explores the diversity of the modern family unit. By viewing and subsequently completing activities drawn from the documentary GAYBY BABY, your school can create a safe and welcoming environment for diverse families.

The *School Action Toolkit* is linked to the **Health and Physical Education** learning area of the **Australian Curriculum** for Years 7–8, and Years 9–10.

The toolkit includes:

- Activities and strategies that explore and celebrate the diversity of the modern Australian family.
- Easy to teach lesson plans and student worksheets.
- Engaging posters to display around the school and classroom.
- Ideas for teachers wishing to foster a more inclusive classroom environment.
- Ideas for school leaders wishing to take steps to welcome diverse families at an administrative level.
- Frequently Asked Questions and Information regarding diverse family units.

The classroom activities are linked to a Supplementary Video Kit, containing excerpts drawn from GAYBY BABY. These short videos promote learning based on the real life experiences of children being raised by same-sex attracted parents in Australia today. They have been reviewed by the **Australian Classification Board** and classified **PG**.

Beyond the classroom, the *School Action Toolkit* encourages a whole school approach to welcoming diverse families in the school community. This is important, as there is an ever-growing demographic of children being raised in non-traditional family units with same-sex attracted parents, single-parents, co-parents, and in foster, adoptive, guardian, kinship or step family units.[1] The *School Action Toolkit* provides you with strategies to support these students as you would those from traditional families, helping to make your school a safer and more inclusive place.

1 See pages 14 & 15 for more detail.

ABOUT THE FILM

GAYBY BABY is a 2015 documentary film directed by Maya Newell and produced by Charlotte Mars. The film follows the stories of Gus, Ebony, Matt and Graham, four children navigating the usual challenges of growing up: school; sport; friends; and making their first decisions about their futures. They do so within loving homes and with caring parents – who all happen to be gay or lesbian.

The film has screened at international film festivals and Sydney Film Festival & Melbourne International Film Festival on home soil. It was nominated for an ACCTA Award for Best Documentary, an AWGIE Award for Best Documentary Writing and was the winner of the ATOM (Australian Teachers of Media) award for Best Documentary, 2015.

The Supplementary Video Kit is available at
www.thegaybyproject.com/schools

From the Filmmakers

Thank you for using the *School Action Toolkit,* which has been created with the generous support of Good Pitch[2] Australia and our impact and community partners.

This resource grew from hearing many schoolyard stories of kids and young adults with same-sex attracted parents. Their stories, shared with us during the making of GAYBY BABY, told us there was much that could be done to improve the understanding and recognition of diverse families in Australian schools.

Over the last 10 years, there have been teachers and principals working in schools to promote inclusive practices, which has begun the conversation around family diversity. Their efforts have helped pave the way for this *School Action Toolkit*.

In August 2015, there was some controversy about the screening of GAYBY BABY in NSW schools. Since that time, we are happy to report, the NSW Department of Education has confirmed there is no "ban" or limitation on the use or screening of GAYBY BABY in schools as a teaching resource.

While unfortunate, the controversy serves as a reminder of the importance of this *School Action Toolkit* in educating the next generation and welcoming the "non-traditional" families in our communities, who so often come under attack.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to the kids whose stories feature in the film segments used in this resource – you inspire us greatly and we are honoured to have been able to share your stories.

Thank you,
Charlotte & Maya

MAYA – GAYBY & FILMMAKER
When I was at school we didn't talk about different family structures. When I saw a fiction film "The Kids are Alright" at the movies, it was the first time in 25 years that I had seen my family structure onscreen. I felt somehow that my family was validated. Representation is so powerful.

CHARLOTTE - FILMMAKER
A lot of people ask us about our use of the word "Gayby". A Gayby is a term some families use for a child with gay or lesbian parents, but it's hardly a scientific definition. It is a term we adopted because it was coined by children with same-sex attracted parents to describe themselves with a sense of pride. While we have continued to use the word in this resource, please keep in mind that it is a choice for each individual child whether to use this term or not ... besides, most people just call them "kids".

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All families are the same, because all families have differences.

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Before you begin

Before using the *School Action Toolkit* please read and implement the steps below.

Step 1: Familiarise yourself with the information and activities contained in the toolkit.

Step 2: Engage in conversations with your school executive/s about taking a whole school approach to addressing family diversity and explain the importance of doing so (see page 30).

Step 3: Communicate with parents and carers about the school's intention to use GAYBY BABY's School Action Toolkit.

BRIGHT IDEAS
A sample 'passive consent' form can be downloaded from our website.

Step 4: Encourage teaching staff to discuss different types of families within their everyday language and teaching programs – see the section on Strategies For Your School (page 33) for ideas about how to do this.

JESSE, 23 YEARS – GAYBY
I think if this film had been shown and my type of family had been known about at school, I wouldn't have had to lie. I wouldn't have had to make up stories about what my family was and who the other woman was who was living with us. School would have been easier. I could have been honest and open with myself and my friends. It would have made a huge difference on my learning as a kid.

SECTION 1:

MEET THE KIDS

Meet the kids

EBONY

12-year-old Ebony has two mothers and two little brothers. They all live together in the outer suburbs of Sydney – a place where she struggles to find her place amongst mostly traditional family units.

Ebony dreams of being a pop singer and hopes to get into the prestigious Newtown Performing Arts High. But getting into Newtown is not just about singing: the school is in a bohemian inner-city suburb where Ebony believes she and her family would be accepted and understood. But with the audition looming, Ebony is forced to ask what matters most in her life. Is it better to change herself to fit in, or change the world to accept her as she is? Maybe getting into Newtown isn't everything…

Key themes

- Sense of identity and belonging
- Changes and transitions into high school
- Resilience and dealing with disappointments
- Roles and responsibilities in families

Video

Duration: 19:30 mins
Activity: 2

GRAHAM

11-year-old Graham desperately wants to be a fluent reader. Having been neglected by his birth parents and never taught to speak as a young child, Graham is now taking on the quest to become literate with the support of his older brother and two adoptive dads. But this quest is complicated when his dads move the family to Fiji for a business opportunity – Fiji is a conservative place where they don't feel comfortable being "out"…

Faced with hiding his family and re-establishing himself in a new country, Graham's goal seems ever more distant. When his new teacher sets an assignment where he must write and perform "The Story of Me", all Graham's fears collide. Can his family help him in this final test, and could it be that life in Fiji is actually the best thing for them?

Key themes

- Family relationships – support and trust
- Self-worth and self identity (persistence with challenging tasks)
- Cultural diversity

Video

Duration: 15 mins
Activity: 3

GUS

10-year-old Gus is growing up in a household of women. He has two mums and a little sister. He's also passionate about WWE wrestling. At a time when he's discovering his masculinity, he finds its macho world alluring. Unfortunately the wrestlers encapsulate everything his mothers' dislike about masculine culture: these men are not their idea of good male role models...

So what or whom makes a good role model? Do we really need role models of the same gender? And do they need to come from within the family home, or can they be drawn from somewhere else entirely? With a big wrestling show coming to Sydney, Gus must prove to his mothers that he understands all these things and more, if he is to attend.

Key themes

- Gender stereotypes and what it means to be male and female
- Changes and transitions associated with puberty
- Negotiation and communication within families
- Role models in the media

Video

Duration: 15 mins
Activity: 4

MATT

11-year-old Matt has a little brother, a father and two mums, with whom he attends Church every Sunday. His birth mum is strong of faith, despite the fact the pastor says same-sex couples are a sin against God… This disconnect between his mother's faith and the pastor's admonitions has got Matt questioning his beliefs. How can his mother love a God who doesn't like gay people?

Matt starts to think he doesn't want anything to do with God. But what would this mean for his relationship with his mum? In answering life's biggest questions, Matt must stand up to God, the Prime Minister, and perhaps most importantly – his mum.

Key themes

- Communication and respect in relationships (negotiating compromises in families)
- Spiritual beliefs and sense of identity
- Taking action to create social change

Video

Duration: 15 mins
Activity: 5

SECTION 2:

BACKGROUND INFO + STATISTICS

Why is it important to value family diversity?

A young person's family is central to their understanding of their own identity. When students see a family like their own reflected in their school environment, it increases feelings of validation, safety and acceptance, which positively impacts their academic achievement and social wellbeing.[2] It is therefore essential that a range of family structures are represented in schools when talking about families.

Even though GAYBY BABY features children with same-sex parented families, when we talk about "family diversity" in this resource we are not just talking about same-sex attracted families. Many students come from families that fall outside the traditional family unit, and need to be supported.

ADRIAN, 13 YEARS
I don't have gay parents, but my mum passed away when I was 5 and my dad raises me. In school we always watch films with families that only have mums and dads and that's sometimes hard for me.

With the structure and composition of Australian families rapidly changing, some children are experiencing a number of family transitions and structures before they reach adolescence.

Statistics on Australian families from Census 2009-2010 indicate that as many as **29%** of all Australian children are being raised outside heterosexual, biologically-parented households.

This is broken down as:

19% of children in single parent families.

7% of children in blended families and 3% in step families, suggesting many children have multiple "mothers" and "fathers" in their lives.

2% of children with grandparents or foster parents.

A small number of children lived in adoptive families. In 2010–11, there were **346** adoptions of children aged 0–14 in Australia (this includes "known", local and inter-country adoptions).

There are also lots of families who are diverse in terms of their culture/race, as seen in those with **parents of different backgrounds**, or structure, as seen in the **kinship families** of many Aboriginal families. This resource may present opportunities for teachers wishing to extend learnings into discussions about these family units, creating a more accepting and inclusive classroom and deconstructing "family" as it best applies to their school's makeup.

Recognising a student's family diversity – in whatever form – positively impacts their wellbeing.[2]

Spotlight on same-sex parented families

The Research

In the 2011 Census there were:

33,714 same-sex couple households in Australia

6,120 children living in same-sex couples

These figures are a **conservative indication** as they only capture families in which two people self-identified as being in a same-sex or de facto relationship. This means it does not include any single-parent families where the parent identifies as same-sex attracted.

In addition, by looking at the increasing numbers – **3,600** children in 2001 to **6,100** in 2011 (ACHESS) – it is very clear that this is a rising demographic.

All this effectively means you may already (whether you realise or not) have same-sex parented families in your school community. Or perhaps you're about to enrol your first one. Whatever position your school is in, you can be sure to see increased enrolments from same-sex parents over the coming years.

What is a same-sex parented family?

There are many ways in which same-sex attracted people have families. Some examples of same-sex parented families are:

- A lesbian couple with a known sperm donor
- A single lesbian woman who has children from a previous heterosexual relationship
- A gay male couple having children through a surrogate
- A co-parenting arrangement between a lesbian couple and a gay male couple

One of the most common arguments against recognising same-sex parented families arises from a concern for the wellbeing of children in these families. But all reputable research to date contradicts the point of view that same-sex parented families are harmful to children.

A University of Melbourne study published in 2014 by Dr Simon Crouch looked at the physical health and social wellbeing of 500 children with same-sex attracted parents from 315 families. This study found that children raised by same-sex attracted parents scored an average of 6 per cent higher than children from the general population on measures of general health and family cohesion.[3] It concluded:

Children in same-sex parented families do as well emotionally, socially and educationally as their peers from heterosexual couple families.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Listen to a more detailed account of the findings on ABC News AM, with Lead Researcher Dr Simon Couch at: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-05/children-of-same-sex-couples-enjoy-same-health-and/5574088

Despite scoring well overall, the research conducted by Dr Crouch also found that children with same-sex attracted parents experience **stigma**. As well as bullying and teasing, parents reported a lack of recognition of their families as having a significant impact. This stigma has been shown to have a negative impact on a number of aspects of child health and wellbeing.[3]

NEED HELP? Visit: kidshelpline.com.au, call 1800 55 1800 or log on to headspace.org.au

SECTION 3:

GAYBY BABY + THE CURRICULUM

Where does GAYBY BABY fit in the Australian Curriculum?

GAYBY BABY's Schools Action Toolkit has been developed to support Achievement Standards and content of the **Australian Curriculum** for **Health and Physical Education** for Years 7–10. This page outlines the relevant content descriptions this resource links to and are addressed by its teaching activities.

Schools may also choose to adapt and use the videos and teaching activities in other areas of the curriculum such as **English, Humanities** and **Media Studies.**

What are the relevant Year 7 and 8 content descriptions?

By the end of year 8, students will have been taught to:

- "Investigate the impact of transition and change on identities" (ACPPS070); "Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older" (ACPPS071);
- "Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others' health and wellbeing" (ACPPS074);
- "Analyse factors that influence emotions, and develop strategies to demonstrate empathy and sensitivity" (ACPPS075); and,
- "Investigate the benefits to individuals and communities of valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity" (ACPPS079).

SUNNAI 16 YRS - GAYBY
"Who wants to be normal? Normal is so boring. Being different is so special; you are brought up with so much love and acceptance."

What are the relevant Year 9 and 10 content descriptions?

By the end of year 10, students will have been taught to:

- "Evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of others" (ACPPS089);
- "Examine the impact of changes and transitions on relationships" (ACPPS090);
- "Investigate how empathy and ethical decision making contribute to respectful relationships" (ACPPS093);
- "Evaluate situations and propose appropriate emotional responses and then reflect on possible outcomes of different responses" (ACPPS094); and,
- "Critique behaviours and contextual factors that influence health and wellbeing of diverse communities" (ACPPS098).

How to use GAYBY BABY's School Action Toolkit

The *School Action Toolkit* is designed to harness the 2015 documentary GAYBY BABY as a case study for improving student understanding about diverse families.

The resource supports teachers to explore the qualities of loving and caring families without focusing solely on the gender or sexual identity of students' parents.

The teaching activities examine the strengths and characteristics of families that are important for the wellbeing of children, rather than the genetic make-up of a family.

While each activity can stand alone, the entire resource has been scaffolded using Bloom's Taxonomy. We therefore recommend that the activities be taught in sequence as a Health and Physical Education unit. By doing so you will move through each level and provide your students with:

Key Student Objectives:

1. Develop knowledge of diverse family structures.
2. Ability to deconstruct family and gender stereotypes.
3. Increased understanding of the impacts of assumptions and prejudices, and strategies to address them.
4. An opportunity to apply these strategies in a safe classroom environment, before implementing in the outside world.
5. The skills to think critically about inclusive behaviour, assessing how diverse families are represented in the school environment and coming up with strategies for improvement.
6. Evaluation skills, as applied to students' collective efforts to impact positive change in their school community.

SUNNAI, 16 YEARS - Gayby
Who wants to be normal? Normal is so boring. Being different is so special; you are brought up with so much love and acceptance.

Toolkit Aims:

- Increased understanding, respect and inclusion of all diverse families, by observing stories that challenge traditional expectations of what a family looks like, and how it should be defined.
- Making the school community a more welcoming place for diverse families through the reduction of exclusionary and/or discriminatory behaviours at a classroom and administrative level.
- The empowerment of students and schools to be confident agents of change in their community, creating a more engaged and harmonious school environment for all.

Lesson and Film	Learning Intentions
What is a "modern" family? GAYBY BABY	**At the end of the lesson students should be able to:** • Identify different types of families. • Deconstruct stereotypes of families in the media. • Articulate how a narrow concept of family can be discriminatory or negatively impact a person's wellbeing. • Recognise that the structure, the gender or sexual identity of the parents, is not what defines a family. • Identify a more inclusive definition of family.
Fitting In EBONY'S STORY	**At the end of this lesson students should be able to:** • Articulate traits, characteristics, talents or interests that make them unique and special as an individual, promoting a positive sense of self. • Describe how new environments or new people can make us see ourselves differently, and consider strategies to manage this. • Deconstruct ideas around difference and engage in a more welcoming attitude to other peoples' differences, acknowledging that our differences are often our strengths.
Influences on who we are GRAHAM'S STORY	**At the end of the lesson students should be able to:** • Explain the value of being surrounded by people and communities who support us, in all our diversity. • Effectively strategise ways to promote inclusivity in their community. • Empathise and articulate the challenges faced by members of the community who face discrimination/prejudice based on family background or sexual identity.
Gender Roles & the Family GUS'S STORY	**At the end of the lesson students should be able to:** • Identify and deconstruct gender stereotypes, particularly within the family setting. • Reflect on the value of having a variety of role models from different genders and backgrounds, acknowledging that a diversity of role models is important in developing rounded and inclusive skills/ideas. • Analyse the fluidity of roles within diverse families, with a view that this fluidity is a positive and empowering thing. • Articulate that a person's gender does not define or limit their capabilities in life.
Challenges in All Families MATT'S STORY	**At the end of the lesson students should be able to:** • Critically evaluate factors in the world that shape our ideas, opinions and thoughts as we grow. • Create and implement strategies for managing differences of opinion, particularly within the family home. • Articulate the value of other people's views, and how to respectfully and sensitively listen to them. • Evaluate the benefits of open and respectful communication, to both individuals and the wider community. • Explain how effective communication in our home environment provides a basis for effective communication in other areas of life.

