



# Lesbian & Gay Parenting



*Committee on Lesbian, Gay,  
and Bisexual Concerns*

*Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families*

*Committee on Women  
in Psychology*

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



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The APA Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Office has worked since 1975 to eliminate the stigma of mental illness which has been mistakenly associated with same-sex sexual orientation and to reduce prejudice, discrimination, and violence against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Major functions of the office include support to APA's Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns; liaison with the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues (APA Division 44) and with other APA groups that have an interest in lesbian, gay, and bisexual concerns; policy analysis, development, and advocacy for APA policy; technical assistance, information, and referral to APA members, other professionals, policymakers, the media, and the public; and development and dissemination of publications and other information on lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns in psychology.

The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Office is housed within the Public Interest Directorate, which works to advance psychology as a means of promoting human welfare. Other programs within the Public Interest Directorate work on issues related to AIDS; adolescent health; aging; children, youth and families; disability; ethnic minorities; urban issues; violence; women; and workplace health.



The pink triangle was used in Nazi concentration camps to identify men interned for homosexuality. Some historians believe that lesbians interned by the Nazis would have been identified by a black triangle as "asocial." Many lesbian, gay, and bisexual organizations have adopted the pink triangle as a symbol of the need for continued vigilance toward sexual orientation prejudice, discrimination, and violence.



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## PREFACE

*Lesbian and Gay Parenting* is a joint publication of the American Psychological Association's (APA) Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns (CLGBC); Committee on Children, Youth, and Families (CYF); and Committee on Women in Psychology (CWP). The previous edition, which was titled *Lesbian and Gay Parenting: A Resource for Psychologists* (1995) was the successor to a publication titled *Lesbian Parents and Their Children: A Resource Paper for Psychologists* that was jointly produced by CLGBC and CWP in 1991. The 1991 publication was narrowly focused on providing an orientation to the research literature for psychologists doing child custody evaluations or giving expert testimony in court cases involving lesbian mothers. In addition, the publication was also targeted for lawyers and parties in parental rights cases involving lesbian parents, as the information provided could assist them in being better informed about the potential role of psychological research or psychological witnesses in their cases. The relatively narrow focus of this publication was selected because the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Office received a significant number of requests for resources on the relevant research literature from parents, lawyers, and psychologists involved in parental rights cases.

When CLGBC and CWP decided to revise and update the publication in 1993, they invited CYF to participate in the development of the new edition. The committees broadened the focus of the publication to include the empirical research on gay fathers, as well as lesbian mothers, and the clinical literature relevant to psychological services for lesbian and gay parents, their children, and their families.

When the current edition was first planned in 1999, the committees decided that the focus of the publication should be narrowed again to serve the needs of psychologists, lawyers, and parties in family law cases. The decision to narrow the focus was made because the need for the publication seemed to be primarily in the forensic context.

*Lesbian and Gay Parenting* is divided into three parts. Part I is a summary of research findings on lesbian mothers, gay fathers, and their children. Although comprehensive, the research summary is focused on

those issues that often arise in family law cases involving lesbian mothers or gay fathers. Part II is an annotated bibliography of the literature cited in Part I. Part III provides some additional resources relevant to lesbian and gay parenting in the forensic context: APA amicus briefs, professional association policies, and contact information for relevant organizations. We hope the publication will be useful to clinicians, researchers, students, lawyers, and parents involved in legal and policy issues related to lesbian and gay parenting.

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# LESBIAN AND GAY PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

*Charlotte J. Patterson*

Like families headed by heterosexual parents, lesbian and gay parents and their children are a diverse group (Arnup, 1995; Barrett & Tasker, 2001; Martin, 1998; Morris, Balsam, & Rothblum, 2002). Unlike heterosexual parents and their children, however, lesbian and gay parents and their children are often subject to prejudice because of their sexual orientation that can turn judges, legislators, professionals, and the public against them, sometimes resulting in negative outcomes, such as loss of physical custody, restrictions on visitation, and prohibitions against adoption (ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, 2002; Appell, 2003; Patterson, Fulcher, & Wainright, 2002). Negative attitudes about lesbian and gay parenting may be held in the population at large (King & Black, 1999; McLeod, Crawford, & Zechmeister, 1999) as well as by psychologists (Crawford, McLeod, Zamboni, & Jordan, 1999). As with beliefs about other socially stigmatized groups, the beliefs held generally in society about lesbians and gay men are often not based in personal experience, but are frequently culturally transmitted (Herek, 1995; Gillis, 1998). The purpose of this summary of research findings on lesbian and gay parents and their children is to evaluate widespread beliefs in the light of empirical data and in this way ameliorate negative effects of unwarranted prejudice.

Because many beliefs about lesbian and gay parents and their children are open to empirical testing, psychological research can evaluate their accuracy. Systematic research comparing lesbian and gay adults to heterosexual adults began in the late 1950s, and research comparing children of lesbian and gay parents with those of heterosexual parents is of a more recent vintage. Research on lesbian and gay adults began with Evelyn Hooker's landmark study (1957), resulted in the declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1973 (Gonsiorek, 1991), and continues today (e.g., Cochran, 2001). Case

reports on children of lesbian and gay parents began to appear in the psychiatric literature in the early 1970s (e.g., Osman, 1972; Weeks, Derdeyn, & Langman, 1975) and have continued to appear (e.g., Agbayewa, 1984). Starting with the pioneering work of Martin and Lyon (1972), first-person and fictionalized descriptions of life in lesbian mother families (e.g., Alpert, 1988; Clausen, 1985; Howey & Samuels, 2000; Jullion, 1985; Mager, 1975; Perreault, 1975; Pollock & Vaughn, 1987; Rafkin, 1990; Wells, 1997) and gay father families (e.g., Galluccio, Galluccio, & Groff, 2002; Green, 1999; Morgen, 1995; Savage, 2000) have also become available. Systematic research on the children of lesbian and gay parents began to appear in major professional journals in the late 1970s and has grown into a considerable body of research only in recent years (Allen & Demo, 1995; Patterson, 1992, 2000).

As this summary will show, the results of existing research comparing lesbian and gay parents to heterosexual parents and children of lesbian and gay parents to children of heterosexual parents are quite clear: Common stereotypes are not supported by the data. Without denying the clarity of results to date, it is important also for psychologists and other professionals to be aware that research in this area has presented a variety of methodological challenges. As is true in any area of research, questions have been raised with regard to sampling issues, statistical power, and other technical matters (e.g., Belcastro, Gramlich, Nicholson, Price, & Wilson, 1993; Wardle, 1997). Some areas of research, such as gender development, and some periods of life, such as adolescence, have been described by reviewers as understudied and deserving of greater attention (Perrin and the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001). In what follows, efforts will be made to highlight the extent to which the research literature has responded to such criticisms.

One criticism of this body of research has been that the research lacks external validity because samples studied to date may not be representative of the larger population of lesbian and gay parents (Belcastro et al., 1993). Recent research on lesbian and gay adults has drawn on population-based samples (e.g., Cochran, 2001), and research on the offspring of lesbian and gay parents has begun to employ the same approach (e.g., Golombok, Perry, Burston, Murray, Mooney-Somers, Stevens, & Golding, 2003; Wainright, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Criticisms about nonsystematic sampling have also been addressed by studying samples drawn from known populations, so that response rates can be calculated (e.g., Brewaeys, Ponjaert, van Hall, & Golombok, 1997; Chan, Brooks, Raboy, & Patterson, 1998; Chan, Raboy, & Patterson, 1998). Thus, contemporary research on children of lesbian and gay parents involves a wider array of sampling techniques than did earlier studies.

Research on children of lesbian and gay parents has also been criticized for using poorly matched or no control groups in designs that call for such controls. Particularly notable in this category was the tendency of early studies to compare development among children of a group of divorced lesbian mothers, many of whom were living with lesbian partners, to that among children of a group of divorced heterosexual mothers who were not currently living with heterosexual partners. The relevance of this criticism has been greatly reduced as research has expanded to explore life in a wider array of lesbian mother and gay father families (many of which have never lived through the divorce of a heterosexual couple), and as newer studies begin to include a wider array of control groups. Thus, contemporary research on children of

lesbian and gay parents involves a wider array of research designs (and hence, control groups) than did earlier studies.

Another criticism has been that, although there is considerable diversity within lesbian and gay parenting communities (Barrett & Tasker, 2001; Morris, Balsam, & Rothblum, 2002), research has often focused on narrowly defined samples. Early studies did generally focus on well-educated, middle class families, but more recent research has included participants from a wider array of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., Wainright et al., 2004). Recent studies have been conducted not only in the United States, but also in the United Kingdom, in Belgium, and in the Netherlands (e.g., Bos, van Balen, & van den Boom, 2003, 2004; Brewaeys, Ponjaert, & Van Hall, 1997; Golombok et al., 1997, 2003; Tasker & Golombok, 1997; Vanfraussen, Ponjaert-Kristoffersen, & Brewaeys, 2003). Thus, contemporary research on children of lesbian and gay parents involves a greater diversity of families than did earlier studies.

Other criticisms have been that most studies have been based on relatively small samples, that there have been difficulties with assessment procedures employed in some studies, and that the classification of parents as lesbian, gay, or heterosexual has been problematic. Again, contemporary research has benefited from such criticisms. It is significant that, even taking into account all the questions and/or limitations that may characterize research in this area, none of the published research suggests conclusions different from that which will be summarized below.<sup>1</sup>

This summary consists of four sections. In the first, the results of research on lesbian and gay parents are summarized. In the second section, a summary of

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<sup>1</sup> A study from Australia (Sarantakos, 1996) has been cited as demonstrating deficits among children raised by gay and lesbian parents in Australia compared to children raised by heterosexual couples. The anomalous results reported by this study--which contradict the accumulated body of research findings in this field--are attributable to idiosyncrasies in its sample and methodologies and are therefore not reliable. An expert reading of the Sarantakos article reveals that certain characteristics of its methodology and sample are highly likely to have skewed the results and rendered them an invalid indicator of the well-being of children raised by gay and lesbian parents in at least three respects: (1) the children raised by gay and lesbian parents experienced unusually high levels of extreme social ostracism and overt hostility from other children and parents, which probably accounted for the former's lower levels of interaction and social integration with peers (see pp. 25-26); (2) nearly all indicators of the children's functioning were based on subjective reports by teachers, who, as noted repeatedly by the author, may have been biased (see pp. 24, 26, & 30); and (3) most or all of the children being raised by gay and lesbian parents, but not the children being raised by heterosexual married parents, had experienced parental divorce, which is known to correlate with poor adjustment and academic performance. Indeed, although the differences Sarantakos observed among the children are anomalous in the context of research on parents' sexual orientation, they are highly consistent with findings from studies of the effects of parental divorce on children (see,



results from research comparing children of lesbian and gay parents with those of heterosexual parents is presented. The third section summarizes research on heterogeneity among lesbian and gay parents and their children. The fourth section provides a brief conclusion.

### **Lesbian and Gay Parents**

Three concerns have historically been associated with judicial decision making in custody litigation and public policies governing foster care and adoption: the belief that lesbians and gay men are mentally ill, that lesbians are less maternal than heterosexual women, and that lesbians' and gay men's relationships with sexual partners leave little time for ongoing parent-child interactions (ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, 2002; Falk, 1989, 1994; Patterson et al., 2002; Patterson & Redding, 1996). As material presented in this section will show, research has failed to confirm any of these beliefs (Allen & Burrell, 1996; Patterson, 1994b, 1994c, 1997, 2000; Perrin, 2002).

### *Mental Health of Lesbians and Gay Men*

The psychiatric, psychological, and social work professions do not consider homosexual orientation to be a mental disorder. Many years ago, the American Psychiatric Association removed "homosexuality" from its list of mental disorders, stating that "homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities" (American Psychiatric Association, 1974). In 1975, the American Psychological Association took the same position and urged all mental health professionals to help dispel the stigma of mental illness that had long been associated with homosexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 1975). The National Association of

Social Workers has a similar policy (National Association of Social Workers, 1994).

The decision to remove homosexual orientation from the list of mental disorders reflects extensive research conducted over three decades showing that homosexual orientation is not a psychological maladjustment (Gonsiorek, 1991; Hart, Roback, Tittler, Weitz, Walston, & McKee, 1978; Reiss, 1980). There is no reliable evidence that homosexual orientation per se impairs psychological functioning, although the social and other circumstances in which lesbians and gay men live, including exposure to widespread prejudice and discrimination, often cause acute distress (Cochran, 2001; Freedman, 1971; Gonsiorek, 1991; Hart et al., 1978; Hooker, 1957; Meyer, 2003; Reiss, 1980).

### *Lesbians and Gay Men as Parents*

Beliefs that lesbian and gay adults are not fit parents likewise have no empirical foundation (Anderssen, Amlie, & Ytteroy, 2002; Brewaeys & van Hall, 1997; Parks, 1998; Patterson, 2000; Patterson & Chan, 1996; Perrin, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001; Tasker, 1999; Victor & Fish, 1995). Lesbian and heterosexual women have not been found to differ markedly either in their overall mental health or in their approaches to child rearing (Bos et al., 2004; Kveskin & Cook, 1982; Lyons, 1983; Miller, Jacobsen, & Bigner, 1981; Mucklow & Phelan, 1979; Pagelow, 1980; Parks, 1998; Patterson, 2001; Rand, Graham, & Rawlings, 1982; Siegenthaler & Bigner, 2000; Thompson, McCandless, & Strickland, 1971). Similarly, lesbians' romantic and sexual relationships with other women have not been found to detract from their ability to care for their children (Bos et al., 2004; Chan et al., 1998b; Pagelow, 1980). Lesbian couples who are parenting together have most often been found to divide household and family labor relatively evenly and to report satisfac-

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e.g., Amato, 2001, and Amato & Keith, 1991). *Children Australia* is a regional journal that is not widely known outside Australia. As such, it cannot be considered a source upon which one should rely for understanding the state of scientific knowledge in this field, particularly when the results contradict those that have been repeatedly replicated in studies published in better known scientific journals. In summary, the Sarantakos study does not undermine the consistent pattern of results reported in other empirical studies addressing this topic.

Some nonscientific organizations have attempted to convince courts that there is an actual scientific dispute in this area by citing research performed by Paul Cameron as supporting the existence of deficits in gay and lesbian parents or their children compared to heterosexual parents or their children. In fact, there is no scientific evidence of such deficits. Cameron's research is methodologically suspect. His key findings in this area have not been replicated and are contradicted by the reputable published research. Unlike research that makes a contribution to science, his key findings and conclusions have rarely been cited by subsequent scientific studies published in peer-reviewed journals as informing their scientific inquiry. For a detailed critique of the research project on which Cameron has based many of his published papers, see Herek (1998).

tion with their couple relationships (Bos et al., 2004; Brewaeys et al., 1997; Chan, et al., 1998a; Ciano-Boyce & Shelley-Sireci, 2002; Hand, 1991; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002; Koepke, Hare, & Moran, 1992; Osterweil, 1991; Patterson, 1995a; Sullivan, 1996; Tasker & Golombok, 1998; Vanfraussen, Ponjaert-Kristoffersen, & Brewaeys, 2003). Research on gay fathers likewise suggests that they are likely to divide the work involved in child care relatively evenly and that they are happy with their couple relationships (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002; McPherson, 1993).

The results of some studies suggest that lesbian mothers' and gay fathers' parenting skills may be superior to those of matched heterosexual couples. For instance, Flaks, Fischer, Masterpasqua, and Joseph (1995) reported that lesbian couples' parenting awareness skills were stronger than those of heterosexual couples. This was attributed to greater parenting awareness among lesbian nonbiological mothers than among heterosexual fathers. In one study, Brewaeys and her colleagues (1997) likewise reported more favorable patterns of parent-child interaction among lesbian as compared to heterosexual parents, but in another, they found greater similarities (Vanfraussen, Ponjaert-Kristoffersen, & Brewaeys, 2003). A recent study of 256 lesbian and gay parent families found that, in contrast to patterns characterizing the majority of American parents, very few lesbian and gay parents reported any use of physical punishment (such as spanking) as a disciplinary technique; instead, they were likely to report use of positive techniques such as reasoning (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002). Certainly, research has found no reasons to believe lesbian mothers or gay fathers to be unfit parents (Armesto, 2002; Barret & Robinson, 1990; Bigner & Bozett, 1990; Bigner & Jacobsen, 1989a, 1989b; Bos et al., 2003, 2004; Bozett, 1980, 1989; Patterson, 1997; Patterson & Chan, 1996; Sbordone, 1993; Tasker & Golombok, 1997; Victor & Fish, 1995; Weston, 1991). On the contrary, results of research suggest that lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive home environments for children.

### **Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents**

In addition to judicial concerns about lesbian and

gay parents themselves, courts have voiced three major fears about the influence of lesbian and gay parents on children. The first of these fears is that development of sexual identity will be impaired among children of lesbian and gay parents. For instance, one such concern is that children brought up by lesbian mothers or gay fathers will show disturbances in gender identity and/or in gender role behavior (Falk, 1989, 1994; Hitchens & Kirkpatrick, 1985; Kleber, Howell, & Tibbits-Kleber, 1986; Patterson et al., 2002; Patterson & Redding, 1996). It has also been suggested that children brought up by lesbian mothers or by gay fathers will themselves become lesbian or gay (Patterson & Redding, 1996; Patterson et al., 2002).

A second category of concerns involves aspects of children's personal development other than sexual identity (Falk, 1989, 1994; Patterson & Redding, 1996; Patterson et al., 2002). For example, courts have expressed fears that children in the custody of gay or lesbian parents will be more vulnerable to mental breakdown, will exhibit more adjustment difficulties and behavior problems, and will be less psychologically healthy than other children.

A third category of specific fears expressed by the courts is that children of lesbian and gay parents may experience difficulty in social relationships (Falk, 1989, 1994; Patterson & Redding, 1996; Patterson et al., 2002). For example, judges have repeatedly expressed concern that children living with lesbian mothers or gay fathers may be stigmatized, teased, or otherwise victimized by peers. Another common fear is that children living with gay or lesbian parents may be more likely to be sexually abused by the parent or by the parent's friends or acquaintances. In the following I will address each of these areas of concern.

### ***Sexual Identity***

Three aspects of sexual identity are considered in the research: gender identity, which concerns a person's self-identification as male or female; gender-role behavior, which concerns the extent to which a person's activities, occupations, and the like are regarded by the culture as masculine, feminine, or

both; and sexual orientation, which refers to a person's choice of sexual partners, who may be homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Stein, 1993). Research relevant to each of these three major areas of concern is summarized below.

**Gender Identity.** In studies of children ranging in age from 5 to 14, results of projective testing and related interview procedures have revealed that development of gender identity among children of lesbian mothers follows the expected pattern (Green, 1978; Green, Mandel, Hotvedt, Gray, & Smith, 1986; Kirkpatrick, Smith & Roy, 1981). More direct assessment techniques to assess gender identity have been used by Golombok, Spencer, & Rutter (1983) with the same result: All children in this study reported that they were happy with their gender and that they had no wish to be a member of the opposite sex. There was no evidence in any of the studies of gender identity of any difficulties among children of lesbian mothers. No data have been reported in this area for children of gay fathers.

**Gender-Role Behavior.** A number of studies have reported that gender-role behavior among children of lesbian mothers fell within typical limits for conventional sex roles (Brewaeys et al., 1997; Golombok et al., 1983; Gottman, 1990; Green, 1978; Green et al., 1986; Hoeffler, 1981; Kirkpatrick et al., 1981; Kweskin & Cook, 1982; Patterson, 1994a). For instance, Kirkpatrick and her colleagues (1981) found no differences between children of lesbian versus heterosexual mothers in toy preferences, activities, interests, or occupational choices.

Rees (1979) administered the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) to 24 adolescents, half of whom had divorced lesbian and half of whom had divorced heterosexual mothers. The BSRI yields scores on masculinity and femininity as independent factors and an androgyny score based on the ratio of masculinity to femininity. Children of lesbian and heterosexual mothers did not differ on masculinity or on androgyny, but children of lesbian mothers reported greater psychological femininity than did those of heterosexual mothers. This result would seem to run counter to expectations based on

stereotypes of lesbians as lacking in femininity, both in their own demeanor and in their likely influences on children.

Gender-role behavior of children was also assessed by Green and his colleagues (1986). In interviews with the children, no differences between the 56 children of lesbian and 48 children of heterosexual mothers were found with respect to favorite television programs, favorite television characters, or favorite games or toys. There was some indication in interviews with children themselves that the offspring of lesbian mothers had less sex-typed preferences for activities at school and in their neighborhoods than did children of heterosexual mothers. Consistent with this result, lesbian mothers were also more likely than heterosexual mothers to report that their daughters often participated in rough-and-tumble play or occasionally played with "masculine" toys such as trucks or guns, but they reported no differences in these areas for sons. Lesbian mothers were no more and no less likely than heterosexual mothers to report that their children often played with "feminine" toys such as dolls. In both family types, however, children's sex-role behavior was seen as falling within the expected range.

More recently, Brewaeys and her colleagues (1997) assessed gender-role behavior among 30, 4- to 8-year-old children who had been conceived via donor insemination by lesbian couples, and compared it to that of 30 same-aged children who had been conceived via donor insemination by heterosexual couples, and to that of 30 same-aged children who had been naturally conceived by heterosexual couples. They used the Pre-School Activities Inventory (Golombok & Rust, 1993), a maternal report questionnaire designed to identify "masculine" and "feminine" behavior among boys and girls within unselected samples of schoolchildren. They found no significant differences between children of lesbian and children of heterosexual parents on preferences for gendered toys, games, and activities (Brewaeys et al., 1997).

In summary, the research suggests that children of lesbian mothers develop patterns of gender-role behavior that are much like those of other children.

No data are available regarding gender-role behavior for children of gay fathers.

**Sexual Orientation.** A number of investigators have also studied a third component of sexual identity, sexual orientation (Bailey, Bobrow, Wolfe, & Mickach, 1995; Bozett, 1980, 1987, 1989; Gottman, 1990; Golombok & Tasker, 1996; Green, 1978; Huggins, 1989; Miller, 1979; Paul, 1986; Rees, 1979; Tasker & Golombok, 1997). In all studies, the great majority of offspring of both lesbian mothers and gay fathers described themselves as heterosexual. Taken together, the data do not suggest elevated rates of homosexuality among the offspring of lesbian or gay parents. For instance, Huggins (1989) interviewed 36 adolescents, half of whom had lesbian mothers and half of whom had heterosexual mothers. No children of lesbian mothers identified themselves as lesbian or gay, but one child of a heterosexual mother did; this difference was not statistically significant. In another study, Bailey and his colleagues (1995) studied adult sons of gay fathers and found more than 90% of the sons to be heterosexual.

Golombok and Tasker (1996, 1997) studied 25 young adults reared by divorced lesbian mothers and 21 young adults reared by divorced heterosexual mothers. They reported that offspring of lesbian mothers were no more likely than those of heterosexual mothers to describe themselves as feeling attracted to same-sex sexual partners. If they were attracted in this way, however, young adults with lesbian mothers were more likely to report that they would consider entering into a same-sex sexual relationship, and they were more likely to have actually participated in such a relationship. They were not, however, more likely to identify themselves as non-heterosexual (i.e., as lesbian, gay, or bisexual). These results were based on a small sample, and they must be interpreted with caution. At the same time, the study is the first to follow children of divorced lesbian mothers into adulthood, and it offers a detailed and careful examination of important issues.

