

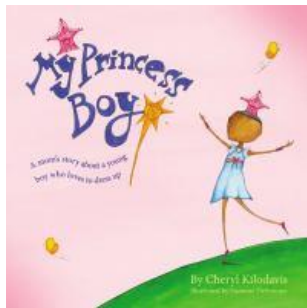


OWWL LIBRARY SYSTEM

BOOK CHALLENGE REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING: MY PRINCESS BOY BY CHERYL KILODAVIS

INTRODUCTION

Item Reviewed



Title: My princess boy: a mom's story about a young boy who loves to dress up

Author: Cheryl Kilodavis

Illustrator: Suzanne DeSimone

Publisher: Aladdin; Illustrated Editions (2011)

Copies Owned: Two physical copies are available in the OWWL catalog.

Shelving Location(s): Physical copies available at member libraries are shelved under "Juvenile" and "Picture Book."

Book Description

"A four-year-old boy loves dressing up in princess clothing. "A nonfiction picture book about acceptance ... to give children and adults a tool to talk about unconditional friendship¹."

Reason for Review

My Princess Boy by Cheryl Kilodavis appears as number 90 on ALA's Top 100 Most Banned and Challenged Books of the Past Decade².

COMMITTEE REVIEW

Committee Charge

¹ My princess boy : a mom's story about a young boy who loves to dress up (Book), OWWL Library System Catalog, <https://search.owwl.org/Record/408084>

² American Library Association, Top 100 Most Banned and Challenged Books: 2010-2019, <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/decade2019>

A six-member committee comprised of Member Library Directors, a System Staff member, a System Trustee, and the System Executive Director read and reviewed this title. Due to schedules and illness, the committee exchanged email messages in order to share their opinions on this particular title.

Committee Discussion

My Princess Boy is a positive story about a four-year-old who enjoys dressing up like a princess and a family who loves him. The committee's comments include:

- "A lovely story that will help children normalize wearing what they want or dressing however they want."
- "It is touching to show the parent's perspective in worrying about their child. I like how this shows a family's unconditional love and support for their child as well as the questions at the end that can show children why it's important to not bully or make fun of each other."
- "A story about acceptance and love. There is no mention of the child being transgender or any mention of sexuality."
- "What kid doesn't like to dress up?"
- "I loved the illustrations for this picture book."
- "I can see how much love this mother put into creating a book that told her child's story. It shows unconditional love, and acceptance."
- "Parents could use this book to open a dialog about gender stereotypes. It's ok if a boy likes pink and wears a crown."

PROFESSIONAL REVIEWS³

School Library Journal Review

K-Gr 2-Kilodavis introduces the difficult themes of bullying and being different, based on the experiences of her four-year-old son. The book tells of a boy who "plays dress up in girly dresses" and is laughed at when he wears them to school but has the support of his family. It is tenderly written and simple enough to be understood by young children. Readers learn about the child's experiences, good and bad. At the end, powerful questions are directed to them for thought and discussion: "If you see a Princess Boy..Will you call him a name? .Will you like him for who he is?" DeSimone's illustrations are colorful, bright, and positive. Children may ask why the people depicted have no faces, which may spark discussions about how we are all the same. This is a book about unconditional love, social acceptance, and a strong family. It is also a call for diversity, tolerance, and an end to bullying and judgments. It will be well placed in elementary school counseling offices as well as in school and public libraries.

³ Professional Reviews were retrieved on October 30, 2023 from https://search.owwl.org/Record/408084#unbound_reviews

Horn Book Guide – 2011

If you see a Princess Boy...will you laugh at him?" A boy who likes "pretty things" and wears "girly dresses" stars in this treacly lesson in acceptance. Though addressing gender identity in young children is admirable (and challenging), Kilodavis--whose own son was her inspiration--doesn't prevail over taboo due to her text's oversimplification and didacticism. Pink-heavy illustrations showing featureless characters are off-putting.

APPROPRIATE AGE LEVEL

The publisher's recommended age for *My Princess Boy* by Cheryl Kilodavis is ages 4 Years to 8 Years (Pre School to Third Grade)⁴.

OWWL Library System does not offer a recommended age range or title restrictions. We encourage parents and guardians and their children to discuss their reading habits in the context of their goals to determine if this title is appropriate.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Item Copy Actions

My Princess Boy is available at two member libraries. There are currently no digital copies available through the OverDrive marketplace to purchase.

OWWL Library System will purchase a physical copy to maintain in local collections available to patrons to place on hold. Should an eBook copy become available, we will purchase for the System's online collection.

Concerned Parent Actions

A minor's access to materials is the responsibility of that minor's parents or guardians. According to the American Library Association:

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services." Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not

⁴ Reading Level retrieved from Simon & Schuster, *My Princess Boy*,
<https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/My-Princess-Boy/Cheryl-Kilodavis/9781442429888>

*want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor's access to materials.*⁵

To aid parents and guardians in addressing title access in OWWL Library System's OverDrive collection, the default collection can be changed under account settings.

To accomplish this, log in to an OverDrive account at <https://owwl.overdrive.com/> > click on My Account > Settings > Content Preferences > Audience(s). An account can be limited to All Audiences, Juvenile, Young Adult, General Adult, and Mature Adult.

Physical collections cannot be changed to restrict a minor's access to materials. Instead, please follow the American Library Association's recommendation noted above.

CONCLUSION

Future Reconsideration Requests

This report shall appropriately respond to any challenge or request for reconsideration of *My Princess Boy* by Cheryl Kilodavis until November 8, 2025. At that time, should a formal challenge or request for reconsideration be received by the OWWL Library System, the Executive Director shall once again form a committee to review the title and use this documentation and all other professional material as the foundation of that discussion.

System Policies and Resolutions

For additional information on the selection of System materials, please review the Selection and Reconsideration of Materials Policy and the Resolution on the Freedom to Read by visiting <https://owwl.org/freedomtoread>.

Report Approval

OWWL Library System's Board of Trustees reviewed and approved this report on November 8, 2023.

Approved: November 8, 2023

⁵ Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors>