



International Family Equality Day

Celebrating the Rainbow of Families in our World !

The International Family Equality Day (IFED) Network

Annual Report 2012







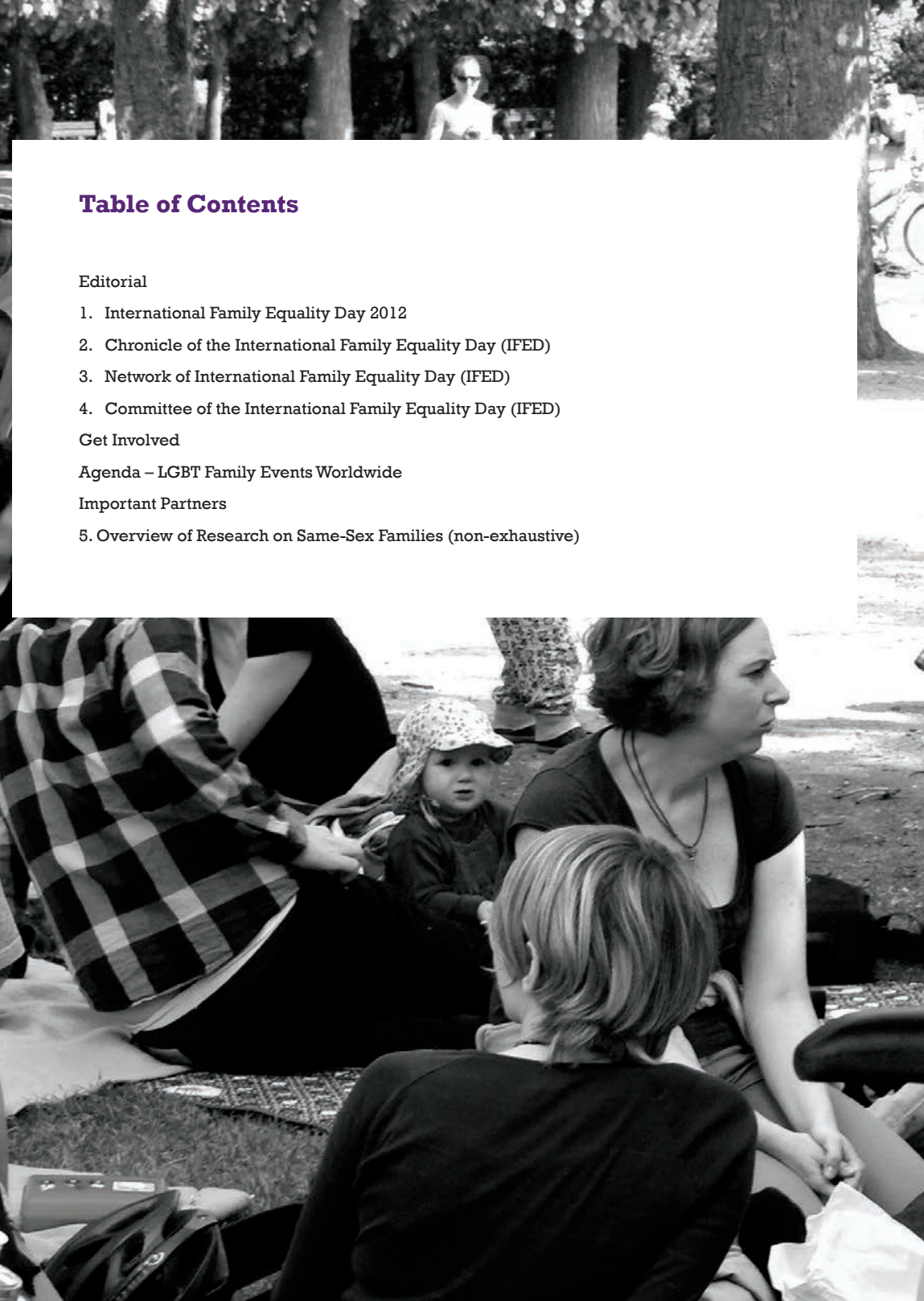


Table of Contents

Editorial

1. International Family Equality Day 2012
2. Chronicle of the International Family Equality Day (IFED)
3. Network of International Family Equality Day (IFED)
4. Committee of the International Family Equality Day (IFED)

Get Involved

Agenda – LGBT Family Events Worldwide

Important Partners

5. Overview of Research on Same-Sex Families (non-exhaustive)



Juha Jämsä

Juha Jämsä is the Executive Director of Finnish Rainbow Families Association (Sateenkaariperheet). He has studied sociology of family and conducted numerous studies in the field of gendered parenthood, gay fathers and the welfare services of Finnish rainbow families. Mr. Jämsä has three teenagers with his husband.



Andra Oshinsky

Andra leads Family Equality Council's programs for LGBT parents and their children, including the Out-spoken Generation program and the Breakthrough Conversation Project. Andra is committed to social justice and diversity and inclusion efforts across all communities and is thrilled to contribute to international support for LGBT families.



Rachel Epstein

Rachel Epstein has been an LGBTQ parenