

To what extent are LGBTQ+ children's picture books being included in the collections of Ontario's public libraries?

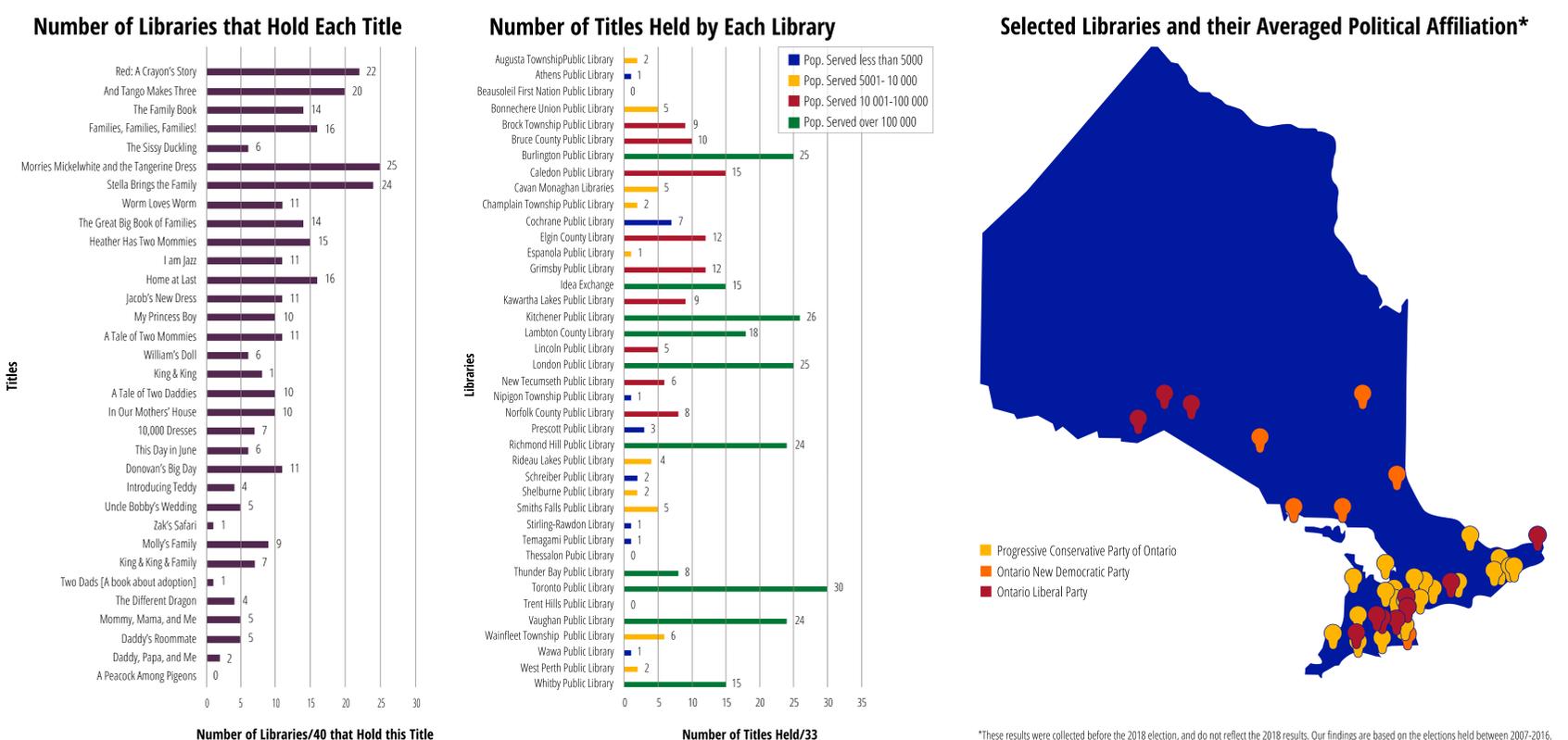
Overview

As the first form of literature children encounter, picture books offer children a window into the world at large; providing them with an avenue to learn about and understand people, and families that are different from their own. Since picture books are foundational to a child's development, we must examine their stories and whom they represent.

Our research identifies 33 of the most frequently recommended picture books with LGBTQ+ representations, and reports on their inclusion in 40 selected Ontario public libraries. Furthermore, we compared the results with contextual factors about each library. By doing this, we hope to encourage libraries to diversify their collections.

Methodology

- 1) The list of 33 titles which form the Rainbow Kids List (RKL) was created by tallying the most frequently recommended titles from 15 professional, award-winning and popular sources.
- 2) 40 Ontario public libraries were selected using a random stratified sample based on the size of the population the library serves.
- 3) All 33 of the titles were searched for in the catalogs of the 40 selected libraries and recorded to form the basis of our results.
- 4) Statistics relating to 5 contextual factors were compiled for each library in order to determine if there were any correlations with the number of titles they held. These include statistics about the library (materials budget, size of print collection, and size of population served) as well as statistics relating to the location of the central branch of the library (median total household income and results of the last 3 provincial elections: 2007, 2011, 2014).



Findings

- There were 153 copies of Red: A Crayon's Story (Hall, 2015) held between the 22 of 40 libraries that held the book, making it the most numerous title.
- Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress (Baldacchino, 2014) was held by 25 of 40 libraries making it the most popularly held title.
- The average number of titles held in each library was 8.67 of 33 titles, or 26.29%.
- Extra small libraries (serving under 5000) had an average of 1.7 titles, small libraries (serving 5001-10,000) had an average of 3.4, medium libraries (serving 10,001-100,000) had an average of 8.6 and large libraries (serving over 100,000) had an average of 21 titles.
- There is a high positive correlation ($r = 0.9$) between the size of the library and the number of titles held.
- There is a high positive correlation ($r = 0.74$) between the size of the library collection and the number of titles held from the RKL.
- There is a high positive correlation ($r = 0.88$) between the amount a library spends on materials and the number of titles held from RKL.