

## LGBTQ Book Collection Audit Cian Sutcliffe

### Summary

The topic of this audit is LGBTQ books for toddlers through middle grade youth. This audit is essential in a time when book banning and censorship rates for children's literature are high. The estimated number of LGBTQ youth ages 13-17 in the US is 1,994,000, and in Illinois it is 80,000 (Conron, 2020, p. 1). Recently, The Trevor Project published the 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. Some of the key findings include:

- "Rates of suicidal thoughts have trended upward among LGBTQ young people over the last three years" (Paley, 2022).
- LGBTQ youth who felt high social support from their family reported attempting suicide at less than half the rate of those who felt low or moderate social support.
- Fewer than 1 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth found their home to be gender-affirming.
- LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide than those who do not (The Trevor Project, 2022).

In light of these findings from the Trevor Project, the importance of LGBTQ representation is vital. Bishop's (1990) metaphor of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors to describe children's literature is still relevant today – youth need books to mirror their own lives and provide windows into others' lives when it comes to queer characters and stories (Williams & Deyoe, 2014, p. 98).

The audit conducted contains books from the Stonewall Award/Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's Literature Award (2010-2022), the 2022 Rainbow Booklist from ALA's GLBTRT, and GLSEN National Student Council's 2021 Elementary and Middle Grade Book Lists. This paper utilizes readings from LIS 622 in addition to independent research.

### Lincoln Library & Springfield, Illinois

The library examined for this audit is Lincoln Library, the public library of Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln Library is centrally located downtown, and branch locations have permanently closed. According to the US Census Bureau (USCB), as of 2020, the population of Springfield is 114,394. The largest racial groups are white (78,799) and Black/African American (23,344). Nearly 19% of residents are in poverty (USCB, 2020). Examining the only school district of Springfield, District 186, is helpful in determining the demographics of the youth population who may be seeking out LGBTQ books at Lincoln Library. About 38% of students are white, and 43% are Black. Nearly 60% of students are low income (Illinois State Board of Education, 2021-2022).

Although Illinois ranks extremely high for LGBTQ government policies (Movement Advancement Project), Springfield received a score of 68/100 on the Human Rights Campaign's 2020 Municipal Equality Index Scorecard. Causes of this low score for children include no youth bullying prevention policy and no services to LGBTQ youth (Human Rights Campaign, 2020). More LGBTQ literature at Lincoln Library will help youth in the community, who are already lacking resources.

Youth in Springfield will benefit from this audit by gaining access to more acclaimed and popular LGBTQ books. This will not only benefit youth who identify as LGBTQ, but their peers and children with same sex parents. Williams & Deyoe (2014), note that "a library collection that includes books with diverse characters and cultures subtly reaffirms young people's sense of self and the value of their culture while providing opportunities to expand their awareness" (p. 98). Additionally, many of the books in the checklist are graphic novels, which are known to help with critical thinking, verbal, and visual literacy skills (Jaffe, 2015). Graphic novels can make reading "less daunting" for youth, especially those who are struggling with reading or English language learners (Jaffe, 2015). However, Moeller et al. (2020), note that a study found librarians engaging in self-censorship, likely due to a lack of familiarity in regard to graphic novels compared to traditional novels (p. 515).

### Book Awards & Lists

The Stonewall Book Award is the ALA's most notable LGBTQ book award. It is administered by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT), an organization within the ALA, and the country's first gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender professional organization. According to the ALA, the awards are "presented to English language books that have exceptional merit relating to the LGBTQIA+ experience." Nominations for the Stonewall Book Awards are accepted from librarians, the general public, and members of the committee. These GLBTRT committee members are "encouraged to read as many of the nominated titles as they can and are required to read all of the ten finalists before the final vote," and must also participate in discussions of books (ALA, 2001). The chair of GLBTRT must select committee members from all over the US, a variety of racial and ethnic groups, and provide an equal gender balance. Additionally, the committee must "ensure that small presses are given equal consideration" (ALA, 2001).

The Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's Literature Award is an extension of the Stonewall Book Awards. It began in 2010, though the Stonewall Awards date back to 1971 (ALA, 2009). The list of awardees and honorees contains books for babies to young adults. This audit focuses on books for toddlers through middle grade youth, and books were carefully selected from the list to fit this age range. The Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's Literature Award was chosen for this audit due to the professional selection process, diversity of the committee, and consideration of books from both small presses and major publishers.

The Rainbow Book List is an annual list of recommended LGBTQ fiction and nonfiction for youth (birth through age 18). It includes titles published in the US and Canada (Breitenbach, 2022). The list provides annotations for each book “so as to attract the young reader” (ALA, 2011). The Rainbow Book List is associated with ALA’s GLBTRT and Rainbow Round Table, and members of the Rainbow Book List Committee must “read and critically evaluate current LGBTQIA+ books,” participate in discussions, and submit books for consideration (ALA, 2011). The 2022 Rainbow Book List contains 122 titles in all. It was selected for this audit due to its current nature – all of the books were published between July 2020 and December 2021 (Breitenbach, 2022). It was also chosen for its extensivity, annotations, and professional selection process.

The final lists for this audit are from the GLSEN National Student Council, which consists of high school youth. Members “advise GLSEN programming and campaigns,” and compile “a list of books that are focused on diverse stories and LGBTQ+ characters” (GLSEN, 2021). These books are from various years. The 2021 National Student Council Elementary and Middle Grade Book Lists were chosen to represent the perspectives of youth. Additionally, these lists are annotated to help families, youth, educators, and librarians.

### Data Collection

The following checklist is organized by bibliographic information, age range, genre, and award organization/year. There is a ‘copies’ column based on the Lincoln Library catalog. Age ranges for each title are approximate, and based on award lists and publisher websites. Titles on multiple lists are noted. The copies column denotes the number of books owned by Lincoln Library. Lack of print copies are noted as either audiobook only or ebook only. There are 78 books total.

Bibliographic Info	Age Range	Genre	Award Organization/Year	Copies
Woodgate, H. (2021). <i>Grandad's Camper</i> . Little Bee Books.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Stonewall Honor 2022 Rainbow Book List	1
Arlow, J.M. (2021). <i>Almost Flying</i> . Dial Books for Young Readers.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Stonewall Honor 2022 Rainbow Book List	1
Lukoff, K. (2021). <i>Too Bright to See</i> . Dial Books for Young Readers.	Middle Grade	Supernatural Novel	2022 Stonewall Winner 2022 Rainbow Book List	1
Layne, A. (2020). <i>Beetle &amp; the Hollowbones</i> . Atheneum Books for Young Readers.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2021 Stonewall Honor	1

Pancholy, M. (2020). <i>The Best at It</i> . Balzer + Bray.	Middle Grade	Novel	2020 Stonewall Honor	3
Lukoff, K. (2019). <i>When Aidan Became a Brother</i> . Lee & Low Books.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	2020 Stonewall Winner GLSEN National Student Council Book List	0
Love, J. (2018). <i>Julián Is a Mermaid</i> . Candlewick Press.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	2019 Stonewall Winner GLSEN National Student Council Book List	2
Callender, K. (2018). <i>Hurricane Child</i> . Scholastic.	Middle Grade	Novel	2019 Stonewall Winner	1
Herring Blake, A. (2018). <i>Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World</i> . Little, Brown.	Middle Grade	Novel	2019 Stonewall Honor	0
Gillman, M. (2017). <i>As the Crow Flies</i> . Iron Circus Comics.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2018 Stonewall Honor	1
Stevenson, R. (2016). <i>Pride: Celebrating Diversity &amp; Community</i> . Orca Books.	Middle Grade	Nonfiction	2017 Stonewall Honor	0
Gino, A. (2015). <i>Melissa</i> . Scholastic.  Note: this title is FKA George	Middle Grade	Novel	2016 Stonewall Winner GLSEN National Student Council Book List	3

