



***Sparkle Boy* by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Maria Mola**

Lee & Low Books, an imprint of LEE & LOW BOOKS INC, 2017

ISBN: 9781620142851 (Hardcover)

*Age Range: 5–8 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: PreS-Gr 2 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Casey loves to play with his blocks, puzzles, and dump truck, and he also loves things that shimmer, glitter, and sparkle. Casey's older sister, Jessie, thinks this is weird. Shimmery, glittery, sparkly things are only for girls. Right?

When Casey and Jessie head to the library for story time, Casey proudly wears his shimmery skirt and sparkly bracelet. His nails glitter in the light. Jessie insists that Casey looks silly. It's one thing to dress like this around the house, but going outside as a "sparkle boy" is another thing entirely. What will happen when the other kids see him?

This sweet and refreshing story speaks to us all about acceptance, respect, and the simple freedom to be yourself. Shimmery, glittery, sparkly things are fun—for everyone!

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"The straightforward text realistically makes Jessie the one who sees the problems that can arise for Casey (and herself), but her protective mechanism seems natural. . . The inviting, solidly drawn artwork features doll-like characters with expressive faces. It's easy to see that being himself moves Casey from sad to happy." —[Booklist](#)

"Compassionate. . . Offer examples of language that children and adults could use in similar real-life situations, and Jessie's response to the library bullies might be the best of all. After being told that boys don't wear skirts and bracelets because 'That's just the way it is,' she responds, 'Not anymore.'" —[Publishers Weekly](#)

"This slice-of-life story will appeal to families, whether or not they include gender-creative members. . . A cheerful addition for libraries that need more titles like Cheryl Kilodavis's *My Princess Boy* and Sarah Hoffman's *Jacob's New Dress*." —[School Library Journal](#)

"*Sparkle Boy* captures the sparkle of siblinghood and the joy of glitter. I love Casey and his family. They are filled with love and heart. The dialogue is so real yet picture-book succinct and the chosen details of the illustrations make the pages feel real without being cluttered. Once again, Lesléa Newman reminds us that we all have the right to shine!" —**Alex Gino, award-winning author of *Melissa***

"Another nuanced knockout from Lesléa Newman, *Sparkle Boy* shines, shimmers, and speaks to the world we live in now." —**Tim Federle, award-winning author of *Better Nate Than Ever***

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LEE & LOW BOOKS INC.

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“Twenty-first century kids face an unprecedented future. *Sparkle Boy* sparkles with traits they'll need, including creativity, freedom, and integrity. . . not to mention great outfits.” —**Marcus Ewert, author of *10,000 Dresses***

“There are so many reasons to love *Sparkle Boy*, and the titular Sparkle Boy's big sister Jessie is one of them. Jessie shows us that tolerance and understanding can sometimes be a learning process for some, and that we all learn at different paces, through different experiences, and for various reasons—love being one of them.” —**Christine Baldacchino, author of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress***

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Bank Street College of Education Irma Black Award Honor Book
- Bank Street College of Education Best Books of the Year
- Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature Best Books
- Massachusetts Book Awards Honor Book

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Teacher's Guide](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Children's Books: A Conversations with Authors webinar](#)
- [SCBWI Webinar: Are You Free to Read What You Want?](#)
- [PFLAG National's Something to Talk About Live with Lesléa Newman](#)
- [MSNBC's 'Book banning with a vengeance': One-on-one with banned book author Lesléa Newman](#)
- [HuffPost Interview with Lesléa Newman](#)
- [The Open Book Blog: Lesléa Newman Guest Post](#)
- [Picture Book Read Aloud: Storytime with Lesléa Newman](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

[Inclusion Cannot Be Optional: Using LGBTQ Books in All Classrooms \(Heinemann\)](#): For LGBTQ students and those with LGBTQ family members, bringing books with LGBTQ characters into the classroom allows students to be seen and to feel valued . . . When reading these books in your classroom, start from where you are most comfortable. For young kids, simply reading books that acknowledge the diversity that exists in our world can be an easy place to begin. Diversity is simply the presence of difference; to acknowledge that there are many ways to be a boy, many ways to be a girl, many ways to be a human, and many ways to be a family, are concepts that all kids can understand. Start with gender diversity, with a picture book like *Sparkle Boy* by Lesléa Newman (2017), or discuss family diversity, with a picture book like *A Family Is a Family Is a Family* by Sara O'Leary (2016). Once you and your students have built a culture of comfort, continue to push the conversations based on where your students are.”

AUTHOR STATEMENT

“Here's a question I was once asked: ‘If you had nothing to rebel against and nothing to conform to, who would you be?’ That got me thinking about the ‘rules’ that our society dictates that are harmful to us all, including notions about gender. I wrote *Sparkle Boy* in hopes that it will add to the discussion about the wide spectrum of gender expression. There is no “right” way to be. There are as many ways to express gender as there are people in the world and we all deserve the freedom to be whoever we want.” —
Lesléa Newman

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***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.