SECTION 4:

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 – What is a "modern family"?

Gayby Baby

Health and Physical Education curriculum links:

- "Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others' health and wellbeing" (ACPPS074)
- "Investigate how empathy and ethical decision making contribute to respectful relationships" (ACPPS093)

Film link:
GAYBY BABY – what makes a family today?

What you need:

- Film clip of GAYBY BABY (53 mins)
- Whiteboard
- Internet access
- Pen and paper for drawing

Learning intentions:
At the end of the lesson students should be able to:

- Identify different types of families.
- Deconstruct stereotypes of families in the media.
- Articulate how a narrow concept of family can be discriminatory or negatively impact on a person's wellbeing.
- Recognise that the structure, or the gender or sexual identity of the parents, is not what defines a family.
- Create/identify a more inclusive definition of family.

Outline:
This is the foundational lesson of the School Action Toolkit and serves as an entry point for thinking about "what makes a modern family". Students will draw upon a viewing of the educational version of GAYBY BABY to identify different family structures, how families are represented in mainstream media and the characteristics that define a family.

Preparation:
We suggest watching GAYBY BABY (53 minutes) in the previous lesson, then engage student's recall abilities throughout the activity. It is also fine to watch the film during the lesson, however teachers will need to allow adequate lesson time.

Suggested procedure:

1. Exercise: Group discussion
2. Exercise: Think, Pair Share on "Family diversity"
3. Activity: Research Task
4. Film Recall or Watch GAYBY BABY
5. Exercise: Questions about GAYBY BABY

Activity method:

Start the lesson by having a class discussion about what your students think makes a family. You could prompt this discussion by asking students to consider what characteristics or qualities a family has, or what are the key ingredients for a happy family.

Brainstorm these words and ideas on your whiteboard.

Next, ask students to write/draw an image that they feel illustrates a "traditional family". Then, below this, ask students to write/draw what they feel illustrates a "modern family".

Ask students to share their images with a student next to them and to discuss the differences between the images.

Finally, hold a class discussion focusing on the differences, if any, between the images, why they are present and what may have caused them.

TEACHER TIP
Teachers may want to refer to the Family Diversity poster at www.thegaybyproject.com/schools to lead this discussion.

Explain to the class that in order to build their understanding of the types of different family structures in Australia they are going to undertake a small research task.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Some useful websites to direct students:

Family characteristics – 2009-2010
http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4442.0

ABS Fact sheet – Family blending
http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/factsheetsfb?opendocument&navpos=450

Australian households and families – Australian Institute of Family Studies
https://aifs.gov.au/publications/australian-households-and-families

Families then and now – Australian Institute of Family Studies
https://aifs.gov.au/publications/families-then-and-now-1980-2010

Ask groups to think about statistics on family diversity in Australia and compare them with the types of families that are typically portrayed in the media, for example in their favourite movies and TV shows.

In groups, ask students to write answers to the following questions:

- Are the statistics accurately reflected in TV families?
- Are there examples of TV or movie families that reflect each of the family structures that were researched?
- Why do you think it might be important to see different kinds of families in the media?

Briefly discuss each group's responses as a class.

Ask students to recall the film they watched in the previous lesson, GAYBY BABY. Refresh their memory with a few easy, call-out questions:

- How many kids were in the film? *(four)*
- What were their names? *(Gus, Ebony, Matt, Graham)*
- Which of them was into wrestling? *(Gus)*
- What was the name of the girl who sang? *(Ebony)*
- What was the same about all the kids? *(they all have gay parents)*

OPTION TO VIEW GAYBY BABY

If you have not previously screened GAYBY BABY, at this point in the activity, explain to students that they are going to view a film that is about four kids from families that they may not usually see on TV.

SCREEN FILM (53 mins)

Next, discuss the film as a group by asking:

- Was there anything one of the kids said, that you found particularly interesting or unexpected?
- Could you relate at all to any of the kids' experiences? e.g. moving school, trying to fit in, arguments with parents etc.
- Apart from differences in the gender of the parents, what other **differences** exist in these families compared to that of traditional families?
- What are the **similarities** between these families and your own?

Next, reflecting on the initial group discussion and the words on your whiteboard, ask your students to comment on whether the families they saw in the video display or contain these words.

To close the lesson, ask your class to help you in the creation of a new definition for "family". Ensure this is written down (perhaps on a large piece of poster paper) and displayed in your classroom.

Extension Activity:

Ask students to brainstorm and complete a Y chart (included as a handout in this resource) on what a positive, happy and modern family looks like, sounds like and feels like (view Y chart example overleaf as a guide).

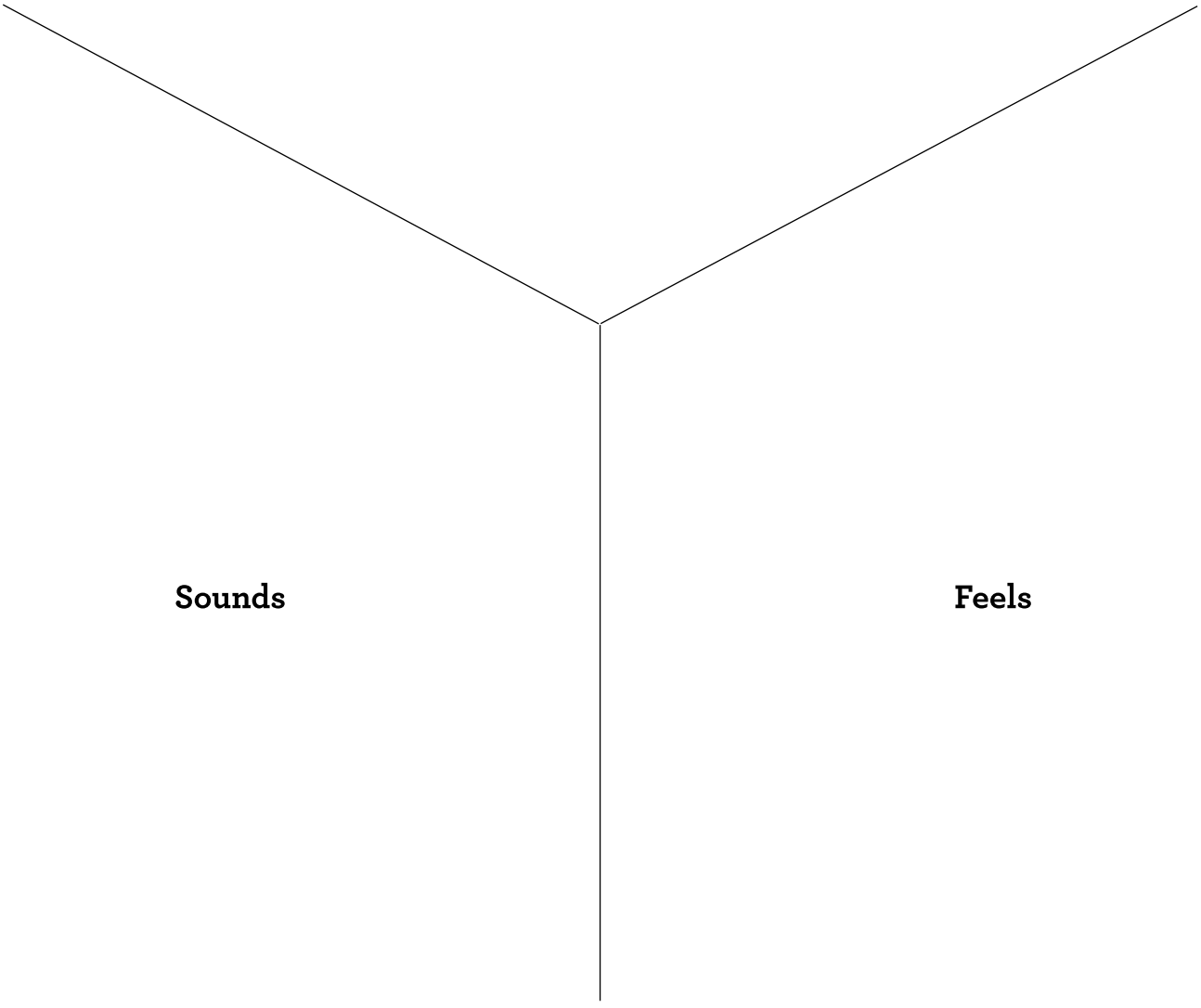
Ask students to think about:

- What sort of things would they hear family members saying to each other?
- How would it *feel* to be part of the family if it was happy and positive?
- What would you see happening between family members?