Silverberg, C. & Smyth, F. (2015). <i>Sex is a Funny Word: a Book about Bodies, Feelings, and YOU</i> . Triangle Square Books.	Middle Grade	Nonfiction Comic Book	2016 Stonewall Honor	1
Pitman, G. (2014). <i>This Day In June</i> . Magination Press.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2015 Stonewall Winner	2
Baldacchino, C. (2014). <i>Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress</i> . Groundwood Books.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2015 Stonewall Honor	1
Settingington, K. (2013). <i>Branded by the Pink Triangle</i> . Second Story Press.	Middle Grade and Above	Nonfiction	2014 Stonewall Honor	1
Federle, T. (2013). <i>Better Nate Than Ever</i> . Simon & Schuster.	Middle Grade	Novel	2014 Stonewall Honor	2

Sáenz, B.A. (2012). <i>Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe</i> . Simon & Schuster.	Middle Grade	Novel	2013 Stonewall Winner	2 Audio book only
Telgemeier, R. (2012). <i>Drama</i> . Graphix/Scholastic.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2013 Stonewall Honor GLSEN National Student Council Book List	4
Adams, S.J. (2011). <i>Sparks: The Epic, Completely True Blue, (Almost) Holy Quest of Debbie</i> . Flux.	Middle Grade	Novel	2013 Stonewall Honor	Ebook only
Walliams, D. (2008). <i>The Boy In the Dress</i> . Penguin Young Readers.	Middle Grade	Chapter Book	2011 Stonewall Honor	0
Newman, L. (2009). <i>Daddy, Papa and Me</i> . Tricycle Press.	Babies and Toddlers	Board Book	2010 Stonewall Honor	0
Ewert, M. (2008). <i>10,000 Dresses</i> . Seven Stories Press.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	2010 Stonewall Honor	Ebook only
Stinson, K. (2021). <i>The Bare Naked Book</i> . Annick Press.	Pre-K	Nonfiction Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Book List	1
Davids, S. & Mays, N.K. (2021). <i>Sharice's Big Voice: A Native Kid Becomes a Congresswoman</i> . HarperCollins.	Pre-K to Elementary	Nonfiction Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Sanders, R. (2021). <i>Two Grooms on a Cake: the story of America's first gay wedding</i> . Little Bee Books.	Elementary	Nonfiction Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Peter, G. (2021). <i>Adventures With My Daddies</i> . Peachtree Publishing Company.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Feder, T. (2021). <i>Bodies Are Cool</i> . Dial Books.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	3
Patterson, J. (2021). <i>Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope</i> . Crown	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1

Books for Young Readers.				
Brockington, R. & Webster, I. (2021). <i>Daddy and Dada</i> . Little, Brown.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Brown, P. (2021). <i>Fred Gets Dressed</i> . Little, Brown.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
McNamara, M. (2021). <i>The Little Library</i> . Schwartz & Wade.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Karlsson, A. (2021). <i>My Sister Daisy</i> . Capstone Press.	Early Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Stevenson, R. (2021). <i>Pride Puppy</i> . Orca Books.	Toddlers to Pre-K	Concept Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Haack, D. (2021). <i>Prince &amp; Knight: Tale of the Shadow King</i> . Little Bee Books.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Rhodes-Carter, A. (2021). <i>Sam is My Sister</i> . Albert Whitman & Company.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Locke, K. (2021). <i>What Are Your Words: A Book About Pronouns</i> . Little, Brown.	Pre-K to Elementary	Picture Book	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Simon, Raphael. <i>The Anti-Book</i> . 2021. 320p. Penguin Random House Dial Books.	Middle Grade	Fantasy Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Machais, J. (2021). <i>Both Can Be True</i> . Quill Tree Books.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Van Otterloo, A. (2020). <i>Cattywampus</i> . Scholastic.	Middle Grade	Fantasy Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Labelle, Sophie. (2020). <i>Ciel</i> . Second Story Press.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Grehan, M. (2021). <i>The Deepest Breath</i> . HarperCollins.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Forman, G. (2021). <i>Frankie &amp; Bug</i> . Aladdin.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1

