



**Book Title:** *Papa, Daddy, and Riley*

**Written by:** Seamus Kirst

**Illustrated by:** Devon Holzwarth

**Age Range:** 3-8

**Grades:** PreK-2nd

### **Identities/Lived Experiences/Themes in This Book**

- Feelings
- Identity affirmation
- Identity safety
- General racial/ethnic diversity
- Bi/Multiracial identity or relationships
- Same-Gender relationships
- Multigenerational relationships
- Adoption/Foster
- Single parent

### **Literacy Connections**

- Realistic fiction
- Identify details in the text
- Compare and contrast characters
- Identify theme or main message
- Character point of view
- Use illustrations/pictures/photos to gain information
- Make inferences
- Make text connections (to self, text, the world)

#### **Anti-Bias Education**

- **Empathy and Understanding**
- **Healthy Complex Identities**
- **Respect Across Differences**
- **Notice, Name, and Reject Bias**
- Responsiveness and Action

#### **Social-Emotional Learning**

- **Self-Awareness**
- **Self-Management**
- **Social Awareness**
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

**Background Information for Adults**

Children in households headed by gay, lesbian, transgender, or gender creative parents and caregivers rarely see themselves in classroom materials, making their family structures invisible. This book provides an example of a healthy, loving family. Even today, children of LGBTQ+ parents and caregivers hear negative messages about their families. When children are given the opportunity to see realistic and healthy portrayals of different kinds of families, they can appreciate the uniqueness of their own family as well as respect the diversity of other families without bias or judgment.

For more information about supporting children with LGBTQ+ families and how to navigate conversations with children about diverse family structures, see the **Diverse Family Structures Primer**.

**Reflection Questions for Adults Reading This Book to Children**

Think about your own beliefs about family.

- Are there family structures that you are uncomfortable with?
- Are there family structures that you are aware of feeling biased or negative toward?
- How might that impact the children that you interact with or work with?
- What experience do you have with same gender families?
- How can you make sure that children with same gender family members feel respected and welcomed?

**Book Summary to Read to Children Before Reading the Book**

*Riley has two dads who love her very much—one calls her his princess, and the other calls her his dragon. Riley feels special and safe with both of them. But when a classmate asks her which dad is her "real" one, Riley isn't sure how to answer. Why should she have to choose? Let's read this story to learn how it's love that makes a family, not who's in it or how it looks.*

**Discussion Questions**  
(essential questions in **bold**)

- 1. What kinds of families do you see pictured throughout the book?**
- 2. In Riley’s family, she has a belly mommy who gave birth to her but doesn’t live with her, and she has two dads who live with her and love her. Why is Olive’s question about who Riley’s ‘real’ dad is so upsetting to Riley?**
3. In what ways is Riley like each of her dads, her Papa and her Daddy?
  - a. How are you like your caregivers/loved ones?
- 4. How would you answer Riley’s question: “What makes a family, if every family is so different?”**
  - a. How do Riley’s dads answer that question?
- 5. How can we make sure all families feel welcome and special in our community or school?**

**Journal Prompts and Extension Activities**

- 1. Write or Draw:** Think of the adults who live with you. Just as Riley was similar to each of her dads in different ways, write or draw about the ways you are similar to the adults you live with. How do those similarities give you a special connection with them?
- 2. Who’s In Your Heart? Activity:** Give children a large paper heart and art materials. Remind them that families can be big or small, and they don’t all look the same. What matters is who loves and takes care of you. Have children decorate their hearts with what love looks like in their home. They can include family members, caregivers, pets, symbols, words, acts of kindness, etc. Allow children to share their hearts when they are done.
- 3. “Words That Make Everyone Feel Welcome” Poster:** First, have children journal or pair up and discuss with each other: *“A time I helped someone feel included...”* Then ask children to think about what they want to put on a poster in response to the question: *“What words or actions can we say and do that will help others feel included in our community?”* Give each child a large cut-out speech bubble and have them write their response on their speech bubble. Paste/tape the bubble to the poster and display the poster in the classroom.

Find more lessons in the  
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book set, available here:**  
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