#### *Other Aspects of Personal Development*

Studies of other aspects of personal development among children of lesbian and gay parents have

assessed a broad array of characteristics. Among these have been separation-individuation (Steckel, 1985, 1987), psychiatric evaluations (Golombok et al., 1983; Kirkpatrick et al., 1981), behavior problems (Brewaeys et al., 1997; Chan, Raboy et al., 1998; Flaks, et al., 1995; Gartrell, Deck, Rodas, Peyser, & Banks, 2005; Golombok et al., 1983, 1997; Patterson, 1994a; Tasker & Golombok, 1995, 1997; Wainright et al., 2004), personality (Gottman, 1990; Tasker & Golombok, 1995, 1997), self-concept (Golombok, Tasker, & Murray, 1997; Gottman, 1990, Huggins, 1989; Patterson, 1994a; Puryear, 1983; Wainright et al., 2004), locus of control (Puryear, 1983; Rees, 1979), moral judgment (Rees, 1979), school adjustment (Wainright et al., 2004), and intelligence (Green et al., 1986). Research suggests that concerns about difficulties in these areas among children of lesbian mothers are unwarranted (Patterson, 1997, 2000; Parks, 1998; Perrin, 1998, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001; Tasker, 1999). As was the case for sexual identity, studies of these aspects of personal development have revealed no major differences between children of lesbian versus heterosexual mothers. One statistically significant difference in self-concept emerged in Patterson's (1994a) study: Children of lesbian mothers reported greater symptoms of stress but also a greater overall sense of well-being than did children in a comparison group (Patterson, 1994a); but this result has yet to be replicated. Overall, the belief that children of lesbian and gay parents suffer deficits in personal development has no empirical foundation.

#### *Social Relationships*

Studies assessing potential differences between children of lesbian and gay parents, on the one hand, and children of heterosexual parents, on the other, have sometimes included assessments of children's social relationships. The most common focus of attention has been on peer relations, but some information about children's relationships with adults has also been collected. Research findings that address the likelihood of sexual abuse are also summarized in this section.

Research on peer relations among children of lesbian mothers has been reported by Golombok and



her colleagues (1983, 1997), by Green and his colleagues (1978, 1986), and by Patterson (1994a). Reports by both parents and children suggest typical patterns of development of peer relationships. For example, as would be expected, most school-aged children reported same-sex best friends and predominantly same-sex peer groups (Golombok et al., 1983; Green, 1978; Patterson, 1994a). The quality of children's peer relations was described, on average, in positive terms by researchers (Golombok et al., 1983) as well as by mothers and their children (Green et al., 1986; Golombok et al., 1997). Although some children have described encounters with anti-gay remarks from peers (Gartrell et al., 2005), young adult offspring of divorced lesbian mothers did not recall being the targets of any more childhood teasing or victimization than did the offspring of divorced heterosexual mothers (Tasker & Golombok, 1995, 1997). The number and quality of adolescents' and young adults' romantic relationships has also been found to be unrelated to maternal sexual orientation (Tasker & Golombok, 1997; Wainright et al., 2004). No data on the children of gay fathers have been reported in this area.

Studies of the relationships with adults among the children of lesbian and gay parents have also resulted in a generally positive picture (Brewaeys et al., 1997; Golombok et al., 1983; Harris & Turner, 1985/86; Kirkpatrick et al., 1981; Wainright et al., 2004). For example, adolescent relationships with their parents have been described as equally warm and caring, regardless of whether parents have same- or opposite-sex partners (Wainright et al., 2004). Golombok and her colleagues (1983) found that children of divorced lesbian mothers were more likely to have had recent contact with their fathers than were children of divorced heterosexual mothers. Another study, however, found no differences in this regard (Kirkpatrick et al., 1981). Harris and Turner (1985/86) studied the children of gay fathers, as well as those of lesbian mothers, and reported that parent-child relationships were described in positive terms. One significant difference was that heterosexual parents were more likely than lesbian and gay parents to say that their children's visits with the other parent presented problems for them

(Harris & Turner, 1985/86). Another significant difference was that young adult offspring of divorced lesbian mothers described themselves as communicating more openly with their mothers and with their mothers' current partners than did adult children of divorced heterosexual parents (Tasker & Golombok, 1997).

Research has also focused on children's contacts with members of the extended family, especially grandparents. Parents are often facilitators and gatekeepers of contact between generations in families. Because grandparents are generally seen as supportive of their grandchildren, any strains in parents' relationships with grandparents might have adverse effects on the frequency of children's contacts with grandparents, and hence also have a negative impact on grandchildren's development. Patterson and her colleagues have evaluated these possibilities in two separate studies (Fulcher, Chan, Raboy, & Patterson, 2002; Patterson et al., 1998). Their findings revealed that most children of lesbian mothers were described as being in regular contact with grandparents (Patterson et al., 1998). In a recent study based on a systematic sampling frame in which lesbian and heterosexual parent families were well-matched on demographic characteristics, there were no differences in the frequency of contact with grandparents as a function of parental sexual orientation (Fulcher et al., 2002). Gartrell and her colleagues (2000) have also reported that grandparents were very likely to acknowledge the children of lesbian daughters as grandchildren. Thus, available evidence suggests that, contrary to popular concerns, intergenerational relationships in lesbian mother families are satisfactory.

Children's contacts with adult friends of their lesbian mothers have also been assessed (Fulcher et al., 2002; Golombok et al., 1983; Patterson et al., 1998). All of the children were described as having contact with adult friends of their mothers, and most lesbian mothers reported that their adult friends were a mixture of homosexual and heterosexual individuals. Children of lesbian mothers were no less likely than those of heterosexual mothers to be in contact with adult men who were friends of their mothers (Fulcher et al., 2002).

Concerns that children of lesbian or gay parents are more likely than children of heterosexual parents to be sexually abused have also been addressed. Results of work in this area reveal that the great majority of adults who perpetrate sexual abuse are male; sexual abuse of children by adult women is extremely rare (Finkelhor & Russell, 1984; Jones & McFarlane, 1980; Sarafino, 1979). Moreover, the overwhelming majority of child sexual abuse cases involve an adult male abusing a young female (Jenny, Roesler, & Poyer, 1994; Jones & McFarlane, 1980). Available evidence reveals that gay men are no more likely than heterosexual men to perpetrate child sexual abuse (Groth & Birnbaum, 1978; Jenny et al., 1994; Sarafino, 1979). There are few published reports relevant to the issue of sexual abuse of children living in custody of lesbian or gay parents. A recent study did, however, find that none of the lesbian mothers participating in a longitudinal study had abused their children (Gartrell et al., 2005). Fears that children in custody of lesbian or gay parents might be at heightened risk for sexual abuse are without basis in the research literature.

### *Summary*

Results of research to date suggest that children of lesbian and gay parents have positive relationships with peers and that their relationships with adults of both sexes are also satisfactory. The picture of lesbian mothers' children that emerges is one of general engagement in social life with peers, with fathers, with grandparents, and with mothers' adult friends—both male and female, both heterosexual and homosexual. Fears about children of lesbians and gay men being sexually abused by adults, ostracized by peers, or isolated in single-sex lesbian or gay communities have received no support from the results of existing research.

### **Diversity Among Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers, and Their Children**

Despite the tremendous diversity evident within lesbian and gay communities, research on differences among lesbian and gay families with children is sparse. One important kind of heterogeneity involves the circumstances of children's birth or

adoption. Some men and women have had children in the context of a heterosexual relationship that split up after one or both parents assumed lesbian or gay identities. Much of the existing research on lesbian mothers, gay fathers, and their children was initiated to address concerns that arose for such families in the context of child custody disputes, and was apparently designed at least in part to examine the veracity of common stereotypes that have been voiced in legal proceedings. A growing number of men and women have also had children after assuming lesbian or gay identities. Recently, research has begun to address issues relevant to families of this type (Brewaeys et al., 1997; Chan et al., 1998a, 1998b; Flaks et al., 1995; Gartrell et al., 1996, 1999, 2000; Golombok et al., 1997; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002; McCandlish, 1987; Parks, 1998; Patterson, 1992, 1994a, 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2001; Patterson et al., 1998; Steckel, 1987; Tasker, 1999). Parents and children in these two kinds of families are likely to have experiences that differ in many respects (Wright, 1998).

In this section, research findings are described on the impact of parental psychological and relationship status and on the influence of other stresses and supports. One area of diversity among lesbian and gay parented families concerns whether or not the custodial parent is involved in a couple relationship, and if so, what implications this relationship may have for children. Pagelow (1980), Kirkpatrick et al. (1981), and Golombok et al. (1983) all reported that divorced lesbian mothers were more likely than divorced heterosexual mothers to be living with a romantic partner. However, none of these investigators examined associations between this variable and children's adjustment or development. In studies that have compared adjustment of mothers and children in single- versus two-parent lesbian parent families (e.g., Brewaeys et al., 1997; Chan et al., 1998b), no clear differences have emerged.

Huggins (1989) reported that self-esteem among daughters of lesbian mothers whose lesbian partners lived with them was higher than that among daughters of lesbian mothers who did not live with a part-

ner. Because of the small sample size and the absence of statistical tests, this finding should be seen as suggestive rather than conclusive. Kirkpatrick has also stated her impression that "contrary to the fears expressed in court, children in households that included the mother's lesbian lover had a richer, more open and stable family life" than did those in single-parent lesbian mother households (Kirkpatrick, 1987, p. 204). On the other hand, self-concept did not vary as a function of family type in another study (Patterson, 1994a), though the failure to find differences in this case may have been due to lack of statistical power, as the number of single-parent families in this sample was small.

Issues related to division of family and household labor have also been studied. In families headed by lesbian couples, Patterson (1995a) found that biological and nonbiological mothers did not differ in their reported involvement in household and family decision-making tasks, but biological mothers reported spending more time in child care, and nonbiological mothers reported spending more time in paid employment. In families where mothers reported sharing child care duties relatively evenly, parents were more satisfied and children were better adjusted. Thus, equal sharing of child care duties was associated with more advantageous outcomes both for parents and for children in this study. In more recent studies, however, differences between biological and nonbiological mothers have not always been significant, and the associations between parental division of labor and child adjustment have not always been replicated (see, for example, Chan et al., 1998a; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002).

Another aspect of diversity among lesbian and gay parented families relates to the psychological status and well-being of the parent. Research on parent-child relations in heterosexual parent families has consistently revealed that children's adjustment is often related to indices of maternal mental health. Thus, one might expect factors that enhance mental health among lesbian mothers or gay fathers also to benefit their children. Lott-Whitehead and Tully (1993) reported considerable variability in the amounts of stress described by lesbian mothers, but

did not describe sources of stress nor their relations to child adjustment. Rand, Graham, and Rawlings (1982) found that lesbian mothers' sense of psychological well-being was associated with their degree of openness about their lesbian identity with employers, ex-husbands, and children. Mothers who felt more able to disclose their lesbian identity were more likely to express a positive sense of well-being. Unfortunately, no information about the relations of these findings to adjustment among children of these women was reported.

More recently, Patterson (2001) reported that maternal mental health was strongly associated with adjustment among young children born to, or adopted early in life, by lesbian mothers. In general, mothers who reported few psychological symptoms also described their children as better adjusted. The mothers in this sample reported being relatively open about their lesbian identities, and most were in good mental health. The sample was thus skewed toward the healthy end of the distribution. In light of the moderate sample size (66 mothers) and restricted range, it is especially noteworthy that associations between maternal mental health and children's adjustment emerged so clearly.

Like other children and youth, those with lesbian mothers who enjoy warm and caring family relationships are likely to fare better. Chan and his colleagues (1998b) reported that children had fewer behavior problems when parents were experiencing less stress, having fewer interparental conflicts, and feeling greater love for one another. This was true both for children of lesbian and for those of heterosexual parents in their sample. In a similar vein, Wainright and her colleagues (2004) reported that, when parents rated the quality of their relationships with adolescents higher, youth were less likely to report depressive symptoms, and were also less likely to have trouble at school; again, this was true both of adolescents with same-sex and of those with opposite-sex parents.

Another area of great diversity among families with a lesbian or gay parent concerns the degree to which a parent's lesbian or gay identity is accepted by other significant people in a child's life. Huggins (1989)

found a tendency for children whose fathers were rejecting of maternal lesbian identities to report lower self-esteem than those whose fathers were neutral or positive. Because of the small sample size and absence of significance tests, this finding should be regarded as suggestive rather than definitive. However, Huggins' (1989) finding does raise questions about the extent to which reactions of important adults in a child's environment can influence responses to discovery of a parent's lesbian or gay identity.

Gershon, Tschann, & Jemerin (1999) studied the relations among perception of stigma, self-esteem, and coping skills among adolescent offspring of lesbian mothers. They conducted interviews with 76 adolescents, aged 11–18 years, and examined the impact of societal factors on self-esteem. The participants had either been born to women who identified as lesbians ( $n = 25$ ) or had been born in the context of their mother's earlier heterosexual marriage ( $n = 51$ ). Gershon and her colleagues found that adolescents who perceived more stigmas related to having a lesbian mother had lower self-esteem in five of seven areas, including social acceptance, self-worth, behavioral conduct, physical appearance, and close friendship. They hypothesized that the presence of various types of coping skills would moderate this relationship between perceived stigma and self-esteem. However, their results showed that only good decision making had a moderating effect: In the face of high perceived stigma, adolescents possessing better decision-making skills had higher self-esteem in the area of behavioral conduct.

In a study of children born to lesbian mothers, Gartrell and her colleagues (2005) reported that 10-year-olds who encountered anti-gay sentiments among their peers were likely to report having felt angry, upset, or sad about these experiences. The children who reported such experiences were somewhat more likely to be described by their mothers as having behavior problems (Gartrell et al., 2005). This latter finding suggests the possibility that children of lesbian and gay parents may fare better in supportive environments. In view of the small effect size and

absence of data from sources outside the family, however, this result should probably be viewed as suggestive rather than definitive at this time.

Effects of the age at which children learn of parental homosexuality have also been a topic of study. Paul (1986) reported that offspring who were told of parental lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity either in childhood or in late adolescence found the news easier to cope with than those who first learned of it during early to middle adolescence. Huggins (1989) also reported that those who learned of maternal lesbianism in childhood had higher self-esteem than did those who were not informed of it until they were adolescents. Because young adolescents are often preoccupied with their own emerging sexuality, it is widely agreed that early adolescence is a particularly difficult time for youth to learn that a mother is lesbian or a father is gay (Bozett, 1980; Pennington, 1987; Schulenberg, 1985).

Some investigators have also raised questions about the potential role of peer support in helping children to cope with issues raised by having a lesbian or gay parent. Lewis (1980) was the first to suggest that children's silence on the topic of parental sexual orientation with peers and siblings might add to their feelings of isolation from other children. All of the 11 adolescents studied by O'Connell (1993) reported exercising selectivity about when they disclosed information about their mothers' lesbian identities. Paul (1986) found that 29% of his young adult respondents had never known anyone else with a lesbian, gay, or bisexual parent, suggesting that feelings of isolation are very real for some young people. Barrett and Tasker (2001) reported that most of the adolescents with gay fathers in their study were not open with heterosexual friends about their fathers' sexual orientation. On the other hand, Gartrell and her colleagues (2005) reported that most of the 10-year-olds with lesbian mothers whom they interviewed were open with peers about their families. It is possible that, over the last several years, and in some environments, it has become easier for children to feel comfortable disclosing that they have nonheterosexual parents. Lewis (1980) suggested that children would benefit from support



groups consisting of children of lesbian or gay parents, and young people interviewed by O'Connell (1993) agreed. Such groups exist, but systematic evaluations of them have not been reported.

In summary, research on diversity among families with lesbian and gay parents and on the potential effects of such diversity on children is still sparse (Martin, 1993, 1998; Patterson, 1995b, 2000, 2001, 2004; Perrin, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001; Tasker, 1999). Data on children of parents who identify as bisexual are still not available, and information about children of non-White lesbian or gay parents is hard to find (but see Wainright et al., 2004, for a racially diverse sample). Existing data on children of lesbian mothers, however, suggest that children fare better when mothers are in good psychological health and living happily with a lesbian partner with whom they share child care. Children may find it easier to deal with issues raised by having lesbian and/or gay parents if they learn of parental sexual orientation during childhood rather than during the early years of adolescence. Existing data also suggest the value of a supportive milieu, in which parental sexual orientation is accepted by other significant adults and in which children have contact with peers in similar circumstances. However, the existing data are still limited, and any conclusions must be seen as tentative. It is clear that existing research provides no basis for believing that children's best interests are served by family conflict or secrecy about a parent's lesbian or gay identity, or by requirements that a lesbian or gay parent maintain a household separate from that of a same-sex partner.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, there is no evidence to suggest that lesbian women or gay men are unfit to be parents or that psychosocial development among children of lesbian women or gay men is compromised relative to that among offspring of heterosexual parents. Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents. Indeed, the evidence to date suggests that home environments provided by lesbian and gay parents are as

likely as those provided by heterosexual parents to support and enable children's psychosocial growth.

It should be acknowledged that research on lesbian and gay parents and their children, though no longer new, is still limited in extent. Although studies of gay fathers and their children have been conducted (Patterson, 2004), less is known about children of gay fathers than about children of lesbian mothers. Although studies of adolescent and young adult offspring of lesbian and gay parents are available (e.g., Gershon et al., 1999; Tasker & Golombok, 1997; Wainright et al., 2004), relatively few studies have focused on the offspring of lesbian or gay parents during adolescence or adulthood. Although more diverse samples have been included in recent studies (e.g., Golombok et al., 2003; Wainright et al., 2004), many sources of heterogeneity have yet to be systematically investigated. Although two longitudinal studies have been reported (Gartrell et al., 1996, 1999, 2000; Tasker & Golombok, 1997), longitudinal studies that follow lesbian and gay parent families over time are still needed. Thus, although a considerable amount of information is available, additional research would further our understanding of lesbian and gay parents and their children.

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## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The annotated bibliography includes all the publications cited in the research summary. The annotations are mostly published abstracts reprinted with permission of PsychINFO, ERIC, the publishers, or the authors. A few of the annotations are original and are reprinted with permission from the previous edition of this publication.

To increase the usefulness of the annotated bibliography, we have divided the entries into seven main sections:

- Empirical studies specifically related to lesbian and gay parents and their children,
- Empirical studies generally related to the fitness of lesbians and gay men as parents,
- Reviews of empirical studies specifically related to lesbian and gay parents and their children,
- Reviews of empirical studies generally related to the fitness of lesbians and gay men as parents,
- Legal reviews,
- Case studies and popular works, and
- Theoretical and conceptual issues.

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### **Empirical Studies Specifically Related to Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children**

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**Bailey, J. M., Bobrow, D., Wolfe, M., & Mikach, S. (1995).** *Sexual orientation of adult sons of gay fathers. *Developmental Psychology, 31*, 124-129.*

The sexual development of children of gay and lesbian parents is interesting for both scientific and social reasons. The present study is the largest to date to focus on the sexual orientation of adult sons of gay men. From advertisements in gay publications, 55 gay or bisexual men were recruited who reported on 82 sons at least 17 years of age. More than 90% of sons whose sexual orientations could be rated were heterosexual. Furthermore, gay and heterosexual sons did not differ on potentially relevant variables such as the length of time they had lived with their fathers. Results suggest that any environmental influence of gay fathers on their sons' sexual orientation is not large. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Barrett, H., & Tasker, F. (2001).** *Growing up with a gay parent: Views of 101 gay fathers on their sons' and daughters' experiences. *Educational and Child Psychology, 18*, 62-77.*

Within the context of a review of the literature on gay male parents and their children, preliminary findings are reported from a postal survey of gay parents recruited through advertisements for volunteers. One hundred one gay and bisexual parents (aged 25-75 yrs.) located in the United Kingdom and Eire provided information about their routes to parenting, partners' involvement with parenting, successes in meeting common parenting challenges, and their eldest

sons' and daughters' responses to growing up with a gay parent. Results appear to confirm previous findings concerning the diversity of parenting circumstances of gay and bisexual men. Men with cohabiting male partners reported themselves as successfully meeting a variety of parenting challenges. While older children were more likely to know of their father's sexual identity, few gender differences were reported in response to this knowledge. Issues for further exploration are identified. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Bigner, J. J., & Jacobsen, R. B. (1989a). The value of children to gay and heterosexual fathers. In F. W. Bozett (Ed.), *Homosexuality and the family* (pp. 163-172). New York: Harrington Park Press.**

Administered a value of children scale to 33 heterosexual fathers (aged 26-55 yrs.) and 33 matched homosexual fathers. Significant differences emerged only on the tradition-continuity-security and social status subscales. Homosexual subjects reported significant reasons motivating them to become parents. Their marriage and family orientation reflected a traditional attitude toward family life and served to protect against societal rejection. While some subjects truly desired children and valued the role children play in their lives, some homosexual subjects had children mainly to attain some type of social status. All subjects tended to value children negatively. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Bigner, J. J., & Jacobsen, R. B. (1989b). Parenting behaviors of homosexual and heterosexual fathers. In F. W. Bozett (Ed.), *Homosexuality and the family* (pp. 173-186). New York: Harrington Park Press.**

Compared the responses of 33 homosexual (HMS) fathers with those of 33 heterosexual (HTS) fathers on the Iowa Parent Behavior Inventory. HMS subjects did not differ significantly from HTS subjects in their reported degree of involvement or in intimacy

level with children. HMS subjects tended to be more strict and more responsive to children's needs and provided reasons for appropriate behavior to children more consistently than HTS subjects. Possible explanations for these similarities and differences in parenting styles are explored. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Bos, H. M. W., van Balen, F., & van den Boom, D. C. (2003). Planned lesbian families: Their desire and motivation to have children. *Human Reproduction*, 10, 2216-2224.**

Abstract can be found at [http://humrep.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/18/10/2216?max-toshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=1&author1=bos&title=planned+lesbian+families&andorexacttitle=and&andorexacttitleabs=and&andorexactfulltext=and&searchid=1122405216620\\_2712&stored\\_search=&FIRSTINDEX=0&sort-spec=relevance&journalcode=humrep](http://humrep.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/18/10/2216?max-toshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=1&author1=bos&title=planned+lesbian+families&andorexacttitle=and&andorexacttitleabs=and&andorexactfulltext=and&searchid=1122405216620_2712&stored_search=&FIRSTINDEX=0&sort-spec=relevance&journalcode=humrep) (Copyright © 2003 by the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology. All rights reserved.)

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**Bos, H. M. W., van Balen, F., & van den Boom, D. C. (2004). Experience of parenthood, couple relationship, social support, and child-rearing goals in planned lesbian mother families. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45, 755-764.**

The phenomenon of planned lesbian families is relatively new. The overall aim of this research was to examine whether planned lesbian mother families differ from heterosexual families on factors that are assumed to influence the parent-child relationship, such as experience of parenthood, child-rearing goals, couple relationship, and social support. One hundred lesbian two-mother families were compared with 100 heterosexual families having naturally conceived children. A variety of measures were used to collect the data, including questionnaires and a diary of activities kept by the parents. Lesbian parents are no less competent or more burdened than heterosexual parents. Both lesbian and heterosexual parents consider it



important to develop qualities of independence in their children. However, “conformity” as a child-rearing goal is less important to lesbian mothers. Furthermore, lesbian social mothers feel more often than fathers in heterosexual families that they must justify the quality of their parenthood. There are few differences between lesbian couples and heterosexual couples, except that lesbian mothers appear less attuned to traditional child-rearing goals and lesbian social mothers appear more to defend their position as mother. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Bozett, F. W. (1980). Gay fathers: How and why they disclose their homosexuality to their children. *Family Relations*, 29, 173-179.**

Data collected by in-depth interviews reveal that many gay fathers disclose their homosexuality to their children. All but one subject reported that their children accepted them as homosexuals. Often the disclosure had the effect of deepening the father–child relationship. Gay fathers tend to be discreet regarding the overt expression of their homo-

sexuality in order to protect their children from other people's hostility. Some gay fathers do not disclose their homosexuality to their children. Nondisclosure may cause the father considerable stress, depending upon the intimacy of the father–child relationship and the centrality of the father identity to the man. (Reprinted with permission of National Council on Family Relations. Copyright © 1980. All rights reserved.)