Taylor, J. (2021). <i>Meow or Never</i> . Scholastic.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
McDonald, B. (2020). <i>Pepper's Rules for Secret Sleuthing</i> . Simon & Schuster.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Rivera, L. (2021). <i>Goldie Vance: The Hocus-Pocus Hoax</i> . Little, Brown.	Middle Grade	Mystery Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Sanchez, A. (2021). <i>The Greatest Superpower</i> . Capstone Editions.	Middle Grade	Fiction	2022 Rainbow Booklist	0
Herring, A. (2021). <i>Hazel Bly and the Deep Blue Sea</i> . Little, Brown.	Middle Grade	Fiction	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Oshiro, M. (2021). <i>The Insiders</i> . HarperCollins.	Middle Grade	Magical Realism Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Bailar, S. (2021). <i>Obie is Man Enough</i> . Penguin Random House.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Lucas, C. (2021). <i>Thanks a Lot, Universe</i> . Abrams.	Middle Grade	Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Locke, K. (2021). <i>This is Our Rainbow: 16 Stories of Her, Him, Them and Us</i> . Knopf Books.	Middle Grade	Anthology	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
McGane, M. (2021). <i>The Accursed Vampire</i> . Quill Tree Books.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
Frasier, C. (2021). <i>Cheer Up: Love and Pom-Poms</i> . Oni Press.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	0
Ostertag, M.K. (2021). <i>The Girl from the Sea</i> . Scholastic/Graphix.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	2
Cooke, S. (2021). <i>Paranorthern: And the Chaos Bunny A-hop-calyipse</i> . Clarion Books.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	1
O'Neill, K. (2021). <i>Tea Dragon Tapestry</i> . Oni Press.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	0
Maggs, S. & Wells, K. (2021). <i>Tell No Tales: Pirates of the Southern Seas</i> . Abrams.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	2022 Rainbow Booklist	0

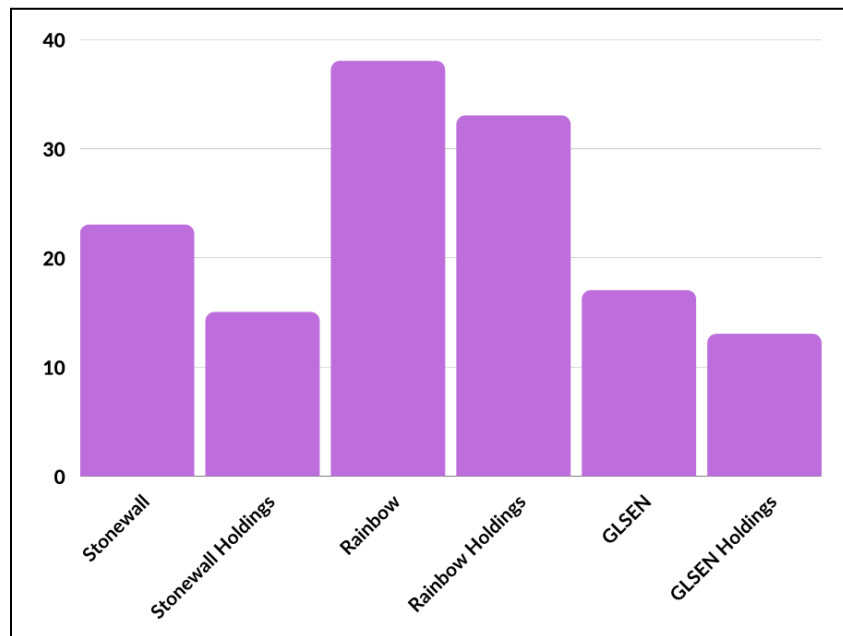
Herthel, J. & Jennings, J. (2014). <i>I Am Jazz</i> . Dial Books.	Early Elementary	Picture Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	1
Gabriel, D. (2019). <i>Sam!.</i> Penny Candy Books.	Early Elementary	Picture Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	0
Parnell, P. & Richardson, J. (2015). <i>And Tango Makes Three</i> . Little Simon.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	2
Nagara, I. (2013). <i>A Is For Activist</i> . Triangle Square.	Concept Board Book	Concept and Alphabet Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	2
Sanders, R. (2018). <i>Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag</i> . Random House.	Elementary	Nonfiction Picture Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	1
Haack, D. (2018). <i>Prince &amp; Knight</i> . Little Bee Books.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	1
Anderson, A. (2018). <i>Neither</i> . Little, Brown.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	2
Walton, J. (2016). <i>Introducing Teddy</i> . Bloomsbury.	Pre-K to Early Elementary	Picture Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	1
Dean, B. (2021). <i>Me, My Dad, and the End of the Rainbow</i> . Simon & Schuster.	Middle Grade	Chapter Book	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	0
Smith, N. (2020). <i>The Deep &amp; Dark Blue</i> . Little, Brown.	Middle Grade	Graphic Novel	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	1
Keplinger, K. et al. (2020). <i>All Out: The No-Longer-Secret Stories of Queer Teens Throughout the Ages</i> . Inkyard Press.	Middle Grade	Anthology	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	1
McKenna, M. (2020). <i>Out! How to Be Your Authentic Self</i> . Amulet Books.	Middle Grade	Self Help/Auto-biography	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	1
Vaid-Menon, A. (2020). <i>Beyond the Gender Binary</i> . Penguin Workshop.	Middle Grade	Self Help/Auto-biography	GLSEN National Student Council Book List	0



