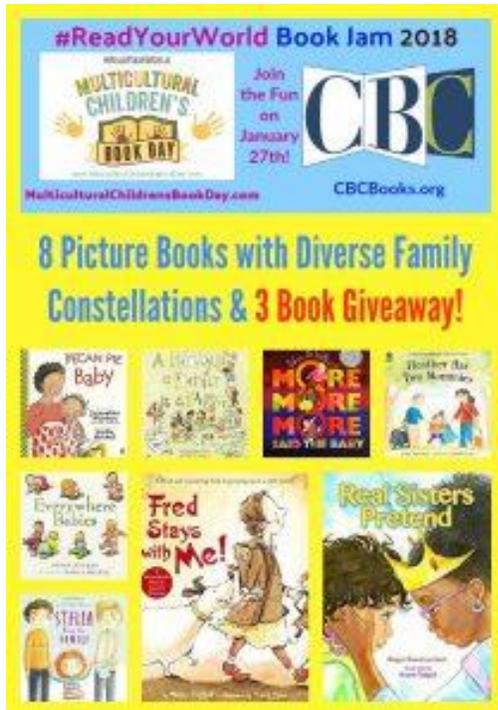


[Eight Picture Books with Diverse Family Constellations](#)

By Megan Dowd Lambert 1/18/18

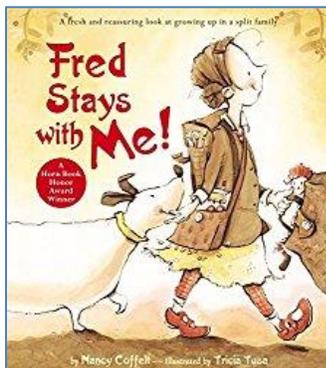


Because of my lived experience as a mother in a multiracial, adoptive, queer, blended family, I appreciate seeing representations of families in picture books that exist and thrive outside of a White, heteronormative, nuclear family structure. I like writing such stories, too! *Real Sisters Pretend*, illustrated by Nicole Tadgell, is an adoption story that was inspired by two of my daughters, and its characters include two moms, one who is Asian and one who is White, and their two adopted daughters, one who is Black and one who is a multiracial child of color.

It was published by Tilbury House in 2016, and was named a [Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People 2017](#). It's also included on the [CCBC Choices 2017](#) list and the [Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature Best Books of 2016](#) list.

I hope that reading our picture book and others featuring diverse family constellations (I've included a list below) will help expand what [Andrew Solomon](#) calls "the ecosphere of kindness" when he writes: "I don't accept subtractive models of love, only additive ones. And I believe that in the same way that we need species diversity to ensure that the planet can go on, so we need this diversity of affection and diversity of family in order to strengthen the ecosphere of kindness."

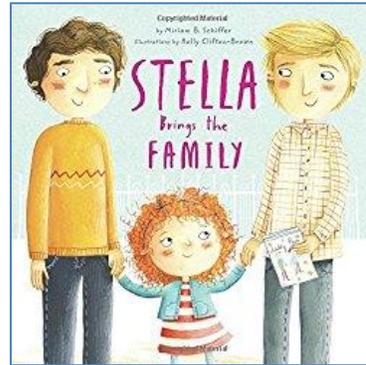
1. ***Fred Stays with Me*** by Nancy Coffelt, illustrated by Tricia Tusa



A little girl whose parents are divorced splits her time between her mom's house and her dad's. Her dog, the eponymous Fred, also moves between homes, which gives her a sense of stability and consistency in her co-parenting, joint-custody family arrangement. [picture book, ages 3 and up]

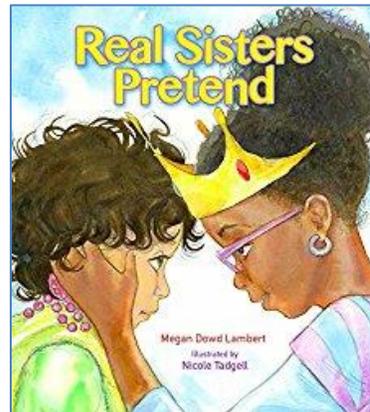
2. ***Stella Brings the Family*** by Miriam Schiffer Baker, illustrated by Holly Clifton-Brown

Stella has two dads and isn't quite sure what to do for her class's Mother's Day celebration. Ultimately, she decides to bring both of her parents, as well as other family members who nurture her, and they are all affirmed and welcomed by everyone at school. [picture book, ages 5 and up]



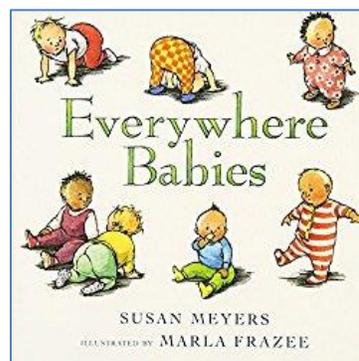
3. ***Real Sisters Pretend*** by Megan Dowd Lambert, illustrated by Nicole Tadgell

Inspired by two of the author's daughters, this is a story about adoptive sisters, Mia (who is multiracial) and Tayja (who is Black), who affirm their bonds with one another after a stranger questions whether they are "real sisters" since they don't look alike. They punctuate their pretend play with conversation about their adoption stories, and it all culminates in a warm family hug with their two moms. [picture book, ages 4 and up]



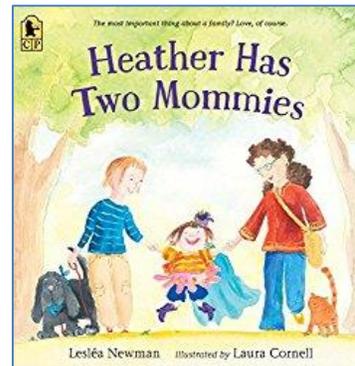
4. ***Everywhere Babies*** by Susan Meyers, illustrated by Marla Frazee

This joyful celebration of babies and babyhood depicts a multiracial cast of characters caring for babies in many different contexts. Depictions of a two-mom family in one scene and other couples who can be read as gay parents present on other spreads, create an inclusive vision in which diverse family constellations are a matter-of-fact part of society. [picture book, ages 0 and up]

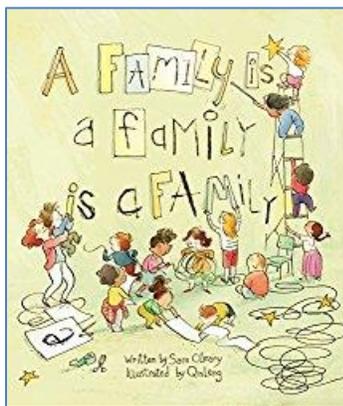


5. **Heather Has Two Mommies** by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Laura Cornell

An updated version of this groundbreaking picture book depicts Heather and her classmates telling one another about their diverse families, and their conversation quickly eases Heather's initial worry that she might be the only one without a dad. When Heather's mommies come to visit her school, they are delighted to see the picture she's made of their family. [picture book, ages 4 and up]



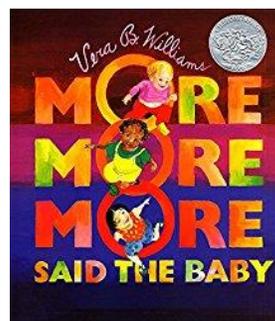
6. **A Family Is a Family Is a Family** by Sara O'Leary, illustrated by Qin Leng



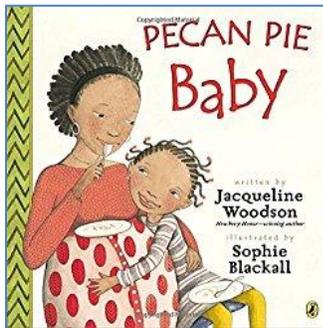
When a teacher asks her class to share something about their families, a foster child worries, "My family is not like everybody else's." This concern evaporates, however, as classmate after classmate describes a different family constellation, including two moms, two dads, many siblings, divorced parents, a blended family, single parents, mixed-race families, and more. [picture book, ages 4 and up]

7. **More, More, More Said the Baby** by Vera B. Williams

Three toddlers and their three caregivers are featured in individual, slice-of-life "love stories" with matter-of-fact multiracial diversity. A daddy, a grandma, and a mommy shower love on their little ones in spreads that are at turns playful and comforting. [picture book, ages 0 and up]



8. ***Pecan Pie Baby*** by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Sophie Blackall



A little girl is ambivalent, at best, about her single mother's pregnancy with "that ding-dang baby." Although she's surrounded by love and support at her school and in her extended, multiracial family, others' excitement about the baby exacerbates her worries. She ultimately is comforted by the knowledge that although her mother is happy about having a new baby, she'll also miss times when it was just the two of them. [picture book, ages 4 and up]



Megan Dowd Lambert wears a lot of hats in this field as an author, reader, reviewer, professor at [Simmons College](#), storytime reader, and mother of seven children. To learn more about Megan, please check out her [website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

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