Assessment judgements can be made on students' level of understanding of the importance of recognising family diversity, and in their engagement with the idea that what is most important about a family is not its structure or the gender or sexual identity of the parents. Students also should display an increased critical awareness of the narrowness of media representations of family.

END OF LESSON

Activity 1: Y Chart



Activity 2 – Fitting in

Ebony's story

Health and Physical Education curriculum links:

- "Investigate the impact of transition and change on identities" (ACPPS070)
- "Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older" (ACPPS071)
- "Evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of others" (ACPPS089)

Film link and theme:

EBONY'S STORY – sense of identity and belonging

What you need:

- Film clip of Ebony's story
- Whiteboard

Learning intentions:

At the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- Articulate traits, characteristics, talents or interests that make them unique and special as an individual, promoting a positive sense of self.
- Describe how new environments or new people can make us see ourselves differently, and consider strategies to manage this.
- Deconstruct ideas around difference and engage in a more welcoming attitude to other people's differences, acknowledging that our differences are often our strengths.

Outline:

This activity explores the concepts of difference and change. It looks at how and why students may see themselves differently in in different environments, and the impact of this on their sense of self. It aims to promote tolerance and looks at strategies for making others feel welcome regardless of their background.

Suggested procedure:

1. Activity: Think, Pair, Share
2. Exercise: Group discussion and building empathy
3. Watch: Ebony's Story
4. Exercise: Questions about Ebony's Story
5. Exercise: Class Brainstorm

Activity method:

Ask students to write down one thing that they believe makes them unique from everyone else in the class.

Ask students to share this with the person next to them before holding a group discussion where, as a class, a unique list of traits, abilities, and characteristics are attributed to each student on the whiteboard.

In a group discussion, ask the class whether the things that are special about us can help us make new friends? For example, if it involves our talents, likes or interests. Ask the class whether what makes us special can also make us feel so different from others that we feel like we don't belong?

Ask students to consider a time when they felt like they didn't belong. Next, ask students to consider the types of feelings they may have had at this time. Ask students to share words to describe these feelings with the class, as you build a list of these words on the whiteboard.

Next, explain that some students will have families that make them feel like they don't belong…

One such family is that of Ebony. Ebony is in Year 6 and goes to school in Western Sydney. She has two mums and doesn't know of anyone else at school with a family like hers. Ebony is worried about fitting in at high school next year because she doesn't think her family is going to be recognised or seen as "normal".

WATCH EBONY'S STORY (15 mins)

EBONY, 12 YEARS - GAYBY
In Parramatta, I don't know anyone who has a family like mine. Most of the time when I meet someone and I tell them my parents are gay ... they go WHAT??!! I'm looking forward to going to high school and finally getting out of Parramatta.

After watching Ebony's story discuss the following questions as a class:

- Why does Ebony feel like she may not fit in at her local high school?
- What may have made Ebony have these fears?
- Do you think its okay for Ebony to be teased because she has two mums?
- How do you think Ebony may feel when she is teased for having two mums?
- Why would Ebony and her mums think she would be more accepted at Newtown?
- Are there any special insights or qualities that Ebony has as a result of her family background?

Finally, as a class, brainstorm the sorts of things Ebony's friends and classmates could do to make her feel safe and welcome at her new school?

EBONY, 12 YEARS - GAYBY
I really want to get in to Newtown. It's a really good school and if I went there it would probably be the place where I would be most accepted.

Extension activity:
Looking at the Family Diversity poster "There's more than one way to make a family" (see www.thegaybyproject.com/schools), ask students to create their own poster, welcoming students from diverse families in their school. Make sure students are conscious of representing all kinds of diversity including, racial, socio economic, ethnic, and sexual diversity on their poster. Students can present their posters in class for assessment and display around the school.

Assessment judgements can be made about students' ability to empathise with other people's difference, the challenges created by that difference and to think creatively about strategies to manage transitions.

END OF LESSON

Activity 3 – Influences on who we are

Graham's story

Health and Physical Education curriculum links:

- "Investigate the benefits to individuals and communities of valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity" (ACPPS079)

Film link and theme:

GRAHAM'S STORY – cultural diversity and its impacts

What you need:

- Film clip of Graham's story
- 2 x News articles (1 x about gay adoption being banned/illegal in an Australian state, and; 1 x about gay marriage being voted down), with enough copies for half the class to reach each.

Learning intentions:

At the end of the lesson students should be able to:

- Explain the value of being surrounded by people and communities who support us, in all our diversity.
- Effectively strategise ways to promote inclusivity in their community.
- Empathise and articulate the challenges faced by members of the community who face discrimination/prejudice based on family background or sexual identity.

Outline:

This lesson explores cultural difference and focuses on developing students' ability to empathise with people from all walks of life. It looks at how government regulations and laws can impact people's lives and at strategies for improvement.

Suggested procedure:

1. Watch: Graham's Story
2. Exercise: Questions about Graham's Story
3. Exercise: Sharing Opinions
4. Activity: Media analysis

Activity method:

Tell students they are going to start the lesson by reviewing the story of Graham, from the film GAYBY BABY, who had to move to Fiji with his two dads.

WATCH GRAHAM'S STORY (15 mins)

After watching the film, ask students the following quick call-out questions:

- Why did the family move to Fiji? *(for Graham's dad's work)*
- Why does Graham have trouble reading? *(because his first parents didn't teach him…)*
- How did Graham's fathers help him with his reading? *(practicing with him, making him do homework, reading school lunches, getting teacher help…)*
- What actions could Graham's school have taken to let him know they were supportive and welcoming of his family? *(displayed posters, used neutral language on school forms, had a private chat with him…)*

Ask students of their opinion about Graham's dads asking him not to share that he has two dads. Why do you think Graham's dads asked him to hide the truth about his family?

Explain that one of the reasons Graham had to hide the truth about his parents is that in many parts of the world being gay and lesbian means that you can be harassed, sent to jail or even killed – so understandably same-sex attracted people are often wary about disclosing their sexuality. In recent history, Fiji has had strict laws that criminalise homosexuality, so Graham's dads felt it was necessary to keep their family situation private to protect Graham from any potential homophobia at his new school.

Ask students to consider how they would feel if they had to tell people that one of their parents didn't exist. Share keywords that describe these feelings with the class.

Outline to students that even in some parts of Australia, being same-sex attracted, means you are not entitled to the same rights as heterosexual people. Ask students to predict what some of these rights may be.

Next, provide a news story to half of the class which discusses gay adoption being illegal. Provide the other half of the class with a new story about marriage equality being voted down/banned.

TEACHER TIP

Here are some articles you might consider using for the exercise:

Gay marriage bill defeated
http://www.smh.com.au/national/gay-marriage-bill-defeated-20120919-266a8.html

Gay adoption in QLD
http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/gay-adoption-a-step-too-far-for-bligh-20111025-1mi9w.html

Ask students to read their article and then hold a group discussion with the other students who read the same article as them about things that they were interested/surprised to read, making note of any questions they have about the article.

As a class, briefly review the news stories and any questions students had.