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**Brewaey, A., Ponjaert, I., Van Hall, E. V., & Golombok, S. (1997). Donor insemination: Child development and family functioning in lesbian mother families. *Human Reproduction*, 12, 1349-1359.**

Abstract can be found at:

[http://humrep.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/12/6/1349?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&author1=brewaey&andorexact-fulltext=and&searchid=1124897164877\\_2266&stored\\_search=&FIRSTINDEX=0&sortspec=relevance&volume=12&resourcetype=1&journalcode=humrep](http://humrep.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/12/6/1349?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&author1=brewaey&andorexact-fulltext=and&searchid=1124897164877_2266&stored_search=&FIRSTINDEX=0&sortspec=relevance&volume=12&resourcetype=1&journalcode=humrep). (Copyright © 1997 by European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology. All rights reserved.)

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**Chan, R. W., Brooks, R. C., Raboy, B., & Patterson, C. J. (1998). Division of labor among lesbian and heterosexual parents: Associations with children's adjustment. *Journal of Family Psychology, 12*, 402-419.**

This study compared lesbian and heterosexual parents' division of household labor, satisfaction with division of labor, satisfaction with couple relationships, and associations of these variables with psychological adjustment of children. Participating lesbian (n = 30) and heterosexual (n = 16) couples all became parents by using anonymous donor insemination and had at least one child of elementary-school age. Although both lesbian and heterosexual couples reported relatively equal divisions of paid employment and of household and decision-making tasks, lesbian biological and nonbiological mothers shared child-care tasks more equally than did heterosexual parents. Among lesbian nonbiological mothers, those more satisfied with the division of family decisions in the home were also more satisfied with their relationships and had children who exhibited fewer externalizing behavior problems. The effect of division of labor on children's adjustment was mediated by parents' relationship satisfaction. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Chan, R. W., Raboy, B., & Patterson, C. J. (1998b). Psychosocial adjustment among children conceived via donor insemination by lesbian and heterosexual mothers. *Child Development, 69*, 443-457.**

Examined the relationships among family structure (e.g., number of parents, parental sexual orientation), family process (e.g., parents' relationship satisfaction, interparental conflict), and the psychological adjustment of children who had been conceived via donor insemination. The 80 participating families, all of whom had conceived children using the resources of a single sperm bank, included 55 families headed by lesbian and 25 families headed by het-

erosexual parents. Fifty families were headed by couples and 30 by single parents. Participating children averaged 7 years of age. Results show that children were developing in a normal fashion and that their adjustment was unrelated to structural variables, such as parental sexual orientation or the number of parents in the household. These results held true for teacher reports as well as for parent reports. Variables associated with family interactions and processes were, however, significantly related to indices of children's adjustment. Parents who were experiencing higher levels of parenting stress, higher levels of interparental conflict, and lower levels of love for each other had children who exhibited more behavior problems. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Ciano-Boyce, C., & Shelley-Sireci, L. (2002). Who is Mommy tonight? Lesbian parenting issues. *Journal of Homosexuality, 43*, 1-13.**

Explored how 18 lesbian adoptive parents, 49 lesbian parents who formed their families biologically, and 44 heterosexual adoptive parents experience and perceive their parenting role, how they respond when their children seek them or their partner for particular nurturing, and how the parents negotiate the cultural expectation of a primary caregiver. Lesbian couples were more equal in their division of child care than heterosexual parents, and lesbian adoptive parents were the most egalitarian. In all types of dual-parent families, parents were sought by their child for different activities. In heterosexual adoptive and lesbian biological families, the child's parental preference was rarely a source of conflict between partners. Lesbian adoptive parents were more likely to report that this preference caused occasional conflict. Reasons for this conflict are discussed in light of societal expectations of women and the role of mother. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2003 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)



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Crawford, I., McLeod, A., Zamboni, B. D., & Jordan, M. B. (1999). Psychologists' attitudes toward gay and lesbian parenting. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 30*, 394-401.

How does the average practicing psychologist view a gay or lesbian couple wishing to adopt a child? Psychologists (N = 388) from across the United States read and rated one of six vignettes describing a couple interested in adopting a 5-year-old child. The vignettes were identical except that the couples' sexual orientation was depicted as gay male, lesbian, or heterosexual, and the child was either a girl or boy. Results indicated that participants who rated the gay male and lesbian couples with a female child were less likely to recommend custody for these couples than participants who rated the heterosexual couples. Before psychologists provide mental health services to gay and lesbian people and their children, they should complete formal, systematic training on sexual diversity. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Flaks, D., Ficher, I., Masterpasqua, F., & Joseph, G. (1995). Lesbians choosing motherhood: A comparative study of lesbian and heterosexual parents and their children. *Developmental Psychology, 31*, 104-114.

Compared 15 lesbian couples and the 3- to 9-year-old children born to them through donor insemination with 15 matched, heterosexual-parent families. A variety of assessment measures were used to evaluate the children's cognitive functioning and behavioral adjustment as well as the parents' relationship quality and parenting skills. Results revealed no significant differences between the two groups of children, who also compared favorably with the standardization samples for the instruments used. In addition, no significant differences were found between dyadic adjustment of lesbian and heterosexual couples. Only in the area of parenting did the two groups of couples differ: Lesbian couples exhibited more parenting awareness skills than did heterosexual couples. The implications of these findings are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Fulcher, M., Chan, R. W., Raboy, B., & Patterson, C. J. (2002). Contact with grandparents among children conceived via donor insemination by lesbian and heterosexual mothers. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 2*, 61-76.

This study compared the networks of extended family and friendship relationships of children conceived via donor insemination with lesbian versus heterosexual parents. Eighty families participated; 55 of the families were headed by lesbian parents and 25 were headed by heterosexual parents. Parents reported their children's contact with grandparents and other important adults. Most children had regular contact with grandparents, other relatives, and adult nonrelatives outside their immediate households, and there were no differences in this regard as a function of parental sexual orientation. Both children of lesbian and heterosexual parents had more frequent contact with the parents of their biological mother than with the parents of their father or other mother. Contrary to negative stereotypes, children of lesbian mothers were described as having regular contact with grandparents. Regardless of parental sexual orientation, children were described as being in more frequent contact with grandparents to whom they were biologically linked. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Gartrell, N., Banks, A., Reed, N., Hamilton, J., Rodas, C., & Deck, A. (2000). The National Lesbian Family Study: 3. Interviews with mothers of five-year-olds. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 70*(4), 542-548.

This third report from a longitudinal study of lesbian families presents data obtained from interviews with mothers (aged 29-47 yrs.) of 5-year-old children conceived by donor insemination. Results indicate that 87% of the children related well to peers, 18% had experienced homophobia from peers or teachers, and 63% had grandparents who frankly acknowledged their grandchild's lesbian family. Of the original couples, 31% had divorced. Of the remainder, 68% felt that their child was equally

bonded to both mothers. Concerns of lesbian families are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Gartrell, N., Banks, A., Hamilton, J., Reed, N., Bishop, H., & Rodas, C. (1999). The National Lesbian Family Study: 2. Interviews with mothers of toddlers. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 69(3), 362-369.**

As part of a longitudinal study of lesbian families in which the children were conceived by donor insemination, interviews were conducted with 156 mothers and co-mothers (aged 26-51 yrs.). Topics covered in the interviews included health concerns, parenting, family structure, relationships, time management, and discrimination. Results yielded the following data: Most couples shared parenting equally, the majority felt closer to their family of origin, adoptive co-mothers felt greater legitimacy as parents, biology and nurture received the same ratings for mother-child bonding, and political and legal action had increased among many participants. The impact of these findings and that of homophobia on lesbian family life are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Gartrell, N., Deck, A., Rodas, C., Peyser, H., & Banks, A. (2005). The National Lesbian Family Study: 4. Interviews with the 10-year-old children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 75(4) 518-524.**

This fourth report from a longitudinal study of U.S. lesbian families presents data from 78 families in which the children were conceived by donor insemination. Results indicate that the prevalence of physical and sexual abuse in these children was lower than national norms. In social and psychological development, the children were comparable to children raised in heterosexual families. Children of unknown donors were indistinguishable from those with known donors in psychological adjustment. Fifty-seven percent of the children were completely out to

their peers, and 43% had experienced homophobia. The children demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of diversity and tolerance. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2005 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Gartrell, N., Hamilton, J., Banks, A., Mosbacher, D., Reed, N., Sparks, C. H., & Bishop, H. (1996). The National Lesbian Family Study: 1. Interviews with prospective mothers. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 66(2), 272-281.**

Provides the initial interview data from a longitudinal, 25-year study on demographic characteristics, parental relationships, social supports, pregnancy motivations and preferences, stigmatization concerns, and coping strategies of 84 lesbian families (aged 23-49 yrs.) in which the children were conceived by donor insemination. Results show subjects were predominately White, college educated, middle or upper-middle class, and Jewish or Christian. Subjects are strongly lesbian-identified, have close relationships with friends and extended families, have established flexible work schedules for child rearing, are well educated about the potential difficulties of raising a child in a lesbian household, and have access to appropriate support groups. Results also show that the prospective children are highly desired and thoughtfully conceived. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Gershon, T. D., Tschann, J. M., & Jemerin, J. M. (1999). Stigmatization, self-esteem, and coping among the adolescent children of lesbian mothers. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 24, 437-445.**

This study examined the relationship between perceived stigma and self-esteem (SE) and the potentially moderating role of general coping skills and level of disclosure about the adolescents' mothers' sexual orientation in a sample of 76 adolescents (aged 11-18 yrs.) with lesbian mothers. Results showed that subjects who perceived more stigma had lower SE in five of seven SE areas (social acceptance, self-worth, behavioral conduct, physical

appearance, and close friendships), compared to those who perceived less stigma. In addition, coping skills moderated the effect of stigma on SE in three SE areas (self-worth, physical appearance, and behavioral conduct). However, only one subtype of coping skills (decision-making coping) was found to moderate the relationship of perceived stigma and SE in such a way that adolescents using more decision-making coping had higher SE in the face of high-perceived stigma. For social support coping, in the face of high-perceived stigma, subjects with more effective coping skills had lower SE. In the face of high-perceived stigma, subjects who disclosed more about their mother's sexual orientation had higher SE in the subscale of close friendships than those who disclosed less. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Golombok, S., & Tasker, F. (1996). Do parents influence the sexual orientation of their children? Findings from a longitudinal study of lesbian families. *Developmental Psychology*, 32, 3-11.**

Findings are presented of a longitudinal study of the sexual orientation of adults who had been raised as children in lesbian families. Twenty-five children of lesbian mothers and a control group of 21 children of heterosexual single mothers were first seen at age 9.5 years on average, and again at age 23.5 years on average. Standardized interviews were used to obtain data on sexual orientation from the young adults in the follow-up study and on family characteristics and children's gender role behavior from the mothers and their children in the initial study. Although those from lesbian families were more likely to explore same-sex relationships, particularly if their childhood family environment was characterized by an openness and acceptance of lesbian and gay relationships, the large majority of children who grew up in lesbian families identified as heterosexual. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Golombok, S., Perry, B., Burston, A., Murray, C., Mooney-Somers, J., Stevens, M., & Golding, J. (2003). Children with lesbian parents: A community study. *Developmental Psychology*, 39, 20-33.**

Existing research on children with lesbian parents is limited by reliance on volunteer or convenience samples. The present study examined the quality of parent-child relationships and the socioemotional and gender development of a community sample of 7-year-old children with lesbian parents. Families were recruited through the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, a geographic population study of 14,000 mothers and their children. Thirty-nine lesbian-mother families, 74 two-parent heterosexual families, and 60 families headed by single heterosexual mothers were compared on standardized interview and questionnaire measures administered to mothers, co-mothers/fathers, children, and teachers. Findings are in line with those of earlier investigations showing positive mother-child relationships and well-adjusted children. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Golombok, S., & Rust, J. (1993). The Pre-School Activities Inventory: A standardized assessment of gender role in children. *Psychological Assessment*, 5(2), 131-136.**

The Pre-School Activities Inventory (PSAI) is a new psychometric scale for the assessment of gender role behavior in young children. Its design and test specification are reported, and the piloting and item analysis are described. Evidence of reliability is given, and several validation studies are reported, as are data on age standardization and norming. Some applications of the PSAI are considered. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Golombok, S., Spencer, A., & Rutter, M. (1983).** Children in lesbian and single-parent households: Psychosexual and psychiatric appraisal. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 24, 551-572.

Compared the psychosexual development, emotions, behavior, and relationships of 37 children (aged 5-17 yrs.) reared in 27 lesbian households with 38 children (aged 5-27 yrs.) reared in 27 heterosexual single-parent households. Systematic standardized interviews with the mothers and with the children, together with parent and teacher questionnaires, were used to make the psychosexual and psychiatric assessments. The two groups did not differ in terms of their gender identity, sex-role behavior, or sexual orientation. Also, they did not differ on most measures of emotions, behavior, and relationships, although there was some indication of more frequent psychiatric problems in the single-parent group. It is concluded that rearing in a lesbian household per se does not lead to atypical psychosexual development or constitute a psychiatric risk factor. (PscINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Golombok, S., Tasker, F. L., & Murray, C. (1997).** Children raised in fatherless families from infancy: Family relationships and the socioemotional development of children of lesbian and single heterosexual mothers. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38, 783-791.

Investigated family functioning and the psychological development of children (aged 3-9 yrs.) raised in fatherless families since their first year of life. Thirty lesbian mother families and 42 families headed by a single heterosexual mother were compared with 41 two-parent heterosexual families using standardized interview and questionnaire measures of the quality of parenting and the socioemotional development of the child. Results show that children raised in fatherless families from infancy experienced greater warmth and interaction with their mother and were more securely attached to her, although they perceived themselves to be less cognitively and physical-

ly competent than their peers from father-present families. No differences were identified between families headed by lesbian and single heterosexual mothers, except for greater mother-child interaction in lesbian mother families. It seems that children raised in fatherless families from birth or early infancy are not disadvantaged in terms of either the quality of their relationship with their mother or their emotional well-being. (PscINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Green, R. (1978).** Sexual identity of 37 children raised by homosexual or transsexual parents. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 135, 692-697. No abstract available.

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**Green, R., Mandel, J. B., Hotvedt, M. E., Gray, J., & Smith, L. (1986).** Lesbian mothers and their children: A comparison with solo parent heterosexual mothers and their children. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 7, 175-181.

Compared the sexual identity and social relationships of 30 daughters and 26 sons (aged 3-11 yrs.) of 50 homosexual mothers with 28 daughters and 20 sons of 40 heterosexual mothers. Mothers were currently unmarried White women aged 25-46 years. In addition to age and race, mothers were matched on length of separation from father; educational level and income; and number, age, and sex of children. Subjects were from rural and urban areas in 10 U.S. states and lived without adult males in the household for a minimum of 2 years. Data from children's tests on intelligence, core-morphologic sexual identity, gender-role preferences, family and peer group relationships, and adjustment to the single-parent family indicate that there were no significant differences between the two types of households for boys and few significant differences for girls. Data also reveal more similarities than differences in parenting experiences, marital history, and present living situations of the two groups of mothers. It is suggested that the mother's sexual orientation per se should not enter



into considerations on parental fitness that are commonly asserted in child custody cases. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Hand, S. I. (1991).** *The lesbian parenting couple. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Professional School of Psychology, San Francisco. No Abstract available.*

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Harris, M. B., & Turner, P. H. (1985/86). Gay and lesbian parents. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 12, 101-113.

Conducted an anonymous survey of 23 male and female homosexual parents (aged 29-53 yrs.) and 16 heterosexual single parents (aged 19-47 yrs.) to see whether the parents' homosexuality created special problems or benefits or both, for their children. Both sets of parents reported relatively few serious problems and generally positive relationships with their children, with only a minority encouraging sex-typed toys, activities, and playmates. Heterosexual parents made a greater effort to provide an opposite-sex role model for their children. Homosexual parents saw a number of benefits and relatively few problems for their children, with females perceiving greater benefits than males. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Hoeffler, B. (1981).** *Children's acquisition of sex-role behavior in lesbian-mother families. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 5, 536-544. **No abstract available.**



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**Huggins, S. L. (1989).** *A comparative study of self-esteem of adolescent children of divorced lesbian mothers and divorced heterosexual mothers. In F. W. Bozett (Ed.), Homosexuality and the family (pp. 123-135). New York: Harrington Park Press.*

Administered the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to nine sons and nine daughters (aged 13-19 yrs.) of divorced lesbian mothers (DLMs) and 18 age- and sex-matched sons and daughters of divorced heterosexual mothers (DHMs). Self-esteem (SE) scores of subjects with DLMs and DHMs were not significantly different. Daughters of DHMs had the highest and sons of DHMs had the lowest SE scores. Daughters who felt negatively about their mothers' lesbianism were more likely to have lower SE. Father's attitude toward the mother's lesbianism was also related to subjects' SE. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Johnson, S. M., & O'Connor, E. (2002).** *The gay baby boom: The psychology of gay parenthood. New York: New York University Press. No abstract available.*

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**King, B. R., & Black, K. N. (1999).** College students' perceptual stigmatization of the children of lesbian mothers. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 69*, 220-227.

To ascertain the extent to which children of lesbian mothers are stigmatized, 338 undergraduate students were asked to complete a child behavior checklist for a hypothetical child of either a divorced lesbian or a divorced heterosexual mother. Respondents attributed more problematic behavior in a variety of domains to the child of the lesbian mother, although this stigmatization was not compounded if lesbian mothers were depicted as living with adult female partners. Implications for child custody determinations and future research are considered. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Kirkpatrick, M., Smith, C., & Roy, R. (1981).** Lesbian mothers and their children: A comparative survey. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 51*, 545-551.

Forty 5- to 12-year-olds, divided equally into groups according to their mothers' sexual choice and within group by sex, were assessed with a developmental history, WISC scores, the Holtzman Inkblot Technique, and the Human Figure Drawing test. Subjects' gender development was not identifiably different in the two groups. Prevalence of disturbance was not found to be a function of the mother's sexual choice. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Koepke, L., Hare, J., & Moran, P. B. (1992).** Relationship quality in a sample of lesbian couples with children and child-free lesbian couples. *Family Relations, 41*, 224-229.

Examined the quality of lesbian relationships by three factors: presence of children, extent of disclo-

sure concerning the nature of the relationship, and longevity of the relationship. Forty-seven lesbian couples (aged 21-66 yrs.) completed ENRICH, which measures the nurturing and enriching dimensions of an intimate relationship, and a 17-item researcher-designed questionnaire that included questions examining disclosure of the nature of the couples' relationship, relationship longevity, presence of children, education, annual income, occupation, and age. Overall, findings indicate that solid and happy relationships existed for the total sample of couples. However, couples with children soared significantly higher on relationship satisfaction and sexual relationship. No differences were found by longevity of the relationship or disclosure. Implications for family life educators and family practitioners are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Kweskin, S. L., & Cook, A. S. (1982).** Heterosexual and homosexual mothers' self-described sex-role behavior and ideal sex-role behavior in children. *Sex Roles, 8*, 967-975.

Compared self-descriptive scores and ratings assigned to an "ideal" child on the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) by 22 heterosexual and 22 homosexual mothers (aged 19-43 yrs.). No significant differences were found. However, significance was obtained when subjects were classified in terms of self-described sex-role behavior on the BSRI. Subjects tended to rate an "ideal" child in the same manner in which they rated themselves. Results show subjects' self-described sex-role behavior to be a better indicator of desired sex-role behavior in children than subjects' sexual orientation. Similarities in sex-role behavior and attitudes of heterosexual and homosexual mothers far outweighed the present subjects' differences when determined by self-description and attitudes toward ideal child behavior. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Lewis, K. G. (1980). Children of lesbians: Their point of view. *Social Work, 25*, 198-203.**

Interviews with 21 children of lesbians in greater Boston area, ranging in age from 9 to 26, identified several major issues. Problems experienced involved parents' divorce and disclosure of mother's homosexuality. Problems between mother and children were secondary to the issue of children's respect for difficult step she had taken. (Reprinted with permission of ERIC Copyright © 1980. All rights reserved.)

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**Lott-Whitehead, L., & Tully, C. T. (1993). The family lives of lesbian mothers. *Smith College Studies in Social Work, 63*, 265-280.**

Studied the family lives of 45 adult lesbians who were also parents. Subjects responded to a questionnaire consisting of closed- and open-ended items that elicited responses on a broad range of topics related to family life. Findings revealed that the subjects were aware of the impact of their sexual orientation on their children, that they were vigilant about maintaining the integrity of their families, and that the stress they felt was buffered by social support networks. Some subjects noted that a sector of the lesbian community itself was unsupportive of lesbian motherhood. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Lyons, T. A. (1983). Lesbian mothers' custody fears. *Women and Therapy, 2*, 231-240.**

Conducted a comparative study between 1977 and 1981 of both lesbian and heterosexual mothers, focusing on the different kinds of support systems that they employ to meet both emotional and material needs for themselves and their children. Forty-three lesbian and 37 heterosexual formerly married mothers were studied. One half of lesbian subjects and one third of heterosexual subjects lived with partners. Results show no differences between the groups in social support systems and relationships

with ex-husbands. Motherhood was a primary part of self-identity for all subjects. Fear of loss of custody was a persistent theme for lesbian mothers and was the only major difference between the groups. Court-awarded custody is never final and can be challenged from a number of sources. Lesbians often lose custody when their situation is discovered. Custody can be used by ex-spouses to adjust property settlements. Fear of disclosure can have disruptive effects on comfort and ease of family gatherings. It is concluded that motherhood, rather than the pursuit of multiple lovers, was the central organizing theme in the lives of lesbian subjects. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**McLeod, A. C., Crawford, I., & Zechmeister, J. (1999). Heterosexual undergraduates' attitudes toward gay fathers and their children. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality, 11*, 43-62.**

One hundred fifty-one heterosexual college students' attitudes toward gay male couples and their adopted children were assessed. Subjects evaluated vignettes depicting either a gay male couple or heterosexual couple and their adopted son along the dimensions of parenting ability, degree to which the child's problems were attributable to the parental relationship, distress of the child (including gender and sexual identity confusion), and the extent to which custody reassignment was perceived to be beneficial. Differences in subjects' ratings indicated that a boy raised by gay fathers was perceived to be experiencing greater confusion regarding his sexual orientation and gender identity. Custody reassignment was also rated as more beneficial for the son raised by gay fathers. Multiple regression analyses indicated that these assumptions were significantly predicted by the subjects' stereotype of gay men as effeminate, above and beyond the subjects' political conservatism and religious attendance. Results are discussed in accordance with G. M. Herek's (1984) functional approach to attitudes toward homosexuality. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)





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McPherson, D. (1993). *Gay parenting couples: Parenting arrangements, arrangement satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pacific Graduate School of Psychology.