## Analysis & Recommendations

### Comparison of the List to Holdings at Lincoln Library

Out of 78 books, Lincoln Library had 61. There were 23 Stonewall Honor Books and Lincoln Library had 15, though 3 were not counted due to their availability only as ebook or audiobook format – not all youth have access to devices and/or reliable internet to read or listen to books. Out of 38 books on the Rainbow List, Lincoln Library had 33. There were 17 books from the GLSEN National Student Council Lists, and the library had 13 of those books. This data can be seen in the bar graph below. It is apparent that while Lincoln Library has many of the books, there still are valuable books that are not available for LGBTQ youth in Springfield.



The following books are not available at Lincoln Library (in any format):

- *When Aidan Became a Brother*
- *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World*
- *Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community*
- *The Greatest Superpower*
- *The Boy In the Dress*
- *Daddy, Papa, and Me*
- *Cheer Up: Love and Pom-Poms*
- *Tea Dragon Tapestry*
- *Tell No Tales: Pirates of the Southern Seas*
- *Sam!*

- *Me, My Dad, and the End of the Rainbow*
- *Beyond the Gender Binary*

### Analyzing *When Aidan Became a Brother* and Possible Censorship

A notable book from the list is *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff, a picture book surrounded by controversy within the past few years. Lee & Low provides a summary of 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 trans boy, Aidan and his parents fixed the parts of life that didn't fit anymore, and he settled happily into his new life. Then Mom and Dad announce that 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.

According to Titus (2021), *When Aidan Became a Brother* is known for being removed from a 5th grade classroom in a Pennsylvania school district due to LGBTQ themes. The book was banned along with Ivy Aberdeen's *Letter to the World* (also not available at Lincoln Library) and *Melissa* (formally published as *George*). Titus (2021) notes that these 3 books do not contain mature or violent topics, and they were eventually returned to the class after the community criticized the decision. In a 2022 PEN America interview, Lukoff was asked what he meant by 'fighting for his life':

When people say that books about queer adults or children are not appropriate to be read by kids, they are saying kids should not know about the existence of LGBTQ people. And if you want to prevent kids from knowing about the existence of LGBTQ people, the easiest way to do that is through restricting books and other media.

Although a search for this book on the Lincoln Library website yielded no results, there were several other books by Lukoff available such as *Too Bright to See*, a supernatural middle grade novel and Stonewall winner. Considering the acclaim and controversy of *When Aidan Became a Brother*, it is unlikely the library is not aware of this title. This is a concerning finding. There are no local news articles about controversial or banned books in Springfield. However, in an article by Spearie (2022) about the search for a new library director and the firing of a former director, a city councilperson addressed recent book controversies in the US. They stated the need for a library director who can manage "conversations around books and access to those materials and the role of the library in a community" (Spearie, 2022).

## Recommendations for Lincoln Library

The data from the checklist shows that Lincoln Library owns only 1 copy of many books, including titles that appear on multiple lists. *Almost Flying*, a middle grade novel by Jake Maia Arlow, is a 2022 Stonewall Honor Book and on the 2022 Rainbow Book List, yet there is only 1 copy available for the community. Youth would benefit from Lincoln Library purchasing multiple copies of acclaimed LGBTQ books.

As previously mentioned, 3 of the books on the checklist were only available as ebooks or audiobooks – *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, *Sparks: The Epic, Completely True Blue*, *(Almost) Holy Quest of Debbie*, and *10,000 Dresses*. While ebooks and audiobooks can be great formats for youth, (reliable) broadband access and/or devices are resources many youth do not have access to. Without access to physical books, many youth cannot read books. It is essential for Lincoln Library to provide at least 1 print copy of a book.

The kids page on the Lincoln Library website has a filters section with tags and categories based on genre, as well as more unique tags such as BookTok and Black Women Authors. Another recommendation for Lincoln Library is to add a LGBTQ tag. Regarding resources and books for LGBTQ youth, an excellent source of inspiration is the Cincinnati Public Library's LGBTQIA+ Resources page. The library provides multiple booklists, lists of local resources, and more. The website also has a resource for LGBTQ youth called Queer Gabby, "an interactive feature where youth and teens can submit comments and questions anonymously, and library staff can respond to them publicly...youth can ask questions related to the library's LGBTQIA+ materials and local services" (Amrein, 2021).

## Course Reflection

Many LIS 622 course readings and discussions have informed this paper and audit. Before this course I only had basic knowledge about ALA awards such as Stonewall, Newbery, and Caldecott. This audit was an opportunity to explore the Stonewall Award in depth. Discussions of Bishop's *Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors* (1990), was an important rationale for this audit of LGBTQ books. Course readings about childhood development by the Dekko Foundation and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2018) support the need for LGBTQ representation in public libraries. For instance, the Dekko Foundation states that the middle years (ages 6-12) are a "fragile emotional stage for self-esteem and self-confidence." Youth "become aware of social justice and injustice" (Dekko Foundation). Youth are capable of understanding and empathizing with queer characters and stories, even if they do not identify as LGBTQ. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2018) supports this idea by explaining that children in the middle years "can be supported to develop respectful and inclusive attitudes about diversity." There is no doubt that youth are aware of their feelings and identities, and The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2018) states that in the middle years, children "explore their concept of self and often intersecting identities, including social identities" like gender expression.

When selecting lists to use for this audit, I wanted to include graphic novels not only due to

my personal belief that they are beneficial for youth, but due to class discussions and readings on this topic. The 2022 Rainbow Booklist has a significant number of graphic novels. This paper references course readings by Jaffe (2015) and Moeller et al. (2020) to rationalize the need for graphic novels by queer authors or with queer characters.

Class discussions about children's rights, censorship, and book banning were considered while writing this paper, especially after the discovery that *When Aidan Became a Brother* may be censored right now at Lincoln Library. I contacted the youth services librarian at Lincoln Library on December 17th to ask if the book is available. If it is not, I asked if there was an event in the community or library that led to it being pulled from the catalog.

The article *Supporting the Right to Read: Principles for Selecting Children's Books* supports many of my arguments in this paper in addition to ideas I have cited. The authors, Hartsfield & Kimmel (2020), discuss the idea of preemptive censorship – “when educators make decisions based on discomfort with a book's content or to avoid controversy...which undermines students' intellectual freedom and unjustly limits their access to books” (p. 420). Hartsfield & Kimmel (2020) also discuss *Melissa*. They argue that “portrayals of peer conflict could support anti-bullying programs,” and “*Melissa's* experiences can be a window for cisgender children, or those whose gender identity matches their biological sex. Sharing *Melissa* as a window book may support cisgender children with becoming more understanding of and compassionate for their transgender peers” (p. 423). Though this book is available at Lincoln Library, the arguments can be applied to LGBTQ books missing from the catalog like *When Aidan Became a Brother*.

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