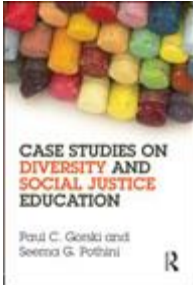


# Case Study 9.4: Two Moms



Written by Paul C. Gorski ([gorski@edchange.org](mailto:gorski@edchange.org)) and Seema Pothini ([sg1515@hotmail.com](mailto:sg1515@hotmail.com)) for their book, *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (Routledge, 2014). Check out the book for this more than 30 additional school- and classroom based case studies on issues like race, class, (dis)ability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.

**Synopsis:** A second grade teacher, noticing that a student who has same-sex parents is being teased, decides to read a book to the class about a child who has two moms. Parents complain to the principal.

## ***Points for Consideration***

- Often, when somebody thinks children of a certain age are not old enough to talk about an issue, whether related to race or sexual orientation or any other identity, they are thinking primarily of children from *privileged* identities. In this case, Denise already is beginning to experience bias from her peers and it is likely that she has witnessed her mothers experiencing bias, as well. As a general rule, we might say that if students are old enough to express or experience bias or injustice, they are old enough to talk about that bias or injustice. These conversations can occur as early as preschool.
- It might not always be possible to completely avoid conflict and controversy if we are fully committed to creating and sustaining a bias-free, equitable, and just classroom environment. This is because doing so requires us to respond to the kinds of situations to which Ms. Ribiero was responding in this case. One measure of a school's commitment to ensuring an equitable learning environment is its persistence to that commitment even in the face of controversy.