Twenty-eight gay male parenting couples and 27 heterosexual parenting couples from across the United States participated in a study comparing gay parenting couples and heterosexual parenting couples. Gay parenting couples are already existing gay couples into which a child has been brought prior to the child's 9-month birthday and in which the child is presently being reared. Parents' division of labor and satisfaction with their division of labor was assessed using Cowan and Cowan's *Who Does What?* Relationship satisfaction was assessed using a single question on relationship satisfaction and Spanier's 32-item Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). Results revealed gay parenting couples demonstrate signifi-

cantly more equitable arrangements of parenting tasks and roles and significantly greater satisfaction with those arrangements than the heterosexual parenting couples. A single question on relationship satisfaction revealed no significant difference between groups in reported satisfaction, while the 32-item DAS revealed the gay parenting couples to be significantly more satisfied with their relationships than the heterosexual couples, especially in the area of dyadic cohesion and affective expression. Post-hoc testing revealed a gender difference: Women reported significantly greater dissatisfaction with parenting arrangements than their husbands or gay parents. Findings are explained in terms of three factors unique to the experience and social setting of gay parenting couples. (*The dissertation citation and abstract contained here is published with permission of ProQuest Information and Learning. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.*)

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**Miller, B. (1979). Gay fathers and their children. *Family Coordinator*, 28, 544-552.**

Presents data from a 3-year study on the quality and nature of the relationships of homosexual fathers with their children. In-depth interviews were conducted with a snowball sample of 40 gay fathers and 14 of their children. Uses a cross-national sample: Interviews were conducted in large and small cities in both Canada and the United States. Excluded from the study were men who no longer saw their children. Fathers were aged from 24 to 64, and the children who were interviewed ranged from 14 to 33 years of age. Addresses the nature of the father-child relationship and the children's adjustment to their father's homosexuality. Four issues frequently raised in custody cases are discussed: Do gay fathers have children to cover their homosexuality, do they molest their children, do their children turn out to be gay in disproportionate numbers, and does having a gay father expose a child to homophobic harassment. Concludes that concerns that gay fathers will have a negative impact on their children's development are unfounded. (Copyright © 1995 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Miller, J. A., Jacobsen, R. B., & Bigner, J. J. (1981). The child's home environment for lesbian versus heterosexual mothers: A neglected area of research. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 7, 49-56.**

Compared 34 lesbian (aged 21-42 yrs.) and 47 heterosexual (aged 24-63 yrs.) mothers in terms of the home setting provided and the caregiver role vis-à-vis children. Results reveal a less affluent socioeconomic setting for the children of lesbian mothers. A strong child-development orientation was found among lesbian mothers, undermining the stereotype of lesbians as aloof from children. Lesbian mothers tended to assume a principal role in child-care responsibility regardless of whether the caregiver and breadwinner roles were shared with a live-in partner. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Morris, J. F., Balsam, K. F., & Rothblum, E. D. (2002). Lesbian and bisexual mothers and non-mothers: Demographics and the coming-out process. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 16, 144-156.**

In a large, national sample of 2,431 lesbians and bisexual women, those who had children before coming out, those who had children after coming out, and those who did not have children were compared on demographic factors and milestones in the coming-out process. Differences were found in race/ethnicity, age, prior marriage, income, religion, use of mental health counseling, and reported hate crimes. Results are also presented for lesbians and bisexual women of each ethnic/racial and age group. Controlling for age and income, lesbians and bisexual women who had children before coming out had reached developmental milestones in the coming-out process about 7-12 years later than women who had children after coming out and about 6-8 years later than nonmothers. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Mucklow, B. M., & Phelan, G. K. (1979). Lesbian and traditional mothers' responses to adult responses to child behavior and self concept. *Psychological Reports*, 44, 880-882.**

Attempted to determine if significant differences existed between 34 lesbian and 47 traditional mothers on measures of maternal attitude and self-concept. The *Adult Response to Child Behavior*, a set of slides of children's behaviors and set responses, provided an indicator of adult, task-, and child-centered attitudes. Three personality aggregates—self-confidence, dominance, and nurturance—were computed from responses to the Adjective Check List. Chi-square analyses showed no difference in response to children's behavior or in self-concept of lesbian and traditional mothers. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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O'Connell, A. (1993). *Voices from the heart: The developmental impact of a mother's lesbianism on her adolescent children*. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 63, 281-299.

Studied 11 young adults (aged 16-23 yrs.) whose mothers, either prior to or postdivorce, "came out" as lesbian. The subjects' experiences surrounding their mothers' disclosure were explored, and sexual identity issues and friendships were highlighted. Findings indicate profound loyalty and protectiveness toward the mother, openness to diversity, and sensitivity to the effects of prejudice. Subjects reported strong needs for peer affiliation and perceived secrecy regarding their mother's lesbianism as necessary for relationship maintenance. Other concerns, abating over time, were unrealized fears of male devaluation and homosexuality. Pervasive sadness about the parental breakup remained, and wishes for family reunification were relinquished when mother "came out." (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Osterweil, D. A. (1991). *Correlates of relationship satisfaction in lesbian couples who are parenting their first child together*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, California School of Professional Psychology, Berkeley/Alameda.

Thirty lesbian couples who were parenting an 18- to 36-month-old child conceived through alternative insemination participated in this cross-sectional study. Based on a multidimensional model of couple satisfaction for heterosexual couples in their transition to parenthood, developed by the Becoming a Family Project at University of California-Berkeley (Cowan, C. P., Cowan, P. A., Heming, Garrett, Coysh, Curtis-Boles, & Boles, 1985), intrapsychic variables (self-esteem, needs for autonomy, affiliation, and nurturance), dyadic variables (role arrangement, coming out, communication, sex, and commitment), and extradyadic variables (social/familial support, use of a known or unknown donor, adoption by the nonbiological



parent, and child-related issues) were analyzed for individual and couple data. Satisfaction was most significantly correlated with low need for autonomy, identification of sense of self as "partner," perception of parents' past relationship as positive, egalitarian distribution of and satisfaction with role arrangement, effective communication skills, expectation of being together in 20 years, equal commitment, satisfying sexual relationship, and use of an unknown donor. Findings are explained in terms of newer female developmental models which acknowledge and normalize women's relational values. The study also compared the biological and nonbiological mothers. Biological mothers had a greater need for autonomy, saw their actual and ideal role as mother slightly larger and their actual and ideal leisure time as smaller than did their partners, and had a more positive relationship with their own mothers. There were no differences between partners in their self-esteem, coming-out experiences, felt acceptance as a



lesbian parent, relationship commitment, sexual satisfaction, social involvement, or their perception of their child. They divided household chores, decision making, and child-related tasks about equally. Finally, the study described the women and the couples' parenting choices. Women's mean age was 35, and the average length of their relationships was 7.7 years. Seventy percent used an unknown donor to prevent potential third-party interference. Seventy percent of the nonbiological mothers were planning to or had already adopted their child. One third of the couples were planning to have another child. Limitations of the study and implications for clinical intervention and future research are offered. (*The dissertation citation and abstract contained here is published with permission of ProQuest Information and Learning. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.*)

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**Pagelow, M. D. (1980). Heterosexual and lesbian single mothers: A comparison of problems, coping and solutions. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 5, 198-204.**

Gathered descriptive data on the everyday experiences of 23 heterosexual (mean age 38 yrs.) and 20 lesbian (mean age 34 yrs.) single mothers; among them, heterosexuals had 51 children, and lesbians had 43. Children ranged in age from 1 to 30 years. Research methods included participant observation in a wide range of discussion groups and group activities, in-depth interviews, and a questionnaire. Using a phenomenological perspective, comparisons were drawn between heterosexual and lesbian respondents' adaptations to three common concerns: child custody, housing, and employment. While both groups reported oppression in the areas of freedom of association, employment, housing, and child custody, the degree of perceived oppression was greater for lesbian mothers. Lesbian mothers exhibited patterns of behavior that may have been responses to perceived oppression and that counterbalanced felt difficulties by the development of relatively higher levels of independence. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1994a). Children of the lesbian baby boom: Behavioral adjustment, self-concepts, and sex-role identity. In B. Greene & G. Herek (Eds.), *Contemporary perspectives on lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research and application* (pp. 156-175). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.**

(From the chapter) today, the rise in births among openly lesbian women in the United States has been so dramatic that many observers have labeled it a lesbian baby boom / the study described here was designed to enhance the understanding of child development in the families of the lesbian baby boom / first, demographic and other characteristics of the families who participated in this research were described / the behavioral adjustment, self-concepts, and sex role behavior of children in these families were explored / to allow comparisons between children with lesbian and heterosexual parents, a group of children in "new" lesbian mother families was studied, and the children's scores on standardized measures were compared with national or other available norms [37 families, headed either by a lesbian couple or by a lesbian single mother, with at least one child between the ages of 4 and 9 yrs. participated in the study]. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1995a). Families of the lesbian baby boom: Parents' division of labor and children's adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 31, 115-123.**

Assessed lesbian couples' division of labor, their satisfaction with division of labor and with their relationships, and their children's psychosocial adjustment. The 26 participating families were headed by lesbian couples, each of whom had at least one child between 4 and 9 years of age. Parents' relationship satisfaction was generally high but was unrelated to measures of parental division of labor or of children's adjustment. Although both parents reported sharing household tasks and decision making equally, biological mothers reported greater involvement in child care, and non-biological mothers reported spending longer hours in

paid employment. Parents were more satisfied and children were more well adjusted when labor involved in child care was more evenly distributed between the parents. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (2001). Families of the lesbian baby boom: Maternal mental health and child adjustment. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 4, 91-107.**

This article reports a study of maternal mental health, household composition, and children's adjustment among 37 families in which 4- to 9-year-old children had been born to or adopted early in life by lesbian mothers. Results showed that maternal reports of both self-esteem and psychological symptoms were within the normal range. Consistent with findings for heterosexual parents and their children, assessments of children's adjustment were significantly associated with measures of maternal mental health. These results underline the importance of maternal mental health as a predictor of children's adjustment among lesbian as well as among heterosexual families. (Reprinted with permission of Haworth Press. Copyright © 2001. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J., Hurt, S., & Mason, C. D. (1998). Families of the lesbian baby boom: Children's contact with grandparents and other adults. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 68, 390-399.**

Investigated, in an exploratory study of 37 lesbian-mother families, the frequency of 4- to 9-year-old children's contact with adults in their extended family and friendship networks. Results countered stereotypes of such children as isolated from parents' families of origin. Among children's adult contacts, those with relatives of their biological mothers were found to be more frequent than those with relatives of nonbiological mothers. Children were more likely to be in contact with their grandparents, as well as with other adult relatives, on the biological rather than the nonbiologi-

cal side. Interpretations of these findings are considered. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Paul, J. P. (1986). *Growing up with a gay, lesbian, or bisexual parent: An exploratory study of experiences and perceptions*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley CA.**

Thirty-four men and women (ages 18 to 28) with a homosexual or bisexual parent were interviewed extensively about their experiences growing up in their families, learning of their parents' sexuality, and developing their own social relationships. Their retrospective accounts (mean time lapse since learning of parent's sexuality was 9.12 yrs.) were analyzed to provide a picture of reactions to a parent's "coming out," reported consequences of having a homosexual or bisexual parent, and the perspectives held by offspring on family, friendships, and sexuality. Quantitative findings concerning the initial reactions of offspring support some of the previous qualitative reports in the field. Respondents who had learned about their parents' sexual orientation in adolescence reported significantly more negative initial reactions to the news than respondents who learned before this time. They were more likely to report negative initial reactions if the parent was their father as opposed to their mother. Initial reactions to the parent also were linked to respondents' concerns about negative reactions of friends to both the non-heterosexual parent and themselves. These initial reactions were not, however, necessarily indicative of perceived current closeness to the non-heterosexual parent, one sign of how the offspring had resolved their feelings about their parents' homosexuality or bisexuality. The current quality of respondents' relationships with their bisexual or homosexual parents was related to the perceptions of parents' ease of communication and openness with offspring. Respondents' conceptualizations of personal relationships suggest possible effects of the experience of growing up with a gay, lesbian, or bisexual



parent, especially with regard to perceptions of friendship and sexuality. The study findings are discussed in light of methodological problems in this type of research, and directions for future research are suggested. (*The dissertation citation and abstract contained here is published with permission of ProQuest Information and Learning. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.*)

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**Puryear, D. (1983).** *A comparison between the children of lesbian mothers and the children of heterosexual mothers.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, California School of Professional Psychology, Berkeley CA.

This study explored the effect of mothers' sexual orientation on three areas of development in children of latency age: self-concept, locus of control orientation, and self and familial views. Fifteen lesbian mother-child pairs and 15 heterosexual mother-child pairs comprised the sample. The two groups were highly similar on a number of personal and demographic variables (e.g., socioeconomic status, age, length of time separated, age of children, etc.). Self-concept was measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (1969), an 80-item "Yes-No" questionnaire. Locus of control orientation was measured by the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (1973), a 40-item "Yes-No" questionnaire. Children's self and familial views were measured by the Kinetic Family Drawing Rating Scale devised by the investigator and adapted from the Burns and Kaufman (1982) scoring method for the Kinetic Family Drawing Projective Test. Mothers also completed a Family Questionnaire devised by the investigator which included demographic information and questions regarding mother's and child's adjustments to the separation from the child's father. No significant differences were found between the two groups of children in self-concept or in locus of control orientation scores. These findings make it difficult to defend the view that the mother's sexual orientation is detrimental to the development of the child's self-concept or locus of control orientation. There were significant differences, however, in self and family

views between the two groups of children. More children of heterosexual mothers depicted the family and father in activities with them than did children of lesbian mothers. Also, the majority of children with heterosexual mothers drew scenes depicting cooperation between the child and other figures, whereas most of the children of lesbian mothers did not. It was noteworthy that most of the children in the sample included the father in their drawings, suggesting that the father is a very important figure in these children's lives regardless of mother's sexual orientation. It was suggested that the impact of divorce (or separation) on the child is greater than the mother's sexual orientation. The need for longitudinal studies of children of lesbian mothers, particularly from latency through adolescence, was emphasized. (*The dissertation citation and abstract contained here is published with permission of ProQuest Information and Learning. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.*)

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**Rand, C., Graham, D. L. R., & Rawlings, E. I. (1982).** *Psychological health and factors the court seeks to control in lesbian mother custody trials.* *Journal of Homosexuality*, 8, 27-39.

The court has repeatedly ruled that a mother will lose custody of and visitation privileges with her children if she expresses her lesbianism through involvement or cohabitation with a female partner, being affiliated with a lesbian community, or disclosing her lesbianism to her children. The present study examined associations between expressions of lesbianism for 25, 23-to 46-year-old White self-identified lesbian mothers and psychological health, as measured by three scales on the California Psychological Inventory and by the Affectometer. Psychological health correlated positively with openness to employer, ex-husband, children, a lesbian community, and amount of feminist activism. Partial support was found for the hypothesis that lesbian mothers who were expressing their lesbianism would be psychologically healthier than those who were not. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)



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**Rees, R. L. (1979).** *A comparison of children of lesbian and single heterosexual mothers on three measures of socialization.* **Unpublished doctoral dissertation, California School of Professional Psychology, Berkeley CA. No abstract available.**

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**Sarantakos, S. (1996).** **Children in three contexts: Family, education, and social development.** *Children Australia, 21(3), 23-31.* **No abstract available. See footnote on page 6.**

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**Sbordone, A. J. (1993).** *Gay men choosing fatherhood.* **Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Psychology, City University of New York.**

Seventy-eight gay men who are parents via adoption or arrangements with surrogate mothers were compared with 83 gay non-fathers on measures of internalized homophobia, self-esteem, and recollections of

their families of origin during childhood.

Questionnaires included: the Nungesser Homosexual Attitudes Inventory, the Ego-Dystonic Homosexuality Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, the Family-of-Origin Scale, the Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire II, and a demographic section. Tests of statistical significance included: the *t*-test, Mann-Whitney *U*-test, chi-square, Pearson's *r*, and analysis of variance. This research begins the documentation of a recent phenomenon in the gay community, gay men who are choosing to become fathers within the context of a gay identity. Results indicate that fathers and non-fathers do not differ significantly in their recollections of maternal and paternal parent-child relationships on measures of love, rejection, attention, or casual versus demanding attitudes toward rules. Nor do the two groups differ significantly on their perceptions of intimacy and autonomy in the family of origin. However, fathers do display significantly higher levels of self-esteem and significantly lower levels of internalized

homophobia than non-fathers. Further comparisons include non-fathers who would like to raise a child and those who would not, and correlations between the arrival of a child and scores on measures of self-esteem and internalized homophobia. The author speculates that the fathers' higher self-esteem and lower internalized homophobia are a result of fatherhood rather than a precursor to it. (*The dissertation citation and abstract contained here is published with permission of ProQuest Information and Learning. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.*)

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**Siegenthaler, A. L., & Bigner, J. J. (2000). The value of children to lesbian and non-lesbian mothers. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 39, 73-91.**

Compared the responses of 25 lesbian and 26 non-lesbian mothers (mean age 35 yrs.) to items on the Value of Children (VOC) Scale. This instrument measures the reasons that may explain why adults become parents and the values and functions for children in the lives of adults. Results indicate that there are more similarities than differences between lesbian and non-lesbian mothers in responses on the VOC scale. Only one subscale that measures goals and incentives for assuming parenthood and having children differentiated between the groups. The lack of differences in response patterns on the VOC scale between lesbian and non-lesbian mothers may be attributed to the similar socialization experiences of women in our society regarding parenthood and the expectations of individuals upon assuming this role in adulthood. The significant differences in responses on the one subscale may be attributed to differences in world-views of lesbian and non-lesbian mothers. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Steckel, A. (1987). Psychosocial development of children of lesbian mothers. In F. W. Bozett, (Ed.), *Gay and lesbian parents* (pp. 75-85). New York: Praeger.**

(From the chapter) children of lesbians / confused in their sexual identity / sex roles / sexual orienta-

tion. Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence or Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Revised, several tests for sex-role behavior and gender identity, and the Bene-Anthony Family Relations test. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Steckel, A. (1985). *Separation-individuation in children of lesbian and heterosexual couples*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Wright Institute Graduate School, Berkeley CA.**

This exploratory study compared separation-individuation in children of lesbian and heterosexual couples, examining how the presence of a female co-parent, rather than a father, might (1) facilitate or hinder a child's intrapsychic separation and (2) affect girls and boys differently. Independence, ego functions and object relations, components of separation-individuation, were measured through use of a structured parent interview, a Q-Sort administered to parents and teachers, and a Structured Doll Technique with the child. Subjects were 11 lesbian families and 11 heterosexual families. The children ranged from 2 years 10 months to 5 years in age, with eight boys and three girls in each group. Parent interviews were analyzed qualitatively for differences between reports of lesbian and heterosexual parents. Structured Doll Technique protocols were scored by raters. T tests were performed on Q-Sort items and on Structured Doll Technique scores by family structure group (lesbian vs. heterosexual) and by child's gender. Major findings were that children of both lesbians and heterosexuals fell within the normal range of the separation-individuation process. Neither group revealed more psychopathology or difficulties in separation-individuation than the other group. Yet findings also demonstrated significantly different experiences of separation and individuation for lesbians' and heterosexuals' children. Heterosexuals' children had a more aggressively tinged separation. They saw themselves as more aggressive ( $p < .01$ ), were seen as more bossy and domineering ( $p < .05$ ), more active in asserting themselves ( $p < .05$ ), more negativistic ( $p < .05$ ),

more involved in power struggles ( $p < .05$ ), and less likely to take commands and demands in stride ( $p < .05$ ). In contrast, lesbians' children had a more lovable self-image ( $p < .05$ ), expressed more helplessness ( $p < .01$ ), and were seen as more affectionate and responsive ( $p < .01$ ), and as more protective toward those younger ( $p < .05$ ). Data regarding gender differences demonstrated that lesbians' daughters were especially interested in developing relationships ( $p < .05$ ) and heterosexuals' sons were notably active in asserting themselves ( $p < .05$ ). It was concluded that the presence of a female co-parent, rather than a father, does not adversely affect the child's progression through the separation-individuation process, but does establish a qualitatively different separation experience. (*The dissertation citation and abstract contained here is published with permission of ProQuest Information and Learning. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.*)

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**Sullivan, M. (1996). Rozzie and Harriet? Gender and family patterns of lesbian coparents. *Gender and Society, 10*, 747-767.**

In this article the author explores the ways in which lesbian coparents divide household, child care, and paid labor to learn whether, and the degree to which, they adopt egalitarian work and family arrangements. Informed by a brief overview of U.S. gay liberation and family politics, and the theoretical and empirical work on the household division of labor by gender, this qualitative analysis of 34 Northern California families suggests that equitable practices—a pattern of equal sharing—among these lesbian coparents are the norm. Less frequently, the Rozzie and Harriet pattern of primary breadwinner/primary caregiver emerges, apparently in relation to differences in parents' relative income and their desire to offer children a "sense of family." The experience of this minority of couples reveals a division of labor that mimics modern heterosexual expectations and highlights the powerful negative effect of economic dependency on women who are full-time caregivers. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Tasker, F., & Golombok, S. (1995). Adults raised as children in lesbian families. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 65*, 203-215.**

Conducted a longitudinal study to examine the psychological well-being, family relationships, and the formation of friendships/intimate relationships among individuals raised in lesbian families. Twenty-five young adults (aged 17-35 yrs.; 8 males) from lesbian families and 21 aged-matched controls (12 males) raised by heterosexual single mothers were interviewed regarding their family and peer relationships, sexual orientations, and psychological adjustment. Subjects raised by lesbian mothers functioned well in adulthood in terms of psychological well-being and of family identity and relationships. The commonly held assumption that lesbian mothers will have lesbian daughters and gay sons was not supported. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Tasker, F., & Golombok, S. (1997). *Growing up in a lesbian family*. New York: Guilford Press.**

(From the jacket) Presenting a . . . longitudinal study of 25 children raised in lesbian mother families, and a comparison group raised by single heterosexual mothers, the book lays out the developmental effects of growing up in a same-sex household and confronts a range of myths and stereotypes along the way. The book focuses on the follow-up interviews with grown-up children who took part in the study—all of whom were born to heterosexual partnerships but whose mothers later entered lesbian relationships. Shedding light on the quality of their family life, young adults share what it was like to grow up with a lesbian mother and her partner and discuss their level of awareness during childhood of growing up in a lesbian-headed home. Also considered are ways children from lesbian mother families integrate their family background with their school environment and cope with prejudice. [This book] will be welcomed by professionals, educators and students in psychology, social





work, and sociology; others interested in the long-term influences of childhood experiences on adult life; and readers in women's studies and lesbian/gay studies. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Tasker, F., & Golombok, S. (1998). The role of co-mothers in planned lesbian-led families. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 2, 49-68.**

Compared the role and involvement in parenting of co-mothers in 15 British lesbian mother families with the role of resident fathers in two different groups of heterosexual families (43 families where the study child was conceived through donor insemination, and 41 families where the child had been naturally conceived). There was a similar proportion of boys and girls in each group of families; average age across all 3 groups of children was 6 years. Birth mothers in all three types of families were administered a semistructured interview to assess the quality of family relationships. Questionnaire data on stress associated with parent-

ing were obtained from co-mothers and fathers, and the children completed the Family Relations Test. The results indicate that co-mothers played a more active role in daily caretaking than did most fathers. However, father-child and co-mother-child relationships were equally warm and affectionate in all three groups and there were no group differences for children's scores on the Family Relations Test or co-mothers/fathers' scores on the Parenting Stress Index. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Vanfraussen, K., Ponjaert-Kristoffersen, I., & Brewaeys, A. (2003). Family functioning in lesbian families created by donor insemination. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 73, 78-90.**

In this study, we wanted to focus on parenting in relation to a specific feature of the lesbian donor insemination (DI) family, namely, the presence of a social mother. We wanted to investigate whether the lack of a biological connection influences the social parent-child interaction. To discover this, a compar-





son is made between both parents within the lesbian household. The second aim of this study is to explore the content of the role of the social parent in a lesbian family. A total of 24 lesbian families participated. The quantitative and qualitative data of this study on family functioning in lesbian DI families reveal that according to both parents and children, the quality of children's relationship with the social mother is comparable to that with the biological mother. Unlike fathers in heterosexual families, the lesbian social mother is as much involved in child activities as is the biological mother. Furthermore, the lesbian social mother has as much authority as does the father in heterosexual families. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2003 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Wainright, J. L., Russell, S. T., & Patterson, C. J. (2004). Psychosocial adjustment and school outcomes of adolescents with same-sex parents. *Child Development, 75(6), Nov-Dec 2004, 1886-1898.***

This study examined associations among family type (same-sex vs. opposite-sex parents); family and relationship variables; and the psychosocial adjustment, school outcomes, and romantic attractions and behaviors of adolescents. Participants included 44 12- to 18-year-old adolescents parented by same-sex couples and 44 same-aged adolescents parented by opposite-sex couples, matched on demographic characteristics and drawn from a national sample. Normative analyses indicated that, on measures of psychosocial adjustment and school outcomes, adolescents were functioning well, and their adjustment was not generally associated

with family type. Assessments of romantic relationships and sexual behavior were not associated with family type. Regardless of family type, adolescents whose parents described closer relationships with them reported better school adjustment. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Wright, J. M. (1998).** *Lesbian stepfamilies: An ethnography of love*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

*Lesbian Step Families: An Ethnography of Love* explores five lesbian step families' definitions of the step parent role and how they accomplish parenting tasks, cope with homophobia, and define and interpret their experiences. An intensive feminist qualitative study, the book offers guidelines for counselors and lesbian step families for creating healthy, functioning family structures and environments. It is the first book to concentrate exclusively on lesbian step families rather than on lesbian mothering in general.

In *Lesbian Step Families: An Ethnography of Love*, you'll explore in detail the different kinds of step relationships that are developed and what factors may lead to the different types of step mothering in lesbian step families. The book helps you understand these relationships and parent roles through in-depth discussions of:

- how a step mother and legal mother who live together negotiate and organize parenting and homemaking tasks,
- how members of lesbian step families define and create the step mother role,
- strategies family members use to define and cope with oppression,
- how sexism is transmitted within the family and how mothering may limit and/or contribute to female liberation, and

- the opinions and viewpoints of the children of these families. The findings in *Lesbian Step Families: An Ethnography of Love* challenge traditional views of mothering and fathering as gender and biologically based activities; they indicate that lesbian step families model gender flexibility and that the mothers and step mothers share parenting—both traditional mothering and fathering—tasks. This allows the biological mother some freedom from motherhood as well as support in it. With insight such as this, you will be prepared to help a client, a loved one, or yourself develop and maintain healthy family relationships. (Reprinted with permission of Haworth Press Copyright © 1998. All rights reserved.)

## **Empirical Studies Generally Related to the Fitness of Lesbians and Gay Men as Parents**

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**Groth, A. N., & Birnbaum, H. J. (1978). Adult sexual orientation and attraction to underage persons. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 7, 175-181.**

Screened 175, 15- to 64-year-old males convicted of sexual assault against children with reference to their adult sexual orientation and the sex of their victims. The subjects divided fairly evenly into two groups based on whether they were sexually fixated exclusively on children or had regressed from peer relationships. Female children were victimized nearly twice as often as male children. All regressed offenders, whether their victims were male or female children, were heterosexual in their adult orientation. There were no examples of regression to child victims among peer-oriented, homosexual males. The possibility emerges that homosexuality and homosexual pedophilia may be mutually exclusive and that the adult heterosexual male constitutes a greater risk to the underage child than does the adult homosexual male. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Hooker, E. (1957). The adjustment of the male overt homosexual. *Journal of Projective Techniques*, 21, 17-31.**

Thirty male homosexuals were matched with 30 heterosexual males for age, IQ, and education. Their Rorschachs, TATs, and MAPS were given to two Rorschach experts and a TAT and MAPS expert for ratings of adjustment. The protocols were also presented in pairs to the judges to see if they could distinguish the homosexual and heterosexual protocols. Agreement between judges of the adjustment ratings was fair, but the Rorschach experts could not discriminate between homosexual and heterosexual protocols any better than chance. The TAT and MAPS protocols of the homosexuals could be distinguished far better

than chance since nearly all the homosexual subjects gave at least one homosexual story. The two groups did not differ significantly in adjustment ratings. The author concludes: "1. Homosexuality as a clinical entity does not exist. Its forms are as varied as are those of heterosexuality. 2. Homosexuality may be a deviation in sexual pattern which is within the normal range, psychologically." (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Jenny, C., Roesler, T. A., & Poyer, K. L. (1994). Are children at risk for sexual abuse by homosexuals? *Pediatrics*, 94, 41-44.**

*Objective:* To determine if recognizably homosexual adults are frequently accused of the sexual molestation of children. *Design:* Chart review of medical records of children evaluated for sexual abuse. *Setting:* Child sexual abuse clinic at a regional children's hospital. *Patients:* Patients were 352 children (276 girls and 76 boys) referred to a subspecialty clinic for the evaluation of suspected child sexual abuse. Mean age was 6.1 years (range, 7 months to 17 yrs.). Data collected. Charts were reviewed to determine the relationships of the children to the alleged offender, the sex of the offender, and whether or not the alleged offender was reported to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Results: Abuse was ruled out in 35 cases. Seventy-four children were allegedly abused by other children and teenagers less than 18 years old. In nine cases, an offender could not be identified. In the remaining 269 cases, two offenders were identified as being gay or lesbian. In 82% of cases (222/269), the alleged offender was a heterosexual partner of a close relative of the child. Using the data from our study, the 95% confidence limits of the risk children would identify recognizably homosexual adults as the potential abuser are from 0% to 3.1%. These limits are within current estimates of the prevalence of homosexuality in the general community. *Conclusions:* The children in the group studied were unlikely to have been molested by identifiably gay or lesbian people. (Reprinted with permission of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Copyright © 1994. All rights reserved.)



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**Thompson, N., McCandless, B., & Strickland, B. (1971). Personal adjustment of male and female homosexuals and heterosexuals. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 78, 237-240.**

Compared the personal adjustment and psychological well-being of 127 male and 84 female homosexuals with 123 male and 94 female heterosexuals. Subjects were matched for sex, age, and education. Homosexuals did not differ in important ways from heterosexuals in defensiveness, personal adjustment, or self-confidence as measured by the adjective check list; or in self-evaluation as measured by a

semantic differential. Male homosexuals were less defensive and less self-confident ( $p < .05$ ), while female homosexuals were more self-confident ( $p < .05$ ) than their respective controls. Homosexuals were more self-concerned as there were more members of both homosexual groups who had or were undertaking psychotherapy. However, there were no adjustment differences in any group between those who had and had not experienced psychotherapy. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)



## Reviews of Empirical Studies Specifically Related to Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children

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Allen, K. R., & Demo, D. H. (1995). **The families of lesbians and gay men: A new frontier in family research.** *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 111-127.

Examined the extent to which the family relations of lesbians and gay men are integrated into the family literature by reviewing over 8,000 articles published between 1980 and 1993 in nine journals that publish family research. The review shows that research on lesbian and gay families is quite limited, and that, where these families have been studied, they have been problematized and their diversity has been overlooked. The authors describe and define lesbian and gay families, illustrating their diversity and challenging the neglect of this population in family studies. The authors direct researchers' attention toward a social ecologies model that incorporates the dynamics of family relationships. Theoretical implications of studying lesbian and gay families are discussed, and research directions to improve knowledge of these families and families in general are proposed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Allen, M., & Burrell, N. (1996). **Comparing the impact of homosexual and heterosexual parents on children: Meta-analysis of existing research.** *Journal of Homosexuality*, 32, 19-35.

Courts determine custody and visitation on the basis of the "best interests of the child." Current judicial rulings in some jurisdictions reflect a bias against awarding custody or granting visitation rights to homosexual parents, favoring the heterosexual parent or heterosexual relative of the child(ren). Should the sexual orientation of the parent play a part in the determination of custody or visitation in order to

protect the child? This meta-analysis summarizes the available quantitative literature comparing the impact of heterosexual and homosexual parents, using a variety of measures, on the child(ren). The analyses examine parenting practices, the emotional well-being of the child, and the sexual orientation of the child. The results demonstrate no differences on any measures between the heterosexual and homosexual parents regarding parenting styles, emotional adjustment, and sexual orientation of the child(ren). In other words, the data fail to support the continuation of a bias against homosexual parents by any court. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Anderssen, N., Amlie, C., & Ytteroy, E. A. (2002). **Outcomes for children with lesbian or gay parents: A review of studies from 1978 to 2000.** *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43, 335-351.

Reviewed 23 empirical studies published between 1978 and 2000 on nonclinical children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers (one Belgian/Dutch, one Danish, three British, and 18 North American). Twenty studies reported on offspring of lesbian mothers, and three on offspring of gay fathers. The studies encompassed a total of 615 offspring (age range 1.5-44 yrs.) of lesbian mothers or gay fathers and 387 controls, who were assessed by psychological tests, questionnaires, or interviews. Seven types of outcomes were found to be typical: emotional functioning, sexual preference, stigmatization, gender role behavior, behavioral adjustment, gender identity, and cognitive functioning. Children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers did not systematically differ from other children on any of the outcomes. The studies indicate that children raised by lesbian women do not experience adverse outcomes compared with other children. The same holds for children raised by gay men, but more studies should be done. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)



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Armesto, J. C. (2002). **Developmental and contextual factors that influence gay fathers' parental competence: A review of the literature.** *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 3, 67-78.

This article reviews the existing literature on gay parenting using two theoretical frameworks: developmental and ecological. Findings suggest that the normal stressors of parenting are compounded for gay men because of their membership in a socially stigmatized group. Specifically, competent parenting in gay men appears to be influenced by the ability to come to terms with a homosexual identity and negotiate the ongoing stress associated with living in a homophobic and heterosexist society. The author discusses the theoretical implications of these findings and suggests areas for future research.

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Belcastro, P. A., Gramlich, T., Nicholson, T., Price, J., & Wilson, R. (1993). **A review of data-based studies addressing the effects of homosexual parenting on children's sexual and social functioning.** *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 20, 105-122.

Summarizes the results of a computer and manual search of the published literature focused on children raised in gay and lesbian households. Studies were selected on the basis of the following criteria: data-based, post-1975 publications; independent variable/homosexual parent; and dependent variable/some aspect of the child's sexual or social functioning. Includes 14 studies that met the criteria. Concludes that the published research database is too weak to support a definitive conclusion that there are no significant differences in children raised by lesbian mothers versus those raised by heterosexual mothers. (Copyright © 1995 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Bozett, F. W. (1989). **Gay fathers: A review of the literature.** In F. W. Bozett (Ed.), *Homosexuality and the family* (pp. 137-162). New York: Harrington Park Press.

Reviews the literature on gay fathers, including historical perspectives and statistical data. Studies of gay fathers and other groups, such as lesbian mothers and nongay fathers, are compared. While the paucity of literature and limitations of the research prevent definitive conclusions, a list of tentative generalizations is proposed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Brewaeys, A., & Van Hall, E. V. (1997). Lesbian motherhood: The impact on child development and family functioning.** *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 18, 1-16. **No abstract available.**

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Gottman, J. S. (1990). **Children of gay and lesbian parents.** In F. W. Bozett & M. B. Sussman (Eds.), *Homosexuality and family relations* (pp. 177-196). New York: Harrington Park Press.

Reviews research literature on children of homosexual (HS) parents, including comparisons with children of heterosexual parents. Children of HS parents did not appear deviant in gender identity, sexual orientation, or social adjustment. Issues that emerged during their upbringing related more to society's rejection of homosexuality than to poor parent-child relationships. Most social adjustment problems occurred in both groups and were commonly related to family history of divorce. Results are supported by J. Schwartz's (unpublished manuscript) investigation of the above variables in adult-aged daughters in relation to mothers' sexual orientations, with a focus on role modeling theory. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Kirkpatrick, M. (1987). Clinical implications of lesbian mother studies. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 13, 201-211.**

Studies have shown similarities between lesbian mothers and divorced heterosexual mothers in marital history, pregnancy history, child-rearing attitudes, and life-style. Motherhood was the most salient factor in both groups' identity. Lesbian mothers had more congenial relations with ex-spouses and included men more regularly in their children's lives. Coupled lesbians had greater economic and emotional resources and provided children with a richer family life than did mothers of either group living alone with children. Children benefited from group discussions about changes in their lives and in their mothers' sexual orientation. Case illustrations are presented. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Kleber, D. J., Howell, R. J., & Tibbits-Kleber, A. L. (1986). The impact of parental homosexuality in child custody cases: A review of the literature. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law*, 14, 81-87.**

Reviews the literature on the impact of parental homosexuality in child custody cases. As a result of the relatively high rate of divorce in the United States and the increasing awareness that many parents (an estimated 1.5 million) are homosexual, the courts and divorce mediators have become actively involved in child custody placement decisions involving homosexual parents. While custody decisions have tended to reflect stereotyped beliefs or fears concerning the detrimental effects of homosexual parenting practices on child development, the research literature provides no evidence substantiating these fears. Several specific custody issues are discussed as well as social factors relevant to lesbian motherhood. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Parks, C. A. (1998). Lesbian parenthood: A review of the literature. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 68, 376-389.**

Reviews the findings of lesbian family research published between 1980 and 1996. The research describes characteristics of lesbian families and challenges faced by these families in the context of heterosexist and homophobic societal attitudes. The research reveals lesbian parents and their children to be healthy, secure, and quite effective in negotiating the many challenges that accompany their stigmatized and minority status. Lesbian couples are confronted by an environment that disavows their unions, challenges their right and fitness to parent, and denies them basic civil and legal protections to individual and family security. Yet, they have succeeded in creating nurturing, egalitarian families in which they are bearing and raising well-functioning, well-adjusted, and socially tolerant children. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1992). Children of lesbian and gay parents. *Child Development*, 63, 1025-1042.**

Reviews research on the personal and social development of children of gay or lesbian parents (CGLP). Beginning with estimates of the numbers of such children, sociocultural, theoretical, and legal reasons for attention to their development are then outlined. In this context, studies on sexual identity, personal development, and social relationships among these children are reviewed. Evidence does not show that the development of CGLP is compromised significantly relative to that among children of heterosexual parents in comparable situations. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1995b).** Lesbian mothers, gay fathers, and their children. In A. R. D'Augelli & C. J. Patterson, (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay and bisexual identities over the lifespan: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 262-290). New York: Oxford University Press.

(From the chapter) considers some of the issues and perspectives relevant to research on lesbian and gay families with children / [presents] an overview of research on lesbian and gay parents, and . . . a review of research on children of lesbian and gay parents identifies some of the sources of diversity within lesbian and gay parenting communities / present research on those who became parents in the context of heterosexual relationships, before coming out as lesbian or gay / describe studies of lesbians who became parents after coming out [present] research on children born in the context of heterosexual relationships . . . followed by a description of new work with children born to or adopted by lesbian and gay parents. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1997).** Children of lesbian and gay parents. In T. Ollendick & R. Prinz (Eds.), *Advances in Clinical Child Psychology, Volume 19* (pp. 235-282). New York: Plenum Press.

Describes recent research on the personal and social development of children of lesbian and gay parents. Beginning with estimates of the numbers of such children, the author then outlines sociocultural, theoretical, and legal reasons that justify attention to their development. Research evidence is also presented on the sexual identity, personal development, and social relationships among these children, and on the mediating effects of divorce and adoption vs. biological birth. The author's own Bay Area Families Study, which examined the familial and individual adjustment of 4- to 9-year-old children born to versus adopted by lesbian mothers, is described. Results of this study show normal levels of maternal adjustment and personal esteem as well as normal social and personal development among children with lesbian mothers. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1998).** Family lives of children with lesbian mothers. In C. J. Patterson & A. R. D'Augelli (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay and bisexual identities in families: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 154-176). New York: Oxford University Press.

In the present chapter, the focus will be children who were born after their mothers came out as lesbians. Research with these families is as yet quite new, but a number of findings similar to those reported for families of divorced lesbian mothers have been reported. The author presents research on lesbian mothers and considers findings about the psychosocial development and adjustment of children born to or adopted early in life by lesbian mothers. After discussing research findings to date, the author suggests some directions for further study and examines the existing research for evidence with regard to one issue of particular interest—the extent to which biological linkages are related to the structure of family lives in the families of the lesbian baby boom. The chapter concludes with a general discussion of what has been learned and what directions seem promising for further work. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (2000).** Family relationships of lesbians and gay men. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 1052- 1069.

Presents an overview of research on the family lives of lesbians and gay men. It is noted that the family lives of lesbian and gay people have been a source of controversy during the past decade. Despite prejudice and discrimination, lesbians and gay men have often succeeded in creating and sustaining family relationships. Research on same-gender couple relationships, parent—child relationships, and other family relationships are reviewed here. In general, the picture of lesbian and gay relationships emerging from this body of work is one of positive adjustment, even in the face of stressful conditions. Research is also beginning to address questions about individual differences among the family relationships of les-

bians and gay men. It is concluded that future work in this area has the potential to affect lesbian and gay lives, influence developmental and family theory, and inform public policies. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (2004). Gay fathers. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (4th ed.). New York: John Wiley. No abstract available.**

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**Stacey, J., & Biblarz, T. J. (2001). (How) Does sexual orientation of parents matter? *American Sociological Review*, 65, 159-183.**

Opponents of lesbian and gay parental rights claim that children with lesbian parents are at higher risk for a variety of negative outcomes. Yet most research in psychology concludes that there are no differences in developmental outcomes between children raised by lesbian parents and those raised by heterosexual parents. This analysis challenges this defensive conceptual framework and analyzes how heterosexism has hampered intellectual progress in the field. The authors discuss limitations in the definitions, samples, and analyses of the studies to date. Next they explore findings from 21 studies and demonstrate that researchers frequently downplay findings indicating differences regarding children's gender and sexual preferences and behavior that could stimulate important theoretical questions. A less defensive, more sociologically informed analytic framework is proposed for investigating these issues. The framework focuses on (1) whether selection effects produced by homophobia account for associations between parental sexual orientations and child outcomes; (2) the role of parental gender vis-à-vis sexual orientation in influencing children's gender development; and (3) the relationship between parental sexual orientations and children's sexual preferences and behaviors. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Tasker, F. (1999). Children in lesbian-led families—A review. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 4, 153-166.**

Research on non-clinical samples of children raised in lesbian-led families formed after parental divorce, together with studies of children raised in families planned by a single lesbian mother or lesbian couple, suggest that growing up in a lesbian-led family does not have negative effects on key developmental outcomes. In many ways family life for children growing up in lesbian-led families is similar to that experienced by children in heterosexual families. In other respects there are important distinctions, such as different types of family forms and the impact of social stigma on the family, that may influence how clinicians approach therapeutic work with children in lesbian mother families. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Victor, S. B., & Fish, M. C. (1995). Lesbian mothers and their children: A review for school psychologists. *School Psychology Review*, 24, 456-479.**

Reviews 56 studies (published from 1971 to 1994) on lesbian mothers and their children. Three main family patterns and some common misconceptions about these families are addressed. Research suggests there are no differences between children of lesbians and children of heterosexuals with regard to their emotional health, interpersonal relationships, sexual orientation, or gender development. Psychological adjustment and parenting skills were not significantly different for lesbian and heterosexual mothers. Implications for school psychology practice and training are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

## Reviews of Empirical Studies Generally Related to the Fitness of Lesbians and Gay Men as Parents

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Amato, P. R. (2001). Children of divorce in the 1990s: An update of the Amato and Keith (1991) meta-analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*, 355-370.

The present study updates the P. R. Amato and B. Keith (1991) meta-analysis of children and divorce with a new analysis of 67 studies published in the 1990s. Compared with children with continuously married parents, children with divorced parents continued to score significantly lower on measures of academic achievement, conduct, psychological adjustment, self-concept, and social relations. After controlling for study characteristics, curvilinear trends with respect to decade of publication were present for academic achievement, psychological well-being, self-concept, and social relations. For these outcomes, the gap between children with divorced and married parents decreased during the 1980s and increased again during the 1990s. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2005 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Amato, P. R., & Keith, B. (1991). Parental divorce and the well-being of children: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 110*, 26-46.

Meta-analysis involved 92 studies that compared children living in divorced single-parent families with children living in continuously intact families on measures of well-being. Children of divorce scored lower than children in intact families across a variety of outcomes, with the median effect size being 1/4 of a standard deviation. For some outcomes, methodologically sophisticated studies yielded weaker effect sizes than did other studies. In addition, for some outcomes, more recent studies yielded weaker effect sizes than did studies carried

out during earlier decades. Some support was found for theoretical perspectives emphasizing parental absence and economic disadvantage, but the most consistent support was found for a family conflict perspective. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2005 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Cochran, S. D. (2001). Emerging issues in research on lesbians' and gay men's mental health: Does sexual orientation really matter? *American Psychologist, 56*, 931-947.

Theoretical writings and research suggest that the onset, course, treatment, and prevention of mental disorders among lesbians and gay men differ in important ways from those of other individuals. Recent improvements in studies of sexual orientation and mental health morbidity have enabled researchers to find some elevated risk for stress-sensitive disorders that is generally attributed to the harmful effects of antihomosexual bias. Lesbians and gay men who seek mental health services must find culturally competent care within systems that may not fully address their concerns. The affirmative therapies offer a model for intervention, but their efficacy and effectiveness need to be empirically documented. Although methodological obstacles are substantial, failure to consider research questions in this domain overlooks the welfare of individuals who may represent a sizable minority of those accessing mental health services annually. (Reprinted with permission of the American Psychological Association, Inc. Copyright © 2001. All rights reserved.)

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Finkelhor, D., & Russell, D. (1984). Women as perpetrators: Review of the evidence. In D. Finkelhor (Ed.), *Child sexual abuse: New theory and research* (pp. 171-187). New York: Free Press. No abstract available.



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**Freedman, M. (1971).** *Homosexuality and psychological functioning.* Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.  
**No abstract available.**

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**Gillis, J. R. (1998).** Cultural heterosexism and the family. In C. J. Patterson & A. R. D'Augelli (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities in the family: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 249-269). New York: Oxford University Press.

(From the chapter) This chapter cites modern examples of cultural heterosexism, reviews some longitudinal data suggesting changes in attitudes toward lesbian, bisexual, and gay people, and offers some direction for research aimed at reducing cultural heterosexism. Employment rights, beliefs about the morality, legality, and cause of homosexuality are also included. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Gonsiorek, J. (1991).** The empirical basis for the demise of the illness model of homosexuality. In J. C. Gonsiorek & J. D. Weinrich (Eds.), *Homosexuality: Research implications for public policy* (pp. 115-136). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

(From the chapter) How can one understand the pathology or nonpathology of homosexuality if one does believe in the reasonableness of psychiatric diagnosis? My perspective is that psychiatric diagnosis is legitimate, but its application to homosexuality is erroneous and invalid because there is no empirical justification for it. The diagnosis of homosexuality as an illness is bad science. Therefore, whether one accepts or rejects the plausibility of the diagnostic enterprise in psychiatry, there is no basis for viewing homosexuality as a disease or as indicative of psychological disturbance. It is my conclusion that the issue of whether homosexuality per se is a sign of psychopathology, psychological maladjustment, or disturbance has been answered, and the answer is that it is not. The studies reviewed and

the findings in this chapter ought to be the touchstone of further theory and research in the study of homosexuality, because they represent the most carefully designed, reliable, valid, and objective measures of adjustment in the armamentarium of the behavioral sciences. Although it is clear that homosexuality is not in and of itself related to psychopathology, there are persistent suggestions that the particular stresses endured by gay men and lesbians, especially in adolescence and young adulthood, may cause an upsurge in attempted suicide and perhaps chemical abuse, perhaps temporary or perhaps in a segment of homosexuals. They do not suggest the inherent psychopathology of homosexuality; rather they suggest additional especially stressful developmental events in the lives of some gay men and lesbians that require theoretical explication. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Hart, M., Roback, H., Tittler, B., Weitz, L., Walston, B., & McKee, E. (1978).** Psychological adjustment of nonpatient homosexuals: Critical review of the research literature. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 39, 604-608.

Reviews research studies comparing adjustment levels of nonpatient homosexuals and heterosexuals. The paper focuses on (a) methodological problems in research on homosexuality; (b) studies comparing adjustment levels of male homosexuals and male heterosexuals, effeminate and noneffeminate male homosexuals, and female homosexuals and female heterosexuals; (c) the relationship between degree of homosexuality and adjustment; (d) homosexual subculture; and (e) the relationship between homosexuality and psychopathology. It is concluded that findings to date have not demonstrated that the homosexual individuals are any less psychologically adjusted than their heterosexual counterparts. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Herek, G. M. (1995). Psychological heterosexism in the United States. In A. R. D'Augelli & C. J. Patterson (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities over the lifespan: Psychological perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press.

(From the chapter) uses social science theory and empirical research to describe and explain psychological heterosexism in the US today / addresses the attitudinal and belief components of psychological heterosexism, with special attention to cognitive and motivational processes / behavioral aspects of psychological heterosexism—specifically, acts of violence against lesbians and gay men—are discussed / the consequences of psychological heterosexism are considered. (PsycINFO Database Record.

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Herek, G. M. (1998). **Bad science in the service of stigma: A critique of the Cameron group's survey studies.** In G. M. Herek (Ed.), *Stigma and sexual orientation: Understanding prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals*. (pp. 223-255). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Discusses the work by psychologist Paul Cameron and his research group, which has argued that homosexuals threaten public health, social order, and the well-being of children. This chapter critically reviews the principal source of data for the Cameron group's publications and identifies six serious errors in their sampling techniques, survey methodology, and interpretation of results. This chapter also uses objective indicators to show that the Cameron group's survey results have had no discernible impact on scientific research. They have been published in journals with low levels of professional prestige and scientific impact, and have been cited in few other research articles, most of which criticized their methodology. It is concluded that the Cameron group's surveys are an example of bad science that has been used to perpetuate the stigma historically associated with homosexuality. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2005 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Meyer, I. H. (2003). **Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence.** *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674-697.

In this article the author reviews research evidence on the prevalence of mental disorders in lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (LGBs) and shows, using meta-analyses, that LGBs have a higher prevalence of mental disorders than heterosexuals. The author offers a conceptual framework for understanding this excess in prevalence of disorder in terms of minority stress—explaining that stigma, prejudice, and discrimination create a hostile and stressful social environment that causes mental health problems. The model describes stress processes, including the experience of prejudice events, expectations of rejection, hiding and concealing, internalized homophobia, and ameliorative coping processes. This conceptual framework is the basis for the review of research evidence, suggestions for future research directions, and exploration of public policy implications. (PsycINFO Database Record.

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Money, J., & Ehrhardt, A. A. (1972). *Man and woman, boy and girl: The differentiation and dimorphism of gender identity from conception to maturity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Presents human and animal experimental and clinical findings from genetics, endocrinology, neurosurgery, psychology, and anthropology on sexual differentiation. In addition to physical abnormalities due to genetic and hormonal influences, environmental influences on the differentiation of gender identity and on erotic behavior are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Reiss, B. F. (1980). **Psychological tests in homosexuality.** In J. Marmor (Ed.), *Homosexual behavior: A modern reappraisal* (pp. 296-311). New York: Basic Books. No abstract available.

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Sarafino, E. P. (1979). **An estimate of nationwide incidence of sexual offenses against children.** *Child Welfare, 58*, 127-134.

Complete data are lacking for accurately estimating sexual offenses against children on a national scale, but projections from statistics available indicate the magnitude of the social problem. (*Reprinted with permission of the Child Welfare League of America. Copyright © 1979. All rights reserved.*)

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Stein, T. S. (1993). **Overview of new developments in understanding homosexuality.** *Review of Psychiatry, 12*, 9-40. No abstract available.

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## Legal Reviews

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**American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian and Gay Rights Project. (2002).** *Too high a price: The case against restricting gay parenting.* New York: American Civil Liberties Union.

*Too High a Price: The Case Against Restricting Gay Parenting* is a 118-page paperback book that provides a comprehensive analysis of legal and policy issues regarding gay parenting, detailing the many restrictions and biases against gay parents that ultimately disrupt families and hurt children. The book, written to support the ACLU's case challenging Florida's anti-gay adoption ban, examines in depth the social science evidence, the legal arguments, and the public policy considerations regarding lesbian and gay parents. Includes summaries of 22 social science studies on gay parenting released between 1981 and 1998, statements from several mainstream national child advocacy and psychological organizations, and profiles of several gay parents and their children. (Reprinted with permission of the American Civil Liberties Union. Copyright © 2005. All rights reserved.)

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**Appell, A. R. (2003).** Recent developments in lesbian and gay adoption law. *Adoption Quarterly*, 7(1), 73-84.

Discusses the recent developments in lesbian and gay adoption law. While several states have resolved questions relating to lesbian and gay adoption in the past few years, a couple of states have seen challenges to what appeared to be the status quo. The author starts with the cases in which courts of appeals have ruled on the permissibility of adoption by same-sex couples or single lesbians and turns next to the unresolved challenges. Nationwide, there appears to have been little political or legal resolution regarding the desirability of expansive notions of family. Yet the issue is on both judicial and legislative radar, playing out most frequently in the context of the relationship between marriage and adoption. Legislatures may have the ultimate say

and can give relatively definitive answers to these questions: California, Connecticut, and Vermont affirmatively permit same-sex couples to sanction their families; while Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Utah have answered to the contrary. In the meantime, constitutional challenges similar to the one in Florida may be brought in Mississippi, Oklahoma and, perhaps, Utah, while same-sex adoption remains uncertain in states without determinate judicial or legislative rules regarding co-parent adoption. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Falk, P. J. (1989).** Lesbian mothers: Psychosocial assumptions in family law. *American Psychologist*, 44, 941-947.

Discrimination persists in courts' consideration of lesbian mothers' petitions for custody of their children. Courts often have assumed that lesbian women are emotionally unstable or unable to assume a maternal role. They also often have assumed that their children are likely to be emotionally harmed, subject to molestation, impaired in gender role development, or themselves homosexual. None of these assumptions are supported by extant research and theory. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Falk, P. J. (1994).** The gap between psychosocial assumptions and empirical research in lesbian-mother child custody cases. In A. E. Gottfried & A. W. Gottfried (Eds.), *Redefining families: Implications for children's development* (pp. 131-156). New York: Plenum.

(From the chapter) a rapidly growing and highly consistent body of empirical work has failed to identify significant differences between lesbian mothers and their heterosexual counterparts or the children raised by these groups / researchers have been unable to establish empirically that detriment results to children from being raised by lesbian



mothers / thus, it appears that there is a considerable gap between many of the assumptions on which legal decision makers have traditionally based their [child custody] decisions and the corresponding empirical and theoretical literature on lesbian mothers and their children / the major implication for legal decision makers is that they should focus less or not at all on the sexual orientation of a potential custodian and more on other factors commonly associated with the best-interests-of-the-child standard, such as the quality of the parent-child relationship. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Hitchens, D. J., & Kirkpatrick, M. J. (1985). Lesbian mothers/gay fathers. In D. H. Schetky & E. P. Benedek (Eds.), *Emerging issues in child psychiatry and the law* (pp. 115-125). New York: Brunner-Mazel. No abstract available.**

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**Patterson, C. J., Fulcher, M., & Wainright, J. (2002). Children of lesbian and gay parents: Research, law, and policy. In B. L. Bottoms, M. B. Kovera, & B. D. McAuliff (Eds.), *Children, social science and the law* (pp. 176-199). New York: Cambridge University Press.**

(From the chapter) Provides an overview of the legal and policy terrain for children of lesbian and gay parents in the US today, with an eye to the diversity of issues and families involved. This is followed by a discussion of the research literature on children of lesbian and gay parents, and by recommendations for changes in law and policy that would benefit children in lesbian- and gay-parented families. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2003 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J., & Redding, R. E. (1996). Lesbian and gay families with children: Implications of social science research for policy. *Journal of Social Issues*, 52(3), 29-50.**

In this paper, we provide an overview of variability across jurisdictions in family law relevant to lesbian and gay parents and their children, showing that some courts have been negatively disposed to these families. We summarize recent research findings suggesting that lesbian and gay parents are as likely as are heterosexual parents to provide home environments that support positive outcomes among children. Research findings suggest that unless and until the weight of evidence can be shown to have shifted, parental sexual orientation should be considered irrelevant to disputes involving child custody, visitation, foster care, and adoption. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Wardle, L. D. (1997). The potential impact of homosexual parenting on children. *University of Illinois Law Review*, 833-919. No abstract available.**



## Case Studies and Popular Works Related to Lesbian and Gay Parenting

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Agbayewa, M. O. (1984). Fathers in the newer family forms: Male or female? *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 29, 402-406.

Current social trends have produced significant changes in the family system, with the emergence of newer family forms such as single-parent and homosexual families. The example of a 6-year-old boy in a female homosexual family is used as the basis of a discussion of theories of sex-role development. The literature on father absence and the converging roles of father and mother, and of men and women, is reviewed. It is suggested that women may function as fathers in the newer family forms. Longitudinal studies of children in these newer family forms are needed to define the implications of these social changes for personality development theories and mental health care delivery. (French abstract) (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Alpert, H. (1988).** *We are everywhere: Writings by and about lesbian parents.* Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press. **No abstract available.**

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**Arnup, K. (Ed.) (1995).** *Lesbian parenting: Living with pride and prejudice.* Charlottetown PEI, Canada: Gynergy Press. **No abstract available.**

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**Barret, R. L., & Robinson, B. E. (1990).** *Gay fathers.* Lexington MA: Lexington Books.

Addresses the complexity of gay and lesbian families using narratives reported by gay and lesbian parents and their children. Discusses research into case law and psychological literature and chronicles the legal and social history of lesbian and gay parenting. A useful resource with information of value not only for gay men and lesbian women but also for judges,

lawyers, therapists, and medical personnel. (Copyright © 1995 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Bozett, F. W. (1987).** Children of gay fathers. In F. W. Bozett (Ed.), *Gay and lesbian parents* (pp. 39-57). New York: Praeger.

(From the chapter) child custody / sexual orientation and lifestyle on their children / custodial gay fathers / children's reactions to having a gay father / social control strategies / boundary control influencing factors / mutuality / father's reactions / protective strategies / role modeling / children's development of sexual identity / homonegative reactions of children. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Clausen, J. (1985).** *Sinking stealing.* Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press. **No abstract available.**

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**Galluccio, J., Galluccio, M., & Groff, D. M. (2002).** *An American Family.* New York: St. Martins Press. **No abstract available.**

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**Green, J. (1999).** *The velveteen father: An unexpected journey to parenthood.* New York: Ballantine Books. **No abstract available.**

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**Howey, N., & Samuels, E. (Eds.) (2000).** *Out of the ordinary: Essays on growing up with lesbian, gay, and transgender parents.* New York: St. Martins Press. **No abstract available.**

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**Jullion, J. (1985).** *Long way home: The odyssey of a lesbian mother and her children.* San Francisco: Cleis Press. **No abstract available.**

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**Mager, D. (1975). Faggot father. In K. Jay & A. Young (Eds.), *After you're out* (pp. 128-134). New York: Links Books. No abstract available.**

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**Martin, D., & Lyon, P. (1972). *Lesbian woman*. San Francisco: Glide Publications. No abstract available.**

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**Morgen, K. B. (1995). *Getting Simon: Two gay doctors' journey to fatherhood*. New York: Bramble Books.**

*Two Gay Doctors' Journey to Fatherhood* chronicles the story of psychologist Ken Morgen and his partner of 15 years, family practitioner Sam Westrick, as they try to create a family. Although the lesbian baby boom had been going on for some years prior to the Morgen–Westrick's experiences, family building for gay male couples at the time this book was written was a fairly new idea. Most gay couples up until the early '90's had children in marriages which most often eventually ended in divorce. After a couple of dramatic false starts in which they were left in the delivery room without the baby they expected to take home, Morgen and Westrick went on an obsessive and tireless search to find a birth-mother, whether to accomplish an adoption by conventional means or using her as a surrogate mother. The roller-coaster of a ride as they meet a variety of women of varying degrees of mental health, pregnancy and honesty, makes *Getting Simon*—in the words of one critic—"...a page turner." Eventually, the couple succeeds in meeting "Ms. Right," but not without a twist of fate that stuns the reader with its irony. Ken Morgen wrote this deeply personal and revealing memoir not only as a testimonial to his faith in the possibility of two men having a baby, but also to the success gay couples can have in creating families if they want to badly enough. In the final chapter is a "How To..." guide for those who would like to follow their path. (*Reprinted with permission of Kenneth B. Morgen. Copyright © 1995. All rights reserved.*)

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**Osman, S. (1972). My stepfather is a she. *Family Process*, 11, 209-218.**

Presents a case study of family therapy conducted with a lesbian couple and their two sons. Therapy was initiated around the acting-out behavior of the oldest son (15 years old), which the boy attempted to blame on his discovery of his mother's lesbianism. Suggests that the nontraditional structure of the family was not a direct contributor to the family dynamics. Observes that the issue of homosexuality was in the background for all involved. Clinicians are advised to be aware of their own biases within the current cultural matrix. (Copyright © 1995 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Perreault, J. (1975). Lesbian mother. In K. Jay & A. Young (Eds.), *After you're out* (pp. 125-127). New York: Links Books. No abstract available.**

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**Perrin, E. C. (2002). *Sexual orientation in child and adolescent health care*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.**

Integrates a variety of issues and information regarding sexuality and sexual orientation that may be useful in the medical treatment of children and adolescents and their families. This text features initiatives to improve the process of clinical care for gay and lesbian individuals and their families, as well as the community as a whole; common scenarios encountered in clinical practice, along with a discussion of their meaning and care; and explicit suggestions for child health professionals to direct efforts to change the context of medical education. This book is intended to be a resource for child health care professionals, including pediatricians, family physicians, nurses, physician's assistants, pediatric psychologists, child psychiatrists, and social workers. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Pollack, S., & Vaughn, J. (Eds.). (1987). *Politics of the heart: A lesbian parenting anthology*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books. No abstract available.**

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**Rafkin, L. (Ed.). (1990). *Different mothers: Sons and daughters of lesbians talk about their lives*. Pittsburgh: Cleis Press. No abstract available.**

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**Savage, D. (2000). *The kid: What happened after my boyfriend and I decided to go get pregnant: An adoption story*. New York: Plume. No abstract available.**

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**Schulenberg, J. (1985). *Gay parenting: A complete guide for gay men and lesbians with children*. New York: Anchor Books.**

A guide to help gay men and lesbian women with issues of being gay or lesbian and a parent. Draws from interviews with lesbian and gay parents and their families. Issues covered are: coming out to your children, co-parenting, artificial insemination, adoption and foster parenting, and custody and visitation. Also includes listing of other resources: support groups, legal, counseling and health services, religious organizations, gay/lesbian hotlines, and an extensive bibliography on lesbian and gay parenting. (Copyright © 1995 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Weeks, R. B., Derdeyn, A. P., & Langman, M. (1975). Two cases of children of homosexuals. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 6, 26-32.**

Reviews the literature with reference to parental attitudes related to homosexuality, sex-role typing, and object choice. Two cases of children of opposite-sexed homosexual parents are presented with projective testing indicating difficulties with gender role identity. It is suggested that the manifestation of sexual conflict in these homosexual parents expressed in attitudes and behavior toward the child is not unique

and does not differ significantly from that of the heterosexual parent who has sexual conflicts. Gathering of more long-term data is recommended. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Wells, J. (Ed.). (1997). *Lesbians raising sons*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books.**

*Lesbians Raising Sons* is an anthology of first person writings examining the ideas of manhood, of motherhood, of lesbians raising male children in yesterday's and today's world. Divided into three segments, the book takes an unflinching and entirely new look at mothering: "New Lessons" examines the way in which sons of lesbians grow up to be different men; "Making a Family" looks at family constructs and "Facing Losses" reveals the heart-breaking reality that many women have had to confront when their families were threatened by homophobic courts and traditions. *Lesbians Raising Sons* was a finalist for the coveted Lambda Literary Award, and informs prospective parents, educators, social workers, and anyone interested in family dynamics. (Reprinted with permission of Jess Wells. Copyright © 2005. All rights reserved.)

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**Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose: Lesbians, gays, kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press.**

(From the cover) In recent decades gay men and lesbians have increasingly portrayed themselves as people who seek not only to maintain ties with blood and adoptive relatives but also to establish families of their own. In *Families We Choose*, Kath Weston draws upon fieldwork and interviews to explore the ways gay men and lesbians are constructing their own notions of kinship by drawing on the symbolism of love, friendship, and biology. She presents interviewees' stories of coming out and of their subsequent relations with straight families. She also discusses changes in gay communities that have helped shape contemporary discourse about the gay family. Finally, she addresses the political implications of chosen families. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

## Theoretical and Conceptual Examinations Related to Lesbian and Gay Parenting

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**Bigner, J. J., & Bozett, F. W. (1990).** Parenting by gay fathers. In F. W. Bozett & M. B. Sussman (Eds.), *Homosexuality and family relations* (pp. 155-176). New York: Harrington Park Press.

Suggests that the process of identity development for homosexual (HS) fathers requires a reconciliation of two polar extremes. Since each identity (heterosexual and HS) essentially is unacceptable to the opposite culture, the task for these men is to integrate both identities into the cognitive class called gay father. Discussion focuses on motivations for fatherhood, the sociological hypothesis of low status integration for gay fathers, relationships between gay fathers and their children, parenting abilities, and issues of disclosure. Implications for educators, family law professionals, and therapists are examined, as well as ramifications for HS men who serve in caretaking roles. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2004 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Jones, B. M., & MacFarlane, K. (Eds.). (1980).** *Sexual abuse of children: Selected readings*. Washington, DC: National Center on Child Abuse & Neglect.

Selected readings on various aspects of child sexual abuse and treatment of abused children and their parents are provided for use as a resource for professionals and concerned citizens interested in community treatment programs. Topics addressed include developmental sexuality, the sexually abused child in the emergency room, venereal disease in children, reactions of the child and family to sexual abuse, literature concerning incest, the nature and treatment of male sex offenders, medical-legal aspects of sexual acts against children, humanistic treatment of

father–daughter incest, means of advocating for sexually abused children in the criminal justice system, a clinical view of sexually abused children, use of art therapy in the diagnosis and treatment of sexually abused children, child prostitution and child pornography, family and couple interactional patterns in cases of father–daughter incest, adult sexual orientation and attraction to underage persons, sexual misuse and the family, writings by victims of incest, and aspects of prevention and protection. Appendices include hospital protocols for the diagnosis and treatment of child sexual abuse, guidelines for parents concerning child sexual abuse, and a directory of child sexual abuse treatment programs. (Reprinted with permission of the National Clearinghouse on Childhood Abuse and Neglect. Copyright © 1980. All rights reserved.)

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**Martin, A. (1993).** *The lesbian and gay parenting handbook: Creating and raising our families*. New York: HarperCollins. No abstract available.

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**Martin, A. (1998).** Clinical issues in psychotherapy with lesbian-, gay-, and bisexual-parented families. In C. J. Patterson & A. R. D'Augelli (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities in families: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 270-291). New York: Oxford University Press.

(From the chapter) Families parented by lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals seek psychotherapy for a variety of difficulties that have nothing specifically to do with their sexual orientation. Yet they also have unique issues, circumstances, and problems that may be the focus of treatment or that may form the lens through which other problems are experienced. It behooves the therapist to become familiar with the myriad issues that are specific to such families in order to work in an ethical and effective manner. This chapter considers questions of family membership as they apply in lesbian- and gay-headed homes. How is it determined who is and who is not a member of such a family? Next, issues



of families with heterosexual beginnings are discussed. Parents who had children after identifying themselves as gay or lesbian, including the influence on family dynamics of the complicated legal and social pressures with which these families are coping, are addressed. Clinical examples from the author's practice are cited. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**McCandlish, B. (1987). Against all odds: Lesbian mother family dynamics. In F. W. Bozett (Ed.), *Gay and lesbian parents* (pp. 23-38). New York: Praeger.**

(From the chapter) lesbian family formation / psychotherapeutic treatment of lesbian mother families / family dynamics / developmental changes / enormous obstacles in custody battles artificial insemination / biological mother / nonbiological parents / legal difficulties / psychiatric problems / gender dysfunction. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1994b). Lesbian and gay couples considering parenthood: An agenda for research, service, and advocacy. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, 1, 33-55.**

When Americans reflect on what matters most to them, they often point to relationships with families and children. Historically, lesbian and gay Americans have faced legal, economic, and other forms of discrimination against their family relationships in general, and against their relationships with children in particular. Despite this history of discrimination, however, lesbians and gay men continue to form families, and many either are or wish to become parents. In this paper, I discuss special needs of lesbian and gay couples that are considering parenthood, describe innovative services that have been developed to meet these needs, and identify directions for future research, service, and advocacy. Much work remains to be done before lesbian and gay Americans will be

able to seek parenthood unencumbered by the burdens of prejudice, discrimination, and institutionalized heterosexism. (Reprinted with permission of the Haworth Press Inc. Copyright © 1994. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J. (1994c). Lesbian and gay families. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 3, 62-64.**

Outlines some of the principal issues and findings concerning lesbian and gay (LAG) families in the areas of individuals' families of origin, couple relationships, and LAG parenthood. Issues addressed include coming out, the similarities and differences between LAG couples and heterosexual couples in their relationships and in parenting, and the problems that LAG family members experience within their heterosexual families. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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**Patterson, C. J., & Chan, R. W. (1996). Gay fathers and their children. In R. P. Cabaj & T. S. Stein (Eds.), *Textbook of homosexuality and mental health* (pp. 371-393). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, Inc.**

(From the chapter) gay fatherhood has emerged into public awareness and brought questions / who are gay fathers, and how do they become parents / what kind of parents do gay men make, and how do their children develop / what special challenges and stresses do gay fathers and their children face in daily life, and how do they cope with them / what can acquaintance with gay fathers and their children offer to the understanding of parenthood, child development, and family life / although research literatures bearing on such questions are quite new and relatively sparse, existing studies address some issues raised by the existence of gay fathers. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

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Pennington, S. (1987). Children of lesbian mothers. In F. W. Bozett (Ed.), *Gay and lesbian parents* (pp. 58-74). New York: Praeger.

(From the chapter) normalcy of these children / sex-role socialization / gender identity / accomplishment of developmental tasks / intelligence / reaction to father absence / parental separation and divorce marital / parenting status / disclosure and its ramifications / relationship issues / custody / societal attitudes in general / implications for professionals / suggestions for research. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)



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Perrin, E. C. (1998). Children whose parents are lesbian or gay. *Contemporary Pediatrics*, 15, 113-130. No abstract available.

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Perrin, E. C., & the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2002). Technical report: Coparent or second-parent adoption by same-sex parents. *Pediatrics*, 109, 341-344.

A growing body of scientific literature demonstrates that children who grow up with one or two gay and/or lesbian parents fare as well in emotional, cognitive, social, and sexual functioning as do children whose parents are heterosexual.

Children's optimal development seems to be influenced more by the nature of the relationships and interactions within the family unit than by the particular structural form it takes. (PsycINFO Database Record. Copyright © 2002 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.)

## OTHER RESOURCES

### APA Amicus Briefs

For full text of APA amicus briefs in lesbian, gay, and bisexual cases, see <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/policy/amicusbriefs.html>.

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#### **In Re. Adoption of Luke, 640 N.W.2d 374**

**Brief Filed:** 9/01

**Court:** Nebraska Supreme Court

**Year of Decision:** 2002

**Issue:** Whether second parent adoptions must be denied when the co-parents are gay or lesbian

**Facts:** The case is an adoption proceeding commenced by the lesbian partner of the child's natural mother. The child was conceived by artificial insemination from an anonymous donor. The biological father was unknown and not a party to the action. The partner sought to adopt the child ("Luke") so that both she and the natural mother could be his legal parents. The trial court denied the adoption because of its interpretation of Nebraska law. The court observed that "everyone with the potential to successfully parent a child in foster care or adoption should be entitled to a fair and equal consideration regardless of sexual orientation or differing lifestyles." However, the court ruled that the laws of Nebraska require otherwise. The court read the Nebraska statutes as not allowing a non-married partner to adopt the child of that person's partner, no matter how qualified they are to be an adoptive parent. The case was appealed to the Nebraska Supreme Court.

**APA's Position:** APA's brief argued that research and clinical experience indicate that when children have been raised by lesbian couples, adoption by the second parent is generally beneficial for the child's social and psychological development and therefore consistent with the child's best interests. The brief also provided research to indicate that parents' sexu-

al orientation does not adversely affect their children or their parenting.

**Result:** The Nebraska Supreme Court affirmed denial of the second-parent adoption. The court premised its decision on a strict construction of the Nebraska adoption statute.

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#### **Boswell v. Boswell**

**Brief Filed:** 7/98

**Court:** Court of Appeals of Maryland

**Year of Decision:** 1998

**Issue:** Whether a gay father may be denied overnight visitation with his children and visitations in the presence of his male partner

**Facts:** In a custody hearing, the trial court had restricted the former husband's visitation with his children, prohibiting overnight visitation, the presence of the father's male partner, and the presence of "anyone having homosexual tendencies or such persuasions, male or female, or with anyone that the father may be living with in a non-marital relationship." The restrictions were not requested or advocated by any partner or witness in the case. The Court of Special Appeals of Maryland ruled that the restrictions were an abuse of discretion by the trial court judge and vacated that aspect of the decision. The mother appealed to the Court of Appeals of Maryland (the highest state court).

**APA's Position:** APA submitted an amicus brief with the National Association of Social Workers on behalf of the respondent father. The brief asserted that: (1) homosexuality is not a mental disorder; (2) gay men and lesbians have comparable parenting skills to heterosexuals; (3) gay fathers and lesbian mothers do not present a heightened danger of sexual abuse; (4) therefore, gay men and lesbians are fit parents to the same extent as heterosexuals; (5) children raised by gay or lesbian parents do not differ psychologically and socially from children raised by heterosexual parents; (6) research does not indicate that exposure of

children to their father's same-sex partner generally has negative effects and there is evidence that involvement of the partner in the children's lives may, in fact, be beneficial to them.

**Result:** The Maryland Court of Appeals affirmed, finding that the divorce court's order was an abuse of discretion. The court followed other jurisdictions in requiring a showing of actual or potential harm to the children before a parent's visitation may be restricted based on his or her nonmarital relationship, whether homosexual or heterosexual. Additionally, the trial court must make specific findings based on sound evidence rather than basing a ruling to restrict visitation on stereotypes or bias.

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**DeLong v. DeLong, Case No. 80637  
(Sup. Ct. Mo. 1998)**

**Brief Filed:** 6/98

**Court:** Supreme Court of Missouri

**Year of Decision:** 1998

**Issue:** Whether a lesbian mother may be denied custody solely on the basis of her sexual orientation rather than on the basis of what is in the best interests of the child

**Facts:** A Missouri trial court denied a lesbian mother custody of her daughter solely on the basis of her sexual orientation in accordance with prior appellate court decisions finding lesbian and gay parents per se unfit to have custody of a child. The Missouri appellate court rejected this per se rule and held that all child custody decisions involving a gay or lesbian parent should be decided according to the same standard used in evaluating the fitness of heterosexual parents—an individualized determination of the child's best interest. The father appealed the decision, and the Supreme Court of Missouri agreed to review the decision.

**APA's Position:** APA filed an amicus brief summarizing the existing research on children raised by lesbian and gay parents and the absence of any demonstrable connection between a person's sexual orientation and his or her fitness as a parent. The brief asserted that: (1) the appellate court's ruling that a

mother's sexual orientation cannot be presumed to be detrimental to her children is supported by a considerable body of scientific research on children of lesbian parents, finding that children raised by gay parents are as healthy psychologically and socially as those raised by heterosexuals, and that there is no significant difference between the two groups on sexual identity and gender role issues; and (2) research on parenting issues indicates that lesbians and gay men are as fit parents as heterosexuals, homosexuality is not a mental disorder, and the two groups have comparable parenting skills.

**Result:** The Supreme Court of Missouri affirmed that the relevant test was the "best interests of the children" and that homosexual parents are not ipso facto unfit for custody. However, the court decided that it was proper to consider the impact of homosexual or heterosexual misconduct on children, and affirmed the custody determination that had gone to the heterosexual parent. The court did find the visitation restrictions imposed by the trial court to be too broad (the children were prohibited from being in the presence of anyone known to be a lesbian and any female with whom the mother was living who was not a relative). The Court remanded the visitation restrictions to the trial court to limit the conditions to apply only to individuals whose presence or conduct may be contrary to the best interests of the children.

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**Hertzler v. Hertzler, 908 P.2d 946**

**Brief Filed:** 12/94

**Court:** Supreme Court of the State of Wyoming

**Year of Decision:** 1995

**Issue:** Whether the "best interests of the child" is served by restricting visitation rights to a minimum level because of a mother's sexual orientation as a lesbian

**Facts:** Pamela and Dean Hertzler were married for 15 years. During the marriage, they adopted two children. Pamela initiated divorce proceedings after determining that she was a lesbian. After the divorce, Pamela was awarded custody of the two children. She later moved to Ohio to live with her partner, Peggy



Keating. In order to move, she agreed to transfer custody to Dean, with the understanding that she would be allowed liberal visitation as was the case for Dean when she had custody. After Dean remarried, he filed a petition to modify the visitation arrangement and filed a motion for a temporary restraining order. He alleged that the children had been harmed by contact with their mother and her domestic partner. Based on Dean's allegations, the court issued a temporary restraining order that limited Pamela's contact to supervised visits and disallowed any contact between the children and Peggy. The court determined that the children had been exposed to inappropriate sexual behavior and had become eroticized. The judge relied on the testimony of Mr. J. Lynn Rhodes, a former minister who recently received his master's degree in counseling and who admitted during trial that his religious beliefs regarding homosexuality affected his opinions in the case. The judge rejected the opinions offered by plaintiff's experts, Dr. Carol Jenny, MD (Director of the Child Advocacy and Protection Team at Children's Hospital Denver), and Dr. Larry Bloom (a licensed clinical psychologist with 20 years' experience in evaluating family interaction and dynamics). The court held that homosexuality is generally socially unacceptable, and it is probable that the children will be subject to social difficulties as a result of the plaintiff's lifestyle in addition to their personal concern. The court stated it would find it appropriate to reduce the plaintiff's visitation with the children, even if issues of sexual abuse or eroticization were resolved, because (1) the plaintiff's open homosexuality was likely to create confusion and difficulty for the children, (2) her lifestyle was likely to negatively affect the development of the children's moral values, and (3) the state had an interest in supporting conventional marriages and families. Pamela appealed to the Supreme Court of Wyoming.

**APA's Position:** APA submitted a brief arguing that: (1) the social science research (a) has reported no significant differences between children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers and those raised by heterosexual parents, (b) indicates that the overall psychological health of children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers does not differ from that of children raised by heterosexual parents, (c) reports no differences

between the social relationships of children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers and children raised by heterosexual parents, and (d) does not suggest that a parent's sexual orientation influences the sexual identity of his or her child; (2) the social science research does not suggest that lesbian mothers and gay fathers are likely to be unfit parents; and (3) visitation cases should be decided without regard to a parent's openly lesbian or gay relationship because (a) an assumption that a child should not have significant contact with a parent in an openly lesbian or gay relationship undermines Wyoming's statutory mandate that visitation determinations be based on the welfare of the child, and (b) the trial court's reference to a state interest in supporting conventional marriages and families does not provide an appropriate basis for restricting a parent's visitation rights.

**Result:** The Wyoming Supreme Court affirmed the trial court, but strongly criticized the judge for indulging in personal biases against homosexuality and ordered the court to continue to ease the limitations on Pamela's visitation times.

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**Bottoms v. Bottoms, 457 S.E.2d 102, (1997 WL 421218)**

(on appeal after remand)

**Brief(s) Filed:** 11/93 (Va. Ct. App.); 12/94 (Va. S. Ct.)

**Courts:** Virginia Court of Appeals; Supreme Court of Virginia

**Year of Decision(s):** 1995

**Issue:** Whether a lesbian biological mother could be denied custody of her child on the grounds that her sexual orientation rendered her unfit as a parent

**Facts:** Kay Bottoms sought custody of her grandson because his mother, Sharon Bottoms, was a lesbian and was raising the boy in the home she shared with her lesbian lover. The trial court held that because she was a lesbian, Sharon Bottoms was per se unfit to raise her son and awarded custody to the grandmother. APA submitted a brief at the appellate level, and the trial court's decision was reversed. The grandmother appealed to the Supreme Court of Virginia.

**APA's Position:** APA submitted a brief to the Supreme Court of Virginia arguing that: (1) social science research indicates that (a) there are no significant differences between children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers and those raised by heterosexual parents, (b) the overall psychological health of children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers does not differ from that of children raised by heterosexual parents, (c) no differences have been reported between the social relationships of children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers and children raised by heterosexual parents, (d) a parent's sexual orientation does not influence the gender identity, gender role behavior, or sexual orientation of his or her child, (e) lesbian mothers and gay fathers are not likely to be unfit parents, and (f) lesbian mothers and gay fathers have parenting skills comparable to those of heterosexual parents; (2) professional social science organizations have rejected the view that lesbians and gay men as a group are dysfunctional; (3) a natural parent in an openly lesbian or gay relationship is entitled to the presumption of parental fitness; and (4) the fact that sodomy continues to be punishable as a felony under Virginia law is not grounds for depriving a lesbian or gay parent of custody.

**Result:** The Supreme Court of Virginia held that there was sufficient evidence to support the trial court's findings that a presumption in favor of mother's custody was rebutted by clear and convincing evidence of unfitness and that the child's best interests would be served by awarding custody to the grandmother. It found that felonious sexual conduct inherent in lesbianism was an important consideration in determining the mother's unfitness for custody of the child, and that the child's cursing, emotional upset at visitation with the mother, and standing in a corner proved that the child had been harmed by the mother's living conditions. Visitation was also set by the lower court and was appealed by the mother. The Virginia Supreme Court reversed the decree dismissing the mother's "show cause petition" and substantially modifying the terms of visitation that prohibited all contact between the child and the mother's lover. The court held that the trial

court had improperly based its disposition of the visitation decree solely on the mother's sexual status, ignoring evidence of the pertinent statutory factors and without regard to the evidence of impact of the attendant conduct on the child.

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## **Li v. Oregon**

**Brief Filed:** 10/04

**Court:** Supreme Court of the State of Oregon

**Year of Decision:** 2005

**Issue:** A challenge to the constitutionality of Oregon's statutes limiting the right to marry to opposite-sex couples

**Facts:** Plaintiffs in this case—nine same-sex couples, the ACLU, and Multnomah County—filed a lawsuit challenging the state's refusal to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The lawsuit charges that Oregon's marriage statute, which bars same-sex couples from marriage, violates the state constitutional guarantees of fairness and equality. The trial court agreed with plaintiffs' constitutional premise. However, the court declined to grant the relief that plaintiffs sought (i.e., extension of the right of marriage to same sex couples). Instead, the trial court ruled that denying the issuing of marriage licenses to same-sex couples violated the state constitution by denying certain benefits to same-sex couples that otherwise were available to opposite sex couples by virtue of their marriages. The court gave the state legislature a deadline for creating a system for providing same-sex domestic partners access to similar rights afforded to married couples. The decision was appealed and went before the Oregon Supreme Court.

In November 2004, while the appeal was pending, Oregon voters adopted Ballot Measure 36, a voter-initiated amendment to the Oregon Constitution defining marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman. That amendment became effective in December 2004. The Supreme Court solicited supplemental briefing before hearing oral arguments, asking the parties to address the effect (if any) of that new constitutional provision on the issues raised in the appeal.

**APA's Position:** APA's brief provides the Court with the scientific and professional literature pertinent to the issues before the Court. Material provided is consistent with research APA provided as amicus in a variety of other cases involving parental rights, challenges to sodomy statutes, and other GLBT rights issues. The brief addresses the extensive psychological literature that has found no difference between same-sex and heterosexual couples on characteristics such as levels of intimacy, feelings of commitment, and desire for relationships as well as the scientific research which has firmly established that homosexuality is not a disorder or disease. Additionally, the brief addresses the large number of children raised by lesbians and gay men, both in same-sex couples and in single-parent families. APA takes the position that ending the prohibition on marriage for same-sex partners is in the best interest of the children being raised by these parents as the children will benefit from the legal stability and other familial benefits that marriage provides. The brief cites empirical research which shows that lesbian and gay parents do not differ from heterosexuals in their parenting skills, and their children do not show any deficits compared to children raised by heterosexual parents. Unlike past APA briefs supporting same-sex couples, this brief also addresses the social and psychological benefits—to both gay and heterosexual people—of marriage as an institution. The brief states that allowing same-sex couples to marry would give them access to the legal, social, and economic support that already facilitate and strengthen heterosexual marriages as well as end the anti-gay stigma imposed by the state through its same-sex marriage ban. Also addressed are invalidities in the research presented by opponents of same-sex marriage. In summary, the APA brief states that there is no scientific basis for distinguishing between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples with respect to the legal rights, obligations, benefits, and burdens conferred by civil marriage.

**Result:** In April 2005, the Oregon State Supreme Court ruled that Oregon's marriage statute limits marriage to opposite-sex couples and is constitutional by virtue of the amendment to the state con-

stitution barring same-sex marriage adopted in November 2004. The Court held that the issue of access to the benefits of marriage, i.e., the constitutional requirement of civil unions or some other alternative, was not properly before it and did not address that issue. The judgment of the circuit court was reversed, with the case remanded to the circuit court with instructions to dismiss the action.

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### **Lewis v. Harris**

**Brief Filed:** 11/04

**Court:** Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division

**Year of Decision:** 2005

**Issue:** Whether the New Jersey Constitution compels the state to allow same-sex couples to marry

**Facts:** Plaintiffs are seven same-sex couples who each applied for marriage licenses in New Jersey. Defendants are state officials with supervisory responsibilities relating to local officials' issuance of marriage licenses. Plaintiffs claim that the denial of their applications for marriage licenses violates their rights of privacy and equal protection of the law protected by the New Jersey Constitution. As relief for the claimed violations of their state constitutional rights, plaintiffs sought a mandatory injunction compelling the defendant state officials to provide them access to the institution of marriage on the same terms and conditions as a couple of the opposite sex. The trial court granted summary judgment for the state, denying the plaintiffs/appellants relief, and the case was appealed to the Superior Court of New Jersey.

**APA's Position:** APA's brief provides the Court with the scientific and professional literature pertinent to the issues before the Court. Material provided is consistent with research APA provided as amicus in a variety of other cases involving parental rights, challenges to sodomy statutes, and other GLBT rights issues. The brief addresses the extensive psychological literature that has found no difference between same-sex and heterosexual couples on characteristics such as levels of intimacy, feelings of

commitment, and desire for relationships as well as the scientific research that has firmly established that homosexuality is not a disorder or disease. Additionally, the brief addresses the large number of children raised by lesbians and gay men, both in same-sex couples and in single-parent families. APA takes the position that ending the prohibition on marriage for same-sex partners is in the best interest of the children being raised by these parents, as the children will benefit from the legal stability and other familial benefits that marriage provides. The brief cites empirical research which shows that lesbian and gay parents do not differ from heterosexuals in their parenting skills, and their children do not show any deficits compared to children raised by heterosexual parents. Unlike past APA briefs supporting same-sex couples, this brief also addresses the social and psychological benefits—to both gay and heterosexual people—of marriage as an institution. The brief states that allowing same-sex couples to marry would give them access to the legal, social, and economic support that already facilitate and strengthen heterosexual marriages as well as end the anti-gay stigma imposed by the state through its same-sex marriage ban. Also addressed are invalidities in the research presented by opponents of same-sex marriage. In summary, the APA brief states that there is no scientific basis for distinguishing between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples with respect to the legal rights, obligations, benefits, and burdens conferred by civil marriage.

**Result:** In June 2005, in a 2-1 opinion, New Jersey's Appellate Division ruled that the state's constitution does not compel New Jersey to allow same-sex couples to marry. The court held that such a change in the marriage law should come from the legislature and not the courts. Because there was a dissenting opinion at the appellate level, the Supreme Court must accept the appeal. APA will participate as amicus at the Supreme Court level.

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## **Andersen v. King County**

**Brief Filed:** 2/05

**Court:** Supreme Court of the State of Washington

**Year of Decision:** Pending

**Issue:** A challenge to the constitutionality of Washington's statutes limiting the right to marry to opposite-sex couples

**Facts:** Plaintiffs filed suit challenging the denial of marriage licenses to same-sex couples, arguing that denying marriage to same-sex couples violates the state constitution's guarantees of equality, liberty, and privacy to all state citizens. The state trial court, King County Superior Court, issued a decision holding that the state's law limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples violates the due process and equal protection guarantees of the Washington Constitution. The court concluded that the exclusion of same-sex partners from marriage and the privileges it entails "is not rationally related to any legitimate or compelling state interest." The trial court stayed the effect of its decision and certified the case for an immediate appeal.

**APA's Position:** This case poses fundamentally the same questions as the cases in *New Jersey, Lewis v. Harris*, and *Oregon, Li v. Oregon*, in which the APA filed amicus briefs. Although some details of the legal standards and specific arguments at issue in each of the cases may vary slightly, the psychological issues addressed by APA's amicus brief are essentially the same.

**Result:** The trial court specifically cited the APA's July 2004 resolution supporting same-sex marriage. In September 2004, the State Supreme Court accepted direct review of the trial court decision, and oral arguments were held in March 2005. A decision is pending.



## Professional Association Policies

### **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (1999)**

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) approved the following statement in support of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals in June 1999:

"The basis on which all decisions relating to custody and parental rights should rest on the best interest of the child. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals historically have faced more rigorous scrutiny than heterosexuals regarding their rights to be or become parents.

"There is no evidence to suggest or support that parents with a gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation are per se different from or deficient in parenting skills, child-centered concerns and parent-child attachments, when compared to parents with a heterosexual orientation. It has long been established that a homosexual orientation is not related to psychopathology, and there is no basis on which to assume that a parental homosexual orientation will increase likelihood of or induce a homosexual orientation in the child.

"Outcome studies of children raised by parents with a homosexual or bisexual orientation, when compared to heterosexual parents, show no greater degree of instability in the parental relationship or developmental dysfunction in children.

"The AACAP opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation against individuals in regard to their rights as custodial or adoptive parents as adopted by Council."

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### **American Academy of Family Physicians (2002)**

***On gay and lesbian parenting.*** The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) adopted the following position statement at its October 2002 meeting:

"RESOLVED, That the AAFP establish policy and be supportive of legislation which promotes a safe and nurturing environment, including psychological and legal security, for all children, including those of adoptive parents, regardless of the parents' sexual orientation."

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### **American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (2004)**

***On same-sex unions.*** The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers adopted the following position statement at its November 2004 meeting:

"BE IT RESOLVED That the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers supports the legalization of marriage between same-sex couples and the extension to same-sex couples who marry and their children of all of the legal rights and obligations of spouses and children of spouses.

"BE IT RESOLVED That the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers encourages the United States Congress and the legislatures of all states to achieve the legalization of marriage between same-sex couples and the extension to same-sex couples who marry and their children of all of the legal rights and obligations of spouses and children of spouses.

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### **American Academy of Pediatrics (2002)**

The American Academy of Pediatrics issued the following statement in support of gay and lesbian parenting and called for equal access to co-parenting and second-parent adoption rights for gay and lesbian parents in February 2002:

"Children deserve to know that their relationships with both of their parents are stable and legally recognized. This applies to all children, whether their parents are of the same or opposite sex. The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes that a considerable body of professional literature provides evidence that children with parents who are homosexual can have the same advantages and the same expectations for health, adjustment, and development as can children

whose parents are heterosexual. When two adults participate in parenting a child, they and the child deserve the serenity that comes with legal recognition.

"Children born or adopted into families headed by partners who are of the same sex usually have only one biologic or adoptive legal parent. The other partner in a parental role is called the "coparent" or "second parent." Because these families and children need the permanence and security that are provided by having two fully sanctioned and legally defined parents, the Academy supports the legal adoption of children by coparents or second parents. Denying legal parent status through adoption to coparents or second parents prevents these children from enjoying the psychological and legal security that comes from having two willing, capable, and loving parents.

"Several states have considered or enacted legislation sanctioning second-parent adoption by partners of the same sex. In addition, legislative initiatives assuring legal status equivalent to marriage for gay and lesbian partners, such as the law approving civil unions in Vermont, can also attend to providing security and permanence for the children of those partnerships.

"Many states have not yet considered legislative actions to ensure the security of children whose parents are gay or lesbian. Rather, adoption has been decided by probate or family courts on a case-by-case basis. Case precedent is limited. It is important that a broad ethical mandate exist nationally that will guide the courts in providing necessary protection for children through coparent adoption.

"Coparent or second-parent adoption protects the child's right to maintain continuing relationships with both parents. The legal sanction provided by coparent adoption accomplishes the following:

1. Guarantees that the second parent's custody rights and responsibilities will be protected if the first parent were to die or become incapacitated. Moreover, second-parent adoption protects the child's legal right of relationships with both parents. In the absence of coparent adoption, mem-

bers of the family of the legal parent, should he or she become incapacitated, might successfully challenge the surviving coparent's rights to continue to parent the child, thus causing the child to lose both parents.

2. Protects the second parent's rights to custody and visitation if the couple separates. Likewise, the child's right to maintain relationships with both parents after separation, viewed as important to a positive outcome in separation or divorce of heterosexual parents, would be protected for families with gay or lesbian parents.
3. Establishes the requirement for child support from both parents in the event of the parents' separation.
4. Ensures the child's eligibility for health benefits from both parents.
5. Provides legal grounds for either parent to provide consent for medical care and to make education, health care, and other important decisions on behalf of the child.
6. Creates the basis for financial security for children in the event of the death of either parent by ensuring eligibility to all appropriate entitlements, such as Social Security survivors benefits.

"On the basis of the acknowledged desirability that children have and maintain a continuing relationship with two loving and supportive parents, the Academy recommends that pediatricians do the following:

Be familiar with professional literature regarding gay and lesbian parents and their children.

Support the right of every child and family to the financial, psychological, and legal security that results from having legally recognized parents who are committed to each other and to the welfare of their children.

Advocate for initiatives that establish permanency through coparent or second-parent adoption for children of same-sex partners through the judicial system, legislation, and community education."

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**American Anthropological Association (2004)**

**On same-sex unions.** The American Anthropological Association issued the following statement in February 2004:

"The results of more than a century of anthropological research on households, kinship relationships, and families, across cultures and through time, provide no support whatsoever for the view that either civilization or viable social orders depend upon marriage as an exclusively heterosexual institution. Rather, anthropological research supports the conclusion that a vast array of family types, including families built upon same-sex partnerships, can contribute to stable and humane societies.

"The Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association strongly opposes a constitutional amendment limiting marriage to heterosexual couples."

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**American Bar Association (2003, 1999, and 1995)**

**On gay and lesbian parenting.** The American Bar Association adopted the following position statement in August 2003:

"RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association supports state and territorial laws and court decisions that permit the establishment of legal parent-child relationships through joint adoptions and second-parent adoptions by unmarried persons who are functioning as a child's parents when such adoptions are in the best interests of the child."

**On gay and lesbian parenting.** The American Bar Association adopted the following position statement in February 1999:

"RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association supports the enactment of laws and implementation of public policy that provide that sexual orientation shall not be a bar to adoption when the adoption is determined to be in the best interest of the child."

**On child custody and visitation.** The American Bar Association adopted the following position statement in August 1995:

"BE IT RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association supports the enactment of legislation and implementation of public policy providing that child custody and visitation shall not be denied or restricted on the basis of sexual orientation."

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**American Medical Association**

**On gay and lesbian parenting.** The American Medical Association adopted the following position statement at its June 2004 meeting:

"WHEREAS, Having two fully sanctioned and legally defined parents promotes a safe and nurturing environment for children, including psychological and legal security; and

"WHEREAS, Children born or adopted into families headed by partners who are of the same sex usually have only one biologic or adoptive legal parent; and

"WHEREAS, The legislative protection afforded to children of parents in homosexual relationships varies from state to state, with some states enacting or considering legislation sanctioning co-parent or second parent adoption by partners of the same sex, several states declining to consider legislation, and at least one state altogether banning adoption by the second parent; and

"WHEREAS, Co-parent or second parent adoption guarantees that the second parent's custody rights and responsibilities are protected if the first parent dies or becomes incapacitated; and

"WHEREAS, Co-parent or second parent adoption ensures the child's eligibility for health benefits from both parents and establishes the requirement for child support from both parents in the event of the parents' separation; and

"WHEREAS, Co-parent or second parent adoption establishes legal grounds to provide consent for medical care and to make health care decisions on

behalf of the child and guarantees visitation rights if the child becomes hospitalized; and

"WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychiatric Association have each issued statements supporting initiatives which allow same-sex couples to adopt and co-parent children; therefore be it

"RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association support legislative and other efforts to allow the adoption of a child by the same-sex partner, or opposite sex non-married partner, who functions as a second parent or co-parent to that child. (New HOD Policy)"

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#### **American Psychiatric Association (2002, 1997, and 2000)**

***On gay and lesbian parenting.*** The American Psychiatric Association adopted the following position statement at its November 2002 meeting:

"The American Psychiatric Association supports initiatives that allow same-sex couples to adopt and co-parent children and supports all the associated legal rights, benefits, and responsibilities which arise from such initiatives."

***On gay and lesbian parenting.*** The American Psychiatric Association adopted the following position statement at its December 1997 meeting:

"1. Sexual orientation should not be used as the sole or primary factor in child custody decisions."

"2. Gay and lesbian couples and individuals should be allowed to become parents through adoption, fostering and new reproductive technologies, subject to the same type of screening used with heterosexual couples and individuals. "

"3. Second-parent adoptions which grant full parental rights to a second, unrelated adult (usually an unmarried partner of a legal parent), are often in the best interest of the child(ren) and should not be prohibited solely because both adults are of the same gender."

"4. Custody determinations after dissolution of a gay relationship should be done in a manner similar to other custody determinations."

***On same-sex unions.*** The American Psychiatric Association adopted the following position statement at its November 2000 meeting:

"The American Psychiatric Association supports the legal recognition of same sex unions and their associated legal rights, benefits and responsibilities."

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#### **American Psychoanalytic Association (1997 and 2002)**

***On marriage.*** The Executive Council of the American Psychoanalytic Association endorsed the following resolution in December 1997 (reaffirmed in March 2004):

"Because marriage is a basic human right and an individual personal choice, RESOLVED, the state should not interfere with same-gender couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitment of civil marriage."

***On gay and lesbian parenting.*** The American Psychoanalytic Association adopted this policy statement in support of gay and lesbian parenting in May 2002:

"The American Psychoanalytic Association supports the position that the salient consideration in decisions about parenting, including conception, child rearing, adoption, visitation and custody is in the best interest of the child. Accumulated evidence suggests the best interest of the child requires attachment to committed, nurturing and competent parents. Evaluation of an individual or couple for these parental qualities should be determined without prejudice regarding sexual orientation. Gay and lesbian individuals and couples are capable of meeting the best interest of the child and should be afforded the same rights and should accept the same responsibilities as heterosexual parents. With the adoption of this position statement, we support research studies that further our understanding of the impact of both traditional and gay/lesbian parenting on a child's development."



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**American Psychological Association (1976, 1998, and 2004)**

*Discrimination Against Homosexuals*

[Adopted by the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives on January 24-26, 1975.]

"1. The American Psychological Association supports the action taken on December 15, 1973, by the American Psychiatric Association, removing homosexuality from that Association's official list of mental disorders. The American Psychological Association therefore adopts the following resolution:

"Homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social and vocational capabilities; Further, the American Psychological Association urges all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations.

"2. Regarding discrimination against homosexuals, the American Psychological Association adopts the following resolution concerning their civil and legal rights:

"The American Psychological Association deplors all public and private discrimination in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodation, and licensing against those who engage in or have engaged in homosexual activities and declares that no burden of proof of such judgment, capacity, or reliability shall be placed upon these individuals greater than that imposed on any other persons. Further, the American Psychological Association supports and urges the enactment of civil rights legislation at the local, state, and federal levels that would offer citizens who engage in acts of homosexuality the same protections now guaranteed to others on the basis of race, creed, color, etc. Further, the American Psychological Association supports and urges the repeal of all discriminatory legislation singling out homosexual acts by consenting adults in private (Conger, 1975, p. 633)."

Conger, J. J. (1975). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1974: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives. *American Psychologist*, 30, 620-651.

**On marriage rights for same-sex couples.** The American Psychological Association Council of Representatives adopted this position statement on July 28, 2004:

"WHEREAS APA has a long-established policy to deplore 'all public and private discrimination against gay men and lesbians' and urges 'the repeal of all discriminatory legislation against lesbians and gay men' (Conger, 1975, p. 633);

"WHEREAS the APA adopted the Resolution on Legal Benefits for Same-Sex Couples in 1998 (Levant, 1998, pp. 665-666);

"WHEREAS discrimination and prejudice based on sexual orientation detrimentally affect psychological, physical, social, and economic well-being (Badgett, 2001; Cochran, Sullivan, & Mays, 2003; Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999; Meyer, 2003);

"WHEREAS 'anthropological research on households, kinship relationships, and families, across cultures and through time, provide no support whatsoever for the view that either civilization or viable social orders depend upon marriage as an exclusively heterosexual institution' (American Anthropological Association, 2004);

"WHEREAS psychological research on relationships and couples provides no evidence to justify discrimination against same-sex couples (Kurdek, 2001, in press; Peplau & Beals, 2004; Peplau & Spalding, 2000);

"WHEREAS the institution of civil marriage confers a social status and important legal benefits, rights, and privileges;

"WHEREAS the United States General Accounting Office (2004) has identified over 1,000 federal statutory provisions in which marital status is a factor in determining or receiving benefits, rights, and privileges, for example, those concerning taxation, federal loans, and dependent and survivor benefits (e.g., Social Security, military, and veterans);

"WHEREAS there are numerous state, local, and private sector laws and other provisions in which marital status is a factor in determining or receiving benefits, rights, and privileges, for example, those concerning taxation, health insurance, health care decision making, property rights, pension and retirement benefits, and inheritance;

"WHEREAS same-sex couples are denied equal access to civil marriage;

"WHEREAS same-sex couples who enter into a civil union are denied equal access to all the benefits, rights, and privileges provided by federal law to married couples (United States General Accounting Office, 2004);

"WHEREAS the benefits, rights, and privileges associated with domestic partnerships are not universally available, are not equal to those associated with marriage, and are rarely portable;

"WHEREAS people who also experience discrimination based on age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender and gender identity, religion, and socioeconomic status may especially benefit from access to marriage for same-sex couples (Division 44/Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Joint Task Force on Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients, 2000);

"THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the APA believes that it is unfair and discriminatory to deny same-sex couples legal access to civil marriage and to all its attendant benefits, rights, and privileges;

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT APA shall take a leadership role in opposing all discrimination in legal benefits, rights, and privileges against same-sex couples;

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT APA encourages psychologists to act to eliminate all discrimination against same-sex couples in their practice, research, education, and training ("Ethical Principles," 2002, p. 1063);

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the APA shall provide scientific and educational resources that inform public discussion and public policy development regarding sexual orientation and marriage and that assist its members, divisions, and affiliated state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations."

American Anthropological Association. (2004). *Statement on marriage and family from the American Anthropological Association*. Retrieved May 11, 2004, from [http://www.aaanet.org/press/ma\\_stmt\\_marriage.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/press/ma_stmt_marriage.htm).

American Psychological Association. (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist, 57*, 1060-1073.

Badgett, M. V. L. (2001). *Money, myths, and change: The economic lives of lesbians and gay men*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cochran, S. D., Sullivan, J. G., & Mays, V. M. (2003). Prevalence of mental disorders, psychological distress, and mental health service use among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults in the United States. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71*, 53-61.

Conger, J. J. (1975). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1974: Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council of Representatives. *American Psychologist, 30*, 620-651.

Division 44/Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns Joint Task Force on Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients. (2000). Guidelines for psychotherapy with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *American Psychologist, 55*, 1440-1451.

- Herek, G. M., Gillis, J. R., & Cogan, J. C. (1999). Psychological sequelae of hate crime victimization among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67*, 945-951.
- Kurdek, L. A. (2001). Differences between heterosexual non-parent couples and gay, lesbian, and heterosexual parent couples. *Journal of Family Issues, 22*, 727-754.
- Levant, R. F. (1999). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the legislative year 1998: Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council of Representatives February 20-22, 1998, Washington, DC, and August 13 and 16, 1998, San Francisco, CA, and minutes of the February, June, August, and December meetings of the Board of Directors. *American Psychologist, 54*, 605-671.
- Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 674-697.
- Paige, R. U. (2005). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association for the legislative year 2004: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives, February 20-22, 2004, Washington, DC, and July 28 and 30, 2004, Honolulu, Hawaii, and Minutes of the February, April, June, August, October, and December 2004 Meetings of the Board of Directors. *American Psychologist, 60*, 436-511.
- Peplau, L. A., & Beals, K. P. (2004). The family lives of lesbians and gay men. In A. L. Vangelisti (Ed.), *Handbook of family communication* (pp. 233-248). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Peplau, L. A., & Spalding, L. R. (2000). The close relationships of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. In C. Hendrick & S. S. Hendrick (Eds.), *Close relationships: A sourcebook* (pp. 111-123). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- United States General Accounting Office. (2004, January 23). Defense of Marriage Act: Update to prior report [GAO-04-353R]. Retrieved May 19, 2004, from <http://www.gao.gov>.
- On parenting.** The American Psychological Association Council of Representatives adopted this position statement July 28, 2004:
- "WHEREAS APA supports policy and legislation that promote safe, secure, and nurturing environments for all children (DeLeon, 1993, 1995; Fox, 1991; Levant, 2000);
- "WHEREAS APA has a long-established policy to deplore 'all public and private discrimination against gay men and lesbians' and urges 'the repeal of all discriminatory legislation against lesbians and gay men' (Conger, 1975);
- "WHEREAS the APA adopted the Resolution on Child Custody and Placement in 1976 (Conger, 1977, p. 432);
- "WHEREAS discrimination against lesbian and gay parents deprives their children of benefits, rights, and privileges enjoyed by children of heterosexual married couples;
- "WHEREAS some jurisdictions prohibit gay and lesbian individuals and same-sex couples from adopting children, notwithstanding the great need for adoptive parents (Lofton v. Secretary, 2004);
- "WHEREAS there is no scientific evidence that parenting effectiveness is related to parental sexual orientation: Lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children (Patterson, 2000, 2004; Perrin, 2002; Tasker, 1999);
- "WHEREAS research has shown that the adjustment, development, and psychological well-being of children is unrelated to parental sexual orientation and that the children of lesbian and gay parents are as likely as those of heterosexual parents to flourish (Patterson, 2004; Perrin, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001);

"THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the APA opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services;

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the APA believes that children reared by a same-sex couple benefit from legal ties to each parent;

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the APA supports the protection of parent-child relationships through the legalization of joint adoptions and second-parent adoptions of children being reared by same-sex couples;

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT APA shall take a leadership role in opposing all discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services;

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT APA encourages psychologists to act to eliminate all discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services in their practice, research, education, and training (Ethical Principles, 2002, p. 1063);

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the APA shall provide scientific and educational resources that inform public discussion and public policy development regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services and that assist its members, divisions, and affiliated state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations."

American Psychological Association. (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist*, 57, 1060-1073.

Conger, J. J. (1977). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1976: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives. *American Psychologist*, 32, 408-438.

Conger, J. J. (1975). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1974: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives. *American Psychologist*, 30, 620-651.

DeLeon, P. H. (1995). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1994: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives August 11 and 14, 1994, Los Angeles, CA, and February 17-19, 1995, Washington, DC. *American Psychologist*, 49, 627-628.

DeLeon, P. H. (1993). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1992: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives August 13 and 16, 1992, and February 26-28, 1993, Washington, DC. *American Psychologist*, 48, 782.

Fox, R. E. (1991). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1990: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives August 9 and 12, 1990, Boston, MA, and February 8-9, 1991, Washington, DC. *American Psychologist*, 45, 845.

Levant, R. F. (2000). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1999: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives February 19-21, 1999, Washington, DC, and August 19 and 22, 1999, Boston, MA, and Minutes of the February, June, August, and December 1999 meetings of the Board of Directors. *American Psychologist*, 55, 832-890.

Lofton v. Secretary of Department of Children and Family Services, 358 F.3d 804 (11th Cir. 2004).

Patterson, C. J. (2004). Gay fathers. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (4th Ed.). New York: John Wiley.

Patterson, C. J. (2000). Family relationships of lesbians and gay men. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62, 1052-1069.



Perrin, E. C., & the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2002). Technical report: Coparent or second-parent adoption by same-sex parents. *Pediatrics*, 109, 341-344.

Stacey, J., & Biblarz, T. J. (2001). (How) Does sexual orientation of parents matter? *American Sociological Review*, 65, 159-183.

Tasker, F. (1999). Children in lesbian-led families- A review. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 4, 153-166.

**On parenting.** The American Psychological Association Council of Representatives adopted the following position statement in September 1976:

"The sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation of natural or prospective adoptive or foster parents should not be the sole or primary variable considered in custody or placement cases."

Reference: Conger, J. J. (1977). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1976: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives. *American Psychologist*, 32, 408-438.

**On legal benefits for same-sex couples.** The American Psychological Association Council of Representatives adopted this position statement in August 1998:

"WHEREAS there is evidence that homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social and vocational capabilities (Conger, 1975) for individuals;

"WHEREAS legislation, other public policy, and private policy on issues related to same-sex couples is currently under development in many places in North America (e.g., Canadian Psychological Association, 1996);

"WHEREAS the scientific literature has found no significant difference between different-sex couples and same-sex couples that justify discrimination (Kurdek, 1994; 1983; Peplau, 1991);

"WHEREAS scientific research has not found significant psychological or emotional differences between the children raised in different-sex versus same-sex households (Patterson, 1994);

"WHEREAS APA has, as a long established policy, deplored 'all public and private discrimination against gay men and lesbians in such areas as employment, housing, administration, and licensing ...' and has consistently urged 'the repeal of all discriminatory legislation against lesbians and gay men' (Conger, 1975);

"WHEREAS denying the legal benefits that the license of marriage offers to same-sex households (including, but not limited to, property rights, health care decision making, estate planning, tax consequences, spousal privileges in medical emergency situations, and co-parental adoption of children) is justified as fair and equal treatment;

"WHEREAS the absence of access to these benefits constitutes a significant psychosocial stressor for lesbians, gay men, and their families;

"WHEREAS APA provides benefits to its members' and employees' domestic partners equivalent to those provided to members' and employees' spouses;

"WHEREAS psychological knowledge can be used to inform the current public and legal debate on 'same-sex marriage' (e.g., Baehr v. Lewin);

"THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT APA supports the provision to same-sex couples of the legal benefits that typically accrue as a result of marriage to same-sex couples who desire and seek the legal benefits; and

"THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT APA shall provide relevant psychological knowledge to inform the public discussion in this area and assist state psychological associations and divisions in offering such information as needed."

Baehr v. Lewin, 852 P.2d 44, 59 (Haw. 1993).

Canadian Psychological Association. (1996). Policy statement on equality for lesbians, gay men, and their relationships and families. [Available from the Canadian Psychological Association.]

Conger, J. J. (1975). Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the year 1974: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Representatives. *American Psychologist*, 30, 620-651.

Kurdek, L. A. (1993). The nature and correlates of relationship quality in gay, lesbian, and heterosexual cohabiting couples: A test of the individual difference, interdependence, and discrepancy models. In B. Greene & G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and clinical issues* (pp. 133-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Patterson, C. J. (1993). Children of the lesbian baby boom: Behavioral adjustment, self-concepts, and sex role theory. In B. Greene & G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and clinical issues* (pp. 156-175). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peplau, A. L. (1991). Lesbian and gay relationships. In J. C. Gonsiorek and J. D. Weinrich (Eds.), *Homosexuality: Research implications for public policy* (pp. 177-196). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

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### **Child Welfare League of America (1988)**

The Child Welfare League of America's Standards of Excellence for Adoption Services states:

"Applicants should be assessed on the basis of their abilities to successfully parent a child needing family membership and not on their race, ethnicity or culture, income, age, marital status, religion, appearance, differing lifestyles, or sexual orientation." Further, applicants for adoption should be accepted "on the basis of an individual assessment of their capacity to understand and meet the needs of a particular available child at the point of adoption and in the future."

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### **National Association of Social Workers (2002)**

The National Association of Social Workers approved the following policy statement at in August 2002 at the NASW Delegate Assembly.

"Legislation legitimizing second-parent adoptions in same-sex households should be supported. Legislation seeking to restrict foster care and adoption by gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people should be vigorously opposed."

National Association of Social Workers (1994). Policy statement on lesbian and gay issues. In *Social Work Speaks: NASW Policy Statements* (pp. 162-165). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

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### **North American Council on Adoptable Children (1998)**

The North American Council on Adoptable Children issued a policy statement in 1998 (amended April 14, 2002) that states:

"Children should not be denied a permanent family because of the sexual orientation of potential parents. Everyone with the potential to successfully parent a child in foster care or adoption is entitled to fair and equal consideration."

## Organizations

### Legal Organizations

#### American Civil Liberties Union

125 Broad Street, 18th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
(Contact information varies by state)

#### Lesbian and Gay Rights Project (ACLU)

125 Broad Street, 18th Floor  
New York, NY, 10004  
(Contact information varies by state)

Publications available:

Too high a price: The case against restricting gay parenting. (2004).

Families of value: Personal profiles of pioneering lesbian and gay parents.

Protecting families: Standard for child custody in same-sex relationships. (1999).

#### Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

Lambda Legal  
120 Wall Street, Suite 1500  
New York, NY 10005-3905  
Telephone: (212) 809-8585  
Email: legalhelpdesk@lambdalegal.org.

Publications available:

You don't need to choose. As a parent, you have rights. (2004)

What's best for your kids? (2004).

The rights of lesbian and gay Parents and their children. (2002).

Protecting families. (1999).

#### Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders

30 Winter Street, Suite 800  
Boston, MA 02108  
Telephone: (617) 426-1350  
Email: gladlaw@glad.org

Publications available:

Adoption: Questions and answers.

Protecting families: Standards for child custody in same-sex relationships. (1999).

#### National Center for Lesbian Rights

870 Market Street, Suite 570  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Telephone: (415) 392-NCLR  
Email: info@nclrights.org

Publications available:

A lesbian and gay parents' legal guide to child custody. (1989).

AIDS and child custody: A guide to advocacy. (1990).

Lesbians choosing motherhood: Legal implications of donor insemination and co-parenting. (1991).

Lesbian mother litigation manual. (1990).

Preserving and protecting the families of lesbians and gay men. (1991).

Recognizing lesbian and gay families: Strategies for obtaining domestic partnership benefits. (1992).

### Family Support Organizations

#### Colage: Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere

2300 Market Street  
Box 165  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
Telephone: (415) 861-KIDS  
E-mail: kidsofgays@aol.com

#### Family Diversity Projects Inc.

PO Box 1246  
Amherst, MA 01004-1246  
Phone: (413) 256-0502  
Fax: (413) 253-3977  
E-mail: info@familydiv.org  
<http://www.familydiv.org>

Family Diversity Projects, a nonprofit organization in Amherst, MA, has created four award-winning traveling rental exhibits that tour communities, schools (K-12), colleges, mental health centers, libraries, houses of worship, workplaces, and conferences, nationwide and internationally. The four exhibits include:

- *Love Makes a Family: Portraits of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People and Their Families* (also a book published by University of Massachusetts Press);

- *In Our Family: Portraits of All Kinds of Families* (with a full curriculum resource guide);
- *Of Many Colors: Portraits of Multiracial Families* (also a book published by University of Massachusetts Press); and
- *Nothing To Hide: Mental Illness in the Family* (also a book published by New Press).

By educating people of all ages to recognize, support, and celebrate the full range of diversity, our traveling exhibits are designed to help reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and harassment of all people who are perceived to be “different” from the “norm.”

*Love Makes a Family* is a museum-quality traveling exhibit that includes photographs and interviews with families that have lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) members. Through first-person accounts and positive images, this exhibit seeks to challenge and change damaging myths and stereotypes about LGBT people and their families. At the most basic level, *Love Makes a Family* combats homophobia by breaking silence and making the invisible visible. By encouraging people of all ages—beginning in early childhood—to affirm and appreciate diversity, this traveling rental exhibit contributes to the process of dismantling the destructive power of prejudice and intolerance, thereby making the world a safer place for all families.

Designed for audiences of all ages, *Love Makes a Family* challenges stereotypes about LGBT people and helps dismantle homophobia. The photo-text rental

exhibit consists of ready-to-hang framed photographs and text. The companion book, *Love Makes a Family* (published by the University of Massachusetts Press), was named the Best Book about Gay and Lesbian Issues by the Association of Independent Publishers. All of Family Diversity Projects’ exhibits include gay- and lesbian-parented families.

For information about how to bring a Family Diversity Projects exhibit to your community (or to get information about the companion books), please contact the address and numbers listed at the beginning of this entry.

**Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International (GLPCI)**

P.O. Box 50360  
 Washington, DC 20091  
 Telephone: (202) 583-8029  
 E-mail: glpcinat@ix.netcom.com  
 Publications available:  
 Books for children of lesbian and gay parents. (1995).  
 GLPCI directory of resources. (1995).

**Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**

1726 M Street, NW  
 Suite 400  
 Washington, DC 20036  
 Telephone: (202) 467-8180  
 E-mail: info@pflag.org









