



Exploring Gender Variance and Transgender Experience Through Books and Film

This list includes a variety of resources in the public press. These books and films are important additions to society's understanding and acceptance of our trans family members, and some discuss characters and interactions that are not always ideal. Please be sensitive to the impact this may have on your child, student or family member. Such examples of inappropriate responses could launch productive conversation and reflection.

Children's Books

1. **Gender Now Coloring Book**, helps your explore the many facets of gender across a variety of species with very young children: <http://www.reflectionpress.com/gendernow/coloring.html>
2. **My Princess Boy**, Cheryl Kilodavis, a loving nonfiction book about a young boy who likes to dress up as a princess. It asks the question, "How you you react if you see a princess boy?"
3. **Oliver Button is a Sissy**, Tommy dePaola, depicts the trials of a gender variant boy in elementary school, and offers up an ending that might seem a bit contrived
4. **Backwards Day**, by S. Bear Bergman, explores the experience of a young natal girl who feels much more like a boy and one day that dream comes true and the world sees him for the boy he is.
5. **The Adventures of Tulip, The Birthday Wish Fairy**, by S. Bear Bergman, is about a fairy who helps a young natal boy confidently and successfully express as the girl she knows herself to be.
6. **Be Who You Are**, Jennifer Carr, a charming story written by a mom to tell an honest and open experience of raising her trans child and how she supported her and helped the school to support her as well

Young Adult literature

1. **Almost Perfect**, Brian Katcher, tells the story of young male teenager who falls for a trans girl, then reacts horribly when he learns her "secret," that she was born a boy. It gives a true representation of how fraught disclosure can be for young people.
2. **I am J**, Chris Beam, tells the story of a teenage trans boy as he struggles to understand himself and transition without a lot of family support
3. **Luna**, Julie Ann Peters, told from a sister's point of view, about her natal male sibling who can only come out and be a true female self at night, in the sister's bedroom, where she can dress and express herself as the girls she knows herself to be.
4. **Freak Show**, James St. James, is the story of an over-the-top gender variant teen boy sent by his mom to live with dad in the south. In the end, he wins over his conservative schoolmates, for the most part.
5. **Parrotfish**, Ellen Whittlinger, about a teen natal girl who identifies as a boy and his struggles at home and at school while he transitions. As one reviewer on Amazon called it "refreshingly un-dire."
6. **How Beautiful the Ordinary**, Michael Cart, et al., 12 stories of sexual orientation and gender identity, by 12 different authors
7. **Jumpstart the World**, Catherine Ryan Hyde. A teen girl, out on her own, befriends and falls for a many living in her apartment building. When she learns he is trans, she faces her own preconceptions

Documentaries

1. **Faces & Facets of Transgender Experience**, www.pflagboulder.org is a wonderful 20-minute introduction to the lives of trans adults and trans youth and their families.
2. **Becoming Me**, In the Life Media, www.itlmedia.org/clips/entry/becoming-me is a moving 29-minute look into the lives of eight trans and gender variant children (ages 4 though 24) and the journey of their families to acceptance and support of their children.
3. **Prodigal Sons**, Kimberly Reed traces her life as a New York City editor as she returns home for a high school reunion in Montana, where she had been the captain of the football team.
4. **Paris is Burning**, Jennie Livingston, chronicles the ball culture of New York City and the African American, Latino, gay and transgender communities involved in it. A thoughtful exploration of race, class and gender in America. A gripping film not for young children.

Movies

All of these are about trans women or gender variant men; if you know of a movie about a trans guy or a gender variant woman, please let the editor know.

1. **Another Woman**, Jerome Foulon, a touching film about a doctor who left his family and transitioned male to female, as she comes to terms with reaching out to her children in her new identity
2. **TransAmerica**, Starring Felicity Huffman, Kevin Zegers, Fionnula Flanagan, a funny and moving story of a trans woman's cross country trek with her son who knew her only as his father
3. **The Birdcage**, starring Robin Williams and Nathan Lane, a silly look at a family headed by a gay couple running a burlesque show whose son falls in love the daughter of a very conservative politician

Resources

1. **Gender Born, Gender Made**, Dianne Ehrensaft offers a thorough and sensitive exploration of the development of our gender identities well suited for parents, teachers and providers
2. **The Transgender Child**, Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper is an excellent resource for parents, educators and providers seeking to understand the trans and gender variant child.
3. **True Selves, Understanding Transsexualism**, Mildred L. Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley, a guidebook for understanding transgender identity and people. Since this was written in 1996, the field has evolved greatly and we no longer box trans people into a variety of labels and definitions, but the experiences of the people stories in this book are enlightening and important.