Then, ask students to comment on how the issues in each news story might affect Graham (or any child with same-sex attracted parents), thinking about their personal security, emotional wellbeing and sense of self.

Extension activity:
Ask students to come up with three strategies that they, or their school, could take to be more supportive of families like Graham's.

Discuss the strategies with students in the next lesson and vote on which strategies the class believes would have the most positive impact.

TAKING ACTION

Students could present their strategies to the P&C or school principal/executive committee for implementation within the school. Strategies might include celebrating **International Family Equality Day** (May 1), **IDAHOT Day** (International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, May 17) or **Wear it Purple Day** (annually in August) – an Australian, student-led initiative to support LGBTIQ[2] students. See pages 29-34 for more strategic ideas for your school.

Assessment judgements can be made about students' understanding of actions that value and celebrate diversity and the impact their actions can have on others' personal wellbeing and sense of self.

END OF LESSON

Activity 4 – Gender roles and the family

Gus' story

Health and Physical Education curriculum links:

- "Evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of others" (ACPPS089)

Film links:

GUS' STORY – Gender stereotypes in the family and role models

What you need:

- Film clip of Gus' story
- Pens and paper

Learning intentions:

At the end of the lesson students should be able to:

- Identify and deconstruct gender stereotypes, particularly within the family setting.
- Reflect on the value of having a variety of role models from different genders and backgrounds, acknowledging that a diversity of role models is important in developing rounded and inclusive skills/ideas.
- Analyse the fluidity of roles within diverse families, with a view that this fluidity is a positive and empowering thing.
- Articulate that a person's gender does not define or limit their capabilities in life.

Outline:

This lesson looks at traditional ideas of what mothers and fathers provide in the family unit. It challenges students to identify and critique gender stereotypes in the world around them.

Suggested procedure:

1. Activity: Number Line Quiz
2. Watch: Gus's Story
3. Activity: Think, Pair, Share
4. Exercise: Questions about Gus's Story
5. Exercise: Class Brainstorm

Activity method:

Ask students to draw a continuum (number line) with "Fathers" written at one end, and "Mothers" at the other. Demonstrate this on your whiteboard, as follows:

Fathers **Mothers**

Ask your students for an example of an action or behaviour that we as a society tend to associate with being a Father (e.g. watching sport, doing the lawn mowing, being the disciplinarian) and something associated with being a Mother (e.g. cooking, going shopping, making kids do their homework). Place answers at the corresponding ends of the continuum.

Ask students to work in pairs to further populate their continuums with 5 more actions or behaviours that could be associated with both Fathers and Mothers. As a class, review the responses.

Introduce Gus' story, explaining to students that they are going to consider how the parenting duties might be split in a family with two mums.

WATCH GUS' STORY (15 mins)

In their pairs again, ask students to consider the actions/behaviours on their number lines and assess who they think might perform these tasks in Gus' family?

Explain to students that one of the key issues in Gus' story was about whether kids can only learn certain things from people of the same gender as them, for example, that boys can only learn how to wrestle from men. Is masculinity only a quality in men?

Ask students to consider what they have learnt from each of their parents/guardians. Who taught them to ride a bike, how to cook, or to be empathetic?

In pairs, reflecting on all the families in GAYBY BABY as well as their own family experience, ask students to discuss whether masculinity can be a quality of a mother; and femininity a quality of a father? In modern families, can fathers do what mothers do and visa versa? Ask students whether, ultimately, we can learn things from all kinds of people, regardless of their gender?

Next, have a class discussion, answering the following questions:

- What are the most important things that a parent provides?
- Are these things provided in Gus' family, or in the families of kids with single parents/guardians?
- As a young person, do you think it's good to see an alternative model of parents' gender roles? Why? What message might this send to young girls and boys?

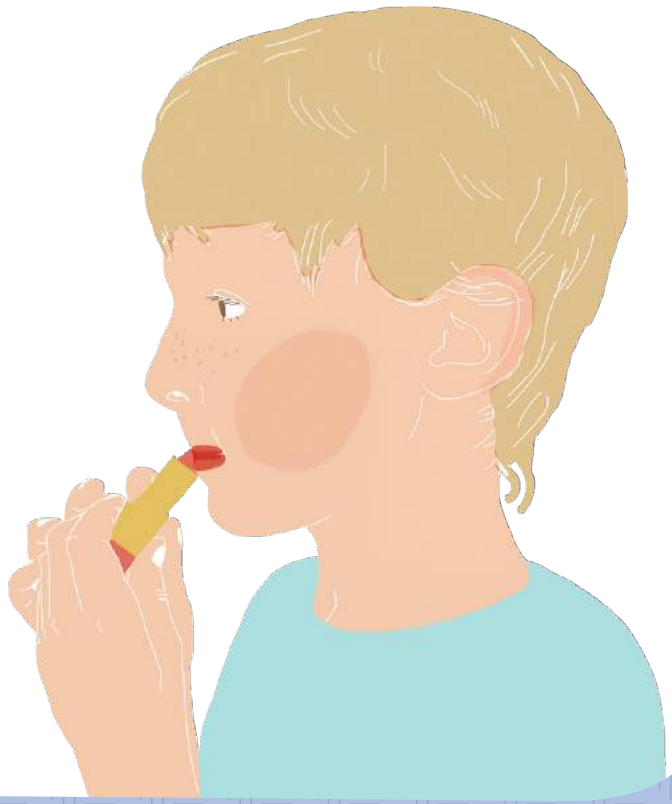
Finish the lesson by brainstorming with students to create a definition of what it means to be a father and a mother in today's society. Assess with the class whether there should be anything notably different (aside from the gender or the fact that a woman gives birth) between their definition of a father and a mother, or could these roles be better defined as "parents" (i.e. is there any need to separate the roles by gender)?

Extension activity:
Ask students to take a family from one of their favourite movies or TV shows, and write a page critiquing whether this family embodies "modern" or "traditional" gender roles. Ask students to play particular attention to the way this family deals with conflict and compromise, referencing to Gus' family, where open communication and compromise was a key strategy for coming up with a resolution.

Assessment judgements can be made on student's ability to deconstruct gender stereotypes and articulate the benefits to individuals, families and the community, of "doing gender" in a range of ways.

TEACHER TIP
If we look closer at the film, Gus loves wrestling but he is also comfortable trying on lipstick and sewing with his mother. By the end of the film, we know that he is aware that there are many different ways to be a man. It is important to also point out the role of open communication and compromise as key strategies that Gus's family used to come to a resolution.

END OF LESSON



Activity 5 – Challenges in all families

Matt's story

Health and Physical Education curriculum links:

- "Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older" (ACPPS071)
- "Analyse factors that influence emotions, and develop strategies to demonstrate empathy and sensitivity" (ACPPS075)
- "Investigate how empathy and ethical decision making contribute to respectful relationships" (ACPPS093)
- "Evaluate situations and propose appropriate emotional responses and then reflect on possible outcomes of different responses" (ACPPS094)

Film links and theme:

MATT'S STORY – negotiating compromises and respectful communication

What you need:

- Film clip of Matt's story
- Pens and paper

Learning intentions:

At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Critically evaluate factors in the world that shape our ideas and encourage in us new opinions and thoughts, as we grow.
- Create and implement strategies for managing differences of opinion, particularly within the family home.
- Articulate the value of other people's views, and how to respectfully and sensitively listen to them.
- Evaluate the benefits of open and respectful communication, to both individuals and the wider community.
- Explain how our effective communication in our home environment provides a basis for effective communication in other areas of life.

Outline:

As the final lesson of the unit, this activity looks at how we communicate and manage differences within the family home as a lens for managing conflicts in the wider community. Through reviewing Matt's Story, and his efforts at resolving his family conflicts, students explore how to respectfully, ethically and empathetically manage differences of opinions, and the benefits of good communication skills.

