

By **Sandra E. Garcia**

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During the season premiere of the animated series “Arthur” on Monday, Arthur, Francine, Buster and Muffy spend most of their time trying to play matchmaker for their third-grade teacher, Mr. Ratburn.

In the end, Mr. Ratburn has his own plans. He ties the knot with Patrick, a local chocolatier, at a wedding attended by the students.

“Mr. Ratburn is married, I still can’t believe it,” Arthur says.

“Yup, it’s a brand-new world,” Francine responds.

The episode, titled “Mr. Ratburn and the Special Someone,” was the latest moment in daytime television to include a more diverse set of characters as it kicked off the show’s 22nd season. The series, which airs on PBS Kids and debuted in 1996, follows the adventures of Arthur, his classmates and his family.

The 2018-19 report “Where We Are on TV,” released by GLAAD, an organization that tracks representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the media, noted some recent strides. The report found that “8.8% of broadcast scripted series regulars are L.G.B.T.Q. characters,” a record high. Of the 857 series regular characters counted on 111 prime-time scripted shows across a variety of networks, 75 identified as L.G.B.T.Q., an increase from 58 in 2017.

“I think it is really important that L.G.B.T.Q. people are having families in historic numbers and that we are seeing our family in media and reflected back to us, especially our children,” Sarah Kate Ellis, the president of GLAAD, said in an interview on Tuesday. Last year GLAAD added a category for children and family programming to its annual media awards because there was finally enough content to consider, she said.

“You know at a very young age if you are trans and gay or bisexual and lesbian,” Ms. Ellis said. “To be able to see yourself reflected is critical.”

Ms. Ellis said the openness that millennials — many who grew up watching “Arthur” — have about their lives and themselves has contributed to the increase in inclusivity across media platforms.

“I think that they are now in positions of power to create content, and they are reflecting the world as they know it,” Ms. Ellis said. “That is positive, and I think it is going to have a huge impact on the next generation of L.G.B.T.Q. people.”

Some on social media said they were not nearly as surprised about Mr. Ratburn’s same-sex marriage as they were that “Arthur” was still airing new episodes.

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