Suggested procedure:

1. Activity: Stating Different Opinions
2. Watch: Matt's Story
3. Exercise: Questions about Matt's Story
4. Activity: Think, Pair, Share
5. Exercise: Group Discussion
6. Exercise: Summary Discussion - the families in GAYBY BABY

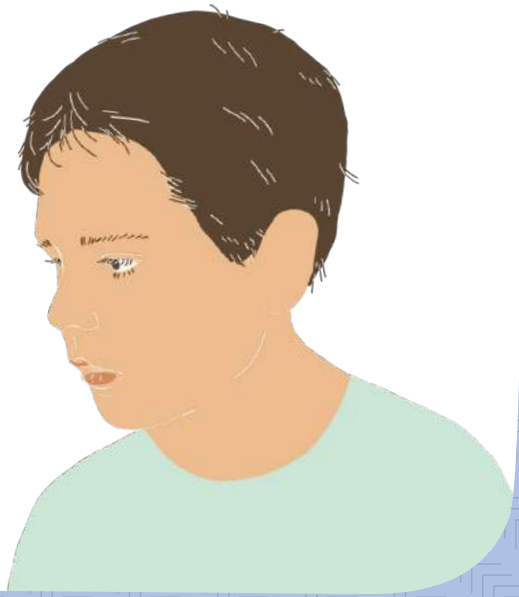
Activity method:

Explain to students that they are going to agree or disagree with a statement by standing on opposite sides of the room, identifying which side is "agree" and which side is "disagree".

Ask the following questions, allowing students time to move to the appropriate sides of the room:

- Students should not be given homework on Fridays.
- Fossil fuels should be mined in Australia.
- Healthcare should be free for all Australians.

Ask students to consider what has inspired them to agree or disagree to these statements. Where do kids draw their opinions from and who do they think might be influencing their perspectives? (media, friends, parents…)



Explain to students that they are now going to watch a film about Matt, a boy who is starting to become more independent and developing his own ideas about things, which is leading to challenges within his family relationships.

While they watch, ask students to think about whether they have ever had an opinion about something that was in opposition with their parents, and how they managed that conflict.

WATCH MATT'S STORY (15 mins)

As a class, discuss the following questions about Matt's Story:

- Do they think Matt was given the space to challenge his mums on their views about religion?
- Was he respectful about how he raised his concerns?
- What was respectful about Matt's behaviour?
- Did his mums listen to him?
- What do you think gave Matt the confidence to write to the Prime Minister and talk to the media at the end of the film?

Next, ask students to think about a time when they have disagreed with their parents about something important. Did their parents listen to them?

In pairs, ask students to come up with a strategy for raising an important (fictional) issue with their parents. Get students to list the 3 key messages to their strategy and write out how they would present each of these messages to their parents, remembering some of the skills that Matt used in the film.

Report back and review the strategies as a class.

Finally, hold a class discussion, asking students to think about the kinds of things they talk to their parents about:

- Has there ever been a time when you wanted to tell your parents something, but felt like you couldn't?
- Were you able to talk to someone else, or did you keep it to yourself?
- After watching Matt's story, do you think you could have found a way to talk to your parents about it?

To finish the lesson/unit, ask students to think about all the kids from GAYBY BABY. Would they say these kids have "open communication" with their parents? Discuss why this might be, considering their discussions throughout the unit about difference, media representations of family, fitting in, and gender stereotypes.

Conclusion/Final Extension Activity:
Ask students to log onto the Gayby Baby schools website (**www.thegaybyproject.com/schools**) and click on the link that says "Write a Letter to the Kids". Here, students should write to either Ebony, Graham, Gus or Matt highlighting what they have learnt in this unit through watching and exploring their stories. Students can print out their letters and present them for assessment of their overall learning highlights.

END OF LESSON/UNIT.

SECTION 5:

STRATEGIES FOR YOUR SCHOOL

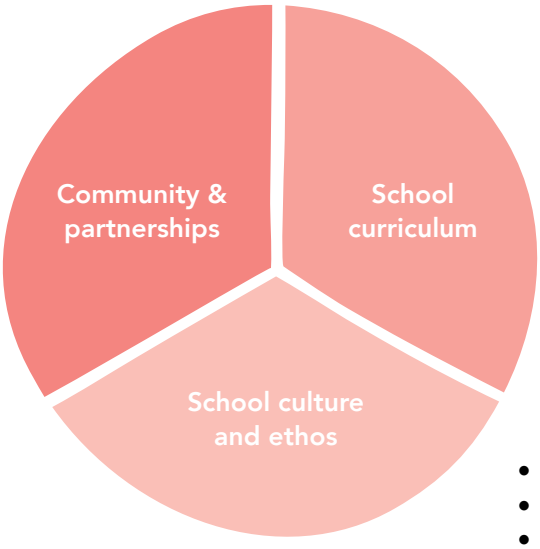
Strategies for your school

Implementing a whole school approach

There are some simple steps which your school can implement to create positive, whole-school change that will make diverse families and their children feel safe and welcome.

A whole-school approach to valuing family diversity recognises that many aspects of the school community can impact upon students' health and wellbeing. It focuses equally on three components of the school:

- Consistent messages
- Building partnerships



- Formal teaching and learning activities
- Informal learning opportunities

- Policies and practices
- Representing all families
- Culture of respect

Component 1: School curriculum

Formal teaching and learning programs:
The implementation of the Health and Physical Education curriculum provides a range of opportunities for students to learn about diversity and respectful relationships. The teaching and learning activities in this resource are mapped explicitly to the Health and Physical Education curriculum.

TEACHER TIPS
There are also opportunities for students to learn about relationships and diversity in other learning areas, particularly English in secondary schools. The general capabilities area of the Australian Curriculum, particularly Personal and social capability, Ethical understanding and Intercultural understanding provide additional learning opportunities to explore diversity and inclusivity.

Informal learning opportunities:
Using a diverse collection of multi-modal texts that reflect the different families that exist within Australian communities to explore concepts during lessons is an important step towards creating an inclusive school.

Component 2: School culture & ethos

Safe and supportive environment:
Explore the National Safe Schools Framework school toolkits to develop ideas for (**http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/**) building a safe, supportive and respectful school environment at your school. The Framework helps school communities to develop and maintain effective student safety and wellbeing policies and learning environments that are free from bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.

Inclusive school policies and practices:
It's good to avoid making assumptions about the families that attend your school, and one of the

simplest ways you could do this is by adopting gender neutral language in parent communications and when discussing student families in the classroom (i.e. consider saying "parents" or "carers" instead of "mum and dad").

While some same-sex parented families may not wish to disclose their family structure to the school community (and this should be respected), one way to avoid any inadvertent offense and to make all families feel welcome is by making it school policy for teachers to know/meet each of their students' families.

Representing all families in the school:
Ensure that a diverse range of families are represented when communicating with the school staff and broader school community. For example ensuring the visual imagery on the school website represents a range of family structures and cultural backgrounds.

BRIGHT IDEAS
Active support could include highly visible representation of different types of families around the school through posters, use of inclusive language in newsletters that recognise that some students may have same-sex attracted parents, and library resources that include diverse families.
A Family Diversity Poster (A2) is included in the Supplementary Video Kit, which can be purchased from thegaybyproject.com/schools.

Creating a culture of respect and valuing of all forms of diversity:
Establishing a culture of respect in the playground and classrooms lets students know that they are not allowed to disrespect another individual because they are perceived as different. If they do arise, situations of bullying, harassment, put-downs or exclusion, may be opportunities to re-educate using positive messages rather than simply handing out a punishment.

TEACHER TIPS
Mel, Safe Schools Coalition – Project Officer
How to deal with the 'He's gay' verbal teasing
Many students who use the term 'That's gay' to describe something they don't like or to insult someone, don't understand that their language is discriminatory. It's important to explain that using the word 'gay' in a negative way is still discrimination, whether it is meant that way or not. I would say, 'Gay is a word used to describe men who fall in love with and might have a relationship with other men or women who falls in love with and might have a relationship with other women. It is actually quite common for people to be gay. Many parents at this school are gay or know people who are gay. It is also better to use a word that really describes what you are saying. Be creative and original, there are lots of great words out there you could have used instead. Also, at this school, and in our society it is against the rules and law to put down a group of people.

KATE, 26 YEARS – GAYBY
At school, there were many kids who used the word "gay" as a put down. It wasn't until year 11 when one of my teachers explained that the word "gay" was insult to gay people therefore was not OK to use as an insult, as this could isolate and offend other students and their families. That teacher was the first person to create an environment where I felt safe enough to tell my friends about having two dads, about my family.

Component 3: Community and partnerships

Consistent messages in the wider community:
A key component to changing societal norms in respect to family diversity is to ensure that the positive messages that are being taught at school are reflected in the wider school community. Evidence shows that if the messages being given at school are consistent to the messages that students are experiencing outside of school, then the school-based learning is reinforced and validated.

Building partnerships with parents and community organisations:
Consider ways to encourage families and community organisations such as the school P&C, the local community garden group or your local sports club, to be actively involved in your efforts to value and celebrate diversity. This might include adding an LGBTIQ charity to your yearly fundraising efforts, and inviting community organisations to do the same.

BRIGHT IDEAS
Building and sustaining relationships should be an ongoing process. The school population changes every year so you might like to consider what systems you are putting in place to involve new members of the school community. For example, consider including a discussion about the school's commitment to valuing family diversity as part of the student enrolment process and new teacher induction program.

Strategies to make your school more inclusive: *what can I do?*

School executive

Form a working committee to oversee the changes:
A working committee is likely to impact greater change if it includes members from the school executive team. The role of the working committee is to facilitate and coordinate the implementation process.

BRIGHT IDEAS
As a school, you can show that you have an ongoing commitment to valuing family diversity by including it in your school plan and annual reports.

Become a Safe Schools Coalition Australia member school:
The school principal can sign up as a member school to Safe Schools Coalition of Australia, which is federally funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, and in Victoria, by the Victorian Government. Membership allows schools access to free-of-charge resources and services to support schools to become safer, more supportive and inclusive environments for all students, staff and families. Services on offer include:

- Tailored professional development for staff
- Printed and digital resources for staff & students
- Guidance on creating supportive and inclusive school policies
- Assistance in setting up and developing student led activities to create change
- Tools to better understand their unique school climate and measure the impact of change
- Guidance on inclusive teaching practice
- Support in the process of affirming the gender identity of a transgender or gender diverse student.

TEACHER TIPS
For more information about becoming a member of Safe Schools Coalition Australia, visit www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au.

Celebrate Wear It Purple Day or IDAHOT Day annually at your school.
Wear It Purple Day is a youth-led day of celebration, letting young people everywhere know they have the right to be proud of who they are – and their sex, sexuality or gender identity does not change this. Students and staff are invited to wear purple on Wear It Purple Day to show their support! Visit www.wearitpurple.org for more information.

IDAHOT stands for International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, and is held annually on May 17. Many schools participate in events on this day to raise awareness and promote anti-homophobia and anti-bullying strategies. As an international event, it's a great way to connect your school with a global movement towards acceptance and inclusivity.

BRENNA, 19 YEARS – GAYBY
Wear it Purple allowed me to share my pride for my family and the LGBTIQ+ community with my peers at school in a loving and exciting way. It also gave me a chance to create a dialogue about acceptance and diversity with the students and teachers and resolutely affirm in the school environment that homophobia was completely unacceptable. Sharing that I was the child of same-sex parents with everyone around me also allowed them to confide in me about their sexuality without fear of a bad reaction. I am so thankful I was in an area and had a tool like Wear It Purple that allowed me to merge my home and school space in a way that a lot of kids with same-sex parents don't get to.

BURWOOD GIRLS HIGH PREFECTS, QISTHY, LUCY AND EVE

Wear it Purple Day is one of the most important dates on our school calendar. We pride ourselves on our support of diversity – in whatever form it takes. Considering the LGBTIQ community has the highest rate of suicide of any population in Australia and experience significantly higher rates of mental health issues, we believe our support to be just one small step in creating better understanding in the wider community. We hope our celebrations have helped create a safe space for LGBTIQ people and encourage the push for equality and acceptance of all people.

Update school policies and practices:
Ensuring that all school forms and policies recognise and value a diverse range of families will send a more inclusive message. The school policies should include references to bullying based on family structure as well as individual difference.

Consider undertaking an audit of the ways families are represented in communications with your community. This is a simple change but it removes the message that there is only one type of family structure.

BRIGHT IDEAS

Even if your school is considered progressive, taking a proactive approach to supporting students from same-sex parented or other diverse families can make all the difference for these students. There is no harm in articulating your support, or checking that your messages of support are being heard.

Classroom teachers

Set up an inclusive classroom:
Offer a range of different texts across different mediums that address a range of family experiences and structures. Accessing these texts can raise awareness about different types of families. This way, students will expand their definitions of "family" organically; you can communicate the value of family diversity without saying a word.

Use inclusive language and learning activities:
Work family diversity into everyday discussion and activities. For example, if you're creating scenarios for explaining health issues, include family references such as "her dads," or "his guardian" to emphasise the types of parenting structures, beyond the two-parented heterosexual, and mono-cultural unit.

TEACHER TIPS

Mel, Safe Schools Coalition – Project Officer

When students ask about Andre's mum's, one of whom used to be his Dad you can say things like... Andre has two mums now and they both love him in the same way they always have. When Andre's mum was born, the doctor said 'It's a boy!' and she lived as a man in the world but it may never have felt right for her. She recently changed her name and pronouns and is wearing clothes that are more feminine. These are ways for her to express her true gender identity which is female. Sex (your body) and gender (how you think and feel about your gender) are two very different things. For most people they match up (which is called being cisgender) but for some people they don't (which is called being transgender). Being transgender is just another natural type of diversity in the world.

SECTION 6:

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Glossary

The following terms and definitions are provided to help teachers to understand and use language that is non-stigmatising and inclusive of students from same-sex parented families.

Gayby or Gaybies - are terms some families use for a child with two parents of the same sex. While we have continued to use the word in this resource, please keep in mind that it is a choice for each individual child whether to use this term or not ... besides, most people just call them "kids".

LGBTIQ – stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer. Some people put a '2' at the end of this acronym to include the kids of parents who identify themselves by one of these terms.

Same-sex parented family – families where both of parents are the same sex

Lesbian-parented family – families where both of the parents are women who are in a relationship together

Gay-parented family - families where both of the parents are of the same-sex, usually men, who are in a relationship together.

Donor-dad or sperm donor – may refer to the man who has donated the sperm for the process of conceiving a child. The donor dad may or may not have a relationship with the child. Different families use different terminology.

Donor-mum or egg donor - may refer to the woman who has donated the egg for the process of conceiving a child. The donor woman may or may not have a relationship with the child. Different families use different terminology.

Anonymous donor - refers to a person who has donated sperm or an egg for the process of conceiving a child. The donor's identity is not known to the child or their family. Although since 2015 in Australia, a child can choose to contact their donor after they turn 18 years old.

Known-donor - refers to a person who has donated sperm or an egg for the process of conceiving a child. The donor is known to the child and their family but may or may not have a caring role in the child's life.

Co-parenting - describes a parenting situation where the parents are not in a marriage, cohabitation, or romantic relationship with one another but share the parenting duties and care of a child or children.

Surrogate, surrogate mother or surro-mum - may refer to a woman who has given birth to a child through a surrogacy arrangement. The surrogate may or may not have a relationship with the child. Different families use different terminology.

Appendix 2: Frequently asked questions

The following questions may commonly be asked of children who come from same-sex parented families. If teachers hear students being asked about their family structures or how they were conceived they should be proactive and support the student as they reply.

How might children in same sex parented families have been conceived?

- Sexual intercourse
- In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF): eggs are extracted under anaesthetic and combined with sperm, allowing fertilisation to take place outside the body. Embryos are grown over 2 – 5 days before being placed in the woman's uterus. IVF can be used for single mothers and lesbian couples as well as heterosexual couples with fertility issues, and single fathers and gay male couples.
- Intrauterine insemination (IUI): A doctor places washed, prepared sperm into a woman's uterus at the time of ovulation.
- Surrogacy: in gestational surrogacy, an embryo prepared through IVF is placed in a surrogate mother's uterus, and the surrogate is not genetically related to the child; in 'traditional surrogacy', the surrogate is the biological mother and carries the baby but is not an intended parent for the child.
- Known donors / unknown donors: Some families will use 'known' sperm or egg/embryo donors – friends, family, acquaintances or men or women they've been introduced to for the purpose of conception. Some families use anonymous sperm or eggs sourced through a sperm bank.
- Private donation / conception arrangements: LGBTIQ families were conceiving children long before they had access to IVF, IUI and surrogacy. Some families may elect to conceive privately, using a needleless syringe or oral medicine syringe.

What terms might same-sex parent families use to describe parents?

Children from LGBTIQ families are often inventive when coming up with terminology that reflects their family structures. Allow them to use their own language and follow their lead. Same sex parent families may refer to each other using familiar nomenclature, or they may use:

- Mum / Dad
- Different terms to distinguish parents, eg. children might call one parent Mummy and one parent Mumma
- First names: many children from same-sex families refer to their parents by their first name or a nickname
- Sperm Donor or the donor
- Donor Dad
- Donor Mum
- Surrogate Mum, or the surrogate
- Biological Mum
- Biological Father
- MaPa, or other names that combine gendered terms. Sometimes transgender, gender fluid or intersex parents may elect a non-gendered name, or a name that includes both genders.
- It is very common for families from different cultures to use parental terms from that culture (Papa from Italy, Ba from Vietnam).

What other terms might kids from same-sex parented families know that kids from heterosexual families might not?

Children raised in same sex parented families are more likely to be familiar with language related to reproduction, gender and sexuality from an early age. Each school may have its own policy on how you teach the science of reproduction but it's important not to silence or shame students who are already aware, especially if they are trying to explain their family structure.

Will same-sex parent families have children who are also same sex attracted?

There is no evidence to suggest that children with same-sex attracted parents are more likely to be same-sex attracted. People are often preoccupied with the sexuality and gender identity of children raised in same-sex parent families once they grow up. But it doesn't actually matter whether straight parents raise straight kids or gay parents raise gay kids – all that matters is that children are loved, supported, educated and cared for.

How do I respond to questions from students relating to Gaybies?

You overhear a student say, "That's gay" or "Fag!" Or, "I didn't mean anything when I called him gay. We all use that word just to tease each other."

It's not OK to use "gay" or "fag" as put-downs or in a negative way. Don't ignore it. Many children use the word "gay" to mean "stupid" or "weird" because that is the only way they have heard it used. Often students don't know what it really means. This is a good time to take the opportunity to explore that.

- *You may not have meant to hurt anyone, but saying "That's gay" can hurt those around you. Do you know what gay means?*
- *It's not ok to use that word/phrase as a put-down in our school. Do you know what gay means?*
- *In the future I expect you to use that word respectfully and not in a hurtful way.*

"Can two boys or two girls get married?"

- *In some places women can marry women and men can marry men. In some places, they can't. Whether they are married or not, two people who love each other can live together, take care of one another and be a family.*
- *No, children can't get married! Grown-ups, on the other hand, create families in many ways. Many grown-ups live their lives in couples and take care of one another. Being married is one way to do this.*

"How can she have two mums? Which one is the real one?"

If you have a child with two dads or two mums in your classroom, it is helpful to know how his or her parents talk about their family. This information will help you respond to other students' questions. Don't offer up information about adoption or children born in previous relationships unless you know that the child and family readily offer up that information. Be careful about making assumptions about a student's family.

- *They both are. Both mums take care of her and love her. There are all kinds of families. Some have two mums, some have two dads, some have one mum or dad and some have a mum and a dad. Some children are raised by other caring adults such as grandparents, other relatives or guardians. What's important is to have adults who love and care for you.*

"How can he have two dads? Don't you need a mum and a dad to make a baby?"

In most grades you can steer the answer to a discussion of family and say something like:

- *Children come into families in many different ways — sometimes through birth, sometimes through adoption. Children are raised in many different ways. Some have two dads, some a mum and a dad. What's important is to have adults who love and care for you.*

A question like this may come up in a health lesson as it could also refer to how babies are made. It is better not to avoid the question. However, you can answer it simply that you do need an egg and a sperm to make a baby but biological parents don't always raise children. However, children come in to families in different ways such as adoption. Then, you could move on to children being raised in different kinds of families.

"My grandma says it's wrong for two women to have children."

The goal in answering this question is not to put-down a student's grandmother. At the same time, you might want to imagine how your response will sound to a student in earshot who has two mums.

- *People have lots of different ideas about families. Your grandma is not the only one who thinks that but in this school we respect all families*
- *There are many kinds of families. Some have a mum and a dad. Some have two mums. Some have one mum or one dad.*
- *There are many different opinions about families. In this school we respect all families that love and care for their children. Making sure children are well-cared-for is what is important. I have met all kinds of healthy, happy families.*

"You overhear a student say, "Gay people are bad."

You could ask that student why he or she thinks that. You also could check to see if the student knows what gay means. Depending on the response, you may first have to define what gay or lesbian means. This could also be an opportunity to dispel stereotypes and the notion of a category of people being all bad or all good.

It is also an opportunity to reaffirm that we respect all people in our classroom. Saying that a group of people are bad is hurtful not only to people who

are gay and to students who may have relatives or friends who are gay, but also to anyone who cares about not hurting other people's feelings.

How should I respond to tricky questions from parents and guardians?

"Aren't the students too young to talk about "gay" people?"

Learning the meaning of "gay" or "lesbian" can come up in a range of contexts — media coverage of current events, families within the school or when addressing name-calling. For example, we may be talking about the mothers or fathers of one of our students or we may be looking at a book that shows a child with two mums or two dads. If we are defining the word for students, we are talking about adult relationships.

Students often use the word "gay" to mean that something is stupid, or they use it as a put-down for a boy who they think is not acting masculine enough. However, they often don't know what "gay" actually means. We are teaching the students to understand the words they are using or hearing. We are talking about not hurting classmates and others with our words.

Students also see the words like gay or lesbian in headlines at the grocery store checkout counter. They overhear them in the news. Then they come into class and ask what they mean. Talking about families and caring adults that love each other is appropriate.

"I don't want my child to think that being gay is an OK option for them."

Information and discussion about gay and lesbian people will not make anyone gay or straight. Knowing or learning about gay people, however, might make someone less likely to insult or threaten someone he or she thinks is gay. Hopefully it will help our students not allow a friend to be bullied or teased for having a gay or lesbian parent.

"My religion teaches that it is wrong to be gay."

Schools include people with many different religious beliefs. Some religious groups support inclusion of same-sex attracted people, and some don't. The role of schools is not to get everyone to agree but to foster a climate where there is respect for the diversity of beliefs and families within a community.

Valuing diversity and demonstrating empathy and respect is required teaching in the Health and Physical Education curriculum. Acknowledging the diversity in the community, promoting opportunities for dialogue and allowing the diversity of families to be visible within the school community builds respect. Most people agree it is appropriate for schools to teach kindness and mutual respect for everyone regardless of their beliefs or their lifestyle choices.

Adapted from Welcomingschools.com at http://hrc-assets.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com//welcoming-schools/documents/Welcoming-Schools-_Responding_to_Questions_about_LGBT_Topics.pdf

Footnotes (pages 11–12):

2 (a) K. F.Osterman (2000). *Students' need for belonging in the school community*. Review of Educational Research, 70(3), 323-367.

(b) A. Bryk & M. Driscoll, *The High School as Community: Contextual Influences and Consequences for Students and Teachers*, National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, 1988. D. Solomon, V. Battistich, M. Watson, E. Schaps, & C. Lewis, *A Six-District Study of Educational Change: Direct and Mediated Effects of the Child Development Project,Social Psychology of Education*, 2000 (pp. 3–51). As cited in: Eric Schaps, National Association of Elementary School Principals, *Building Community: The Neglected Element in School Renewal*, September 2000. Available at: http://www.devstu.org/about/articles/building_community.html.

(c) Eric Schaps, V. Battistich & D. Solomon, *School as a Caring Community: A Key to Character Education*, in A. Molnar (Editor), *The Construction of Children's Character, Part II, 96th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 1997. D. Solomon, V. Battistich, M. Watson, E. Schaps, & C. Lewis, *A Six-District Study of Educational Change: Direct and Mediated Effects of the Child Development Project*, Social Psychology of Education, 2000 (pp. 3–51). As cited in: Eric Schaps, Educational Leadership, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, The Heart of a Caring School, March 2003 (pp. 31–33). See: http://www.devstu.org/about/articles/heart_of_caring_school.html

3. Full ACHESS findings may be accessed at http://www.achess.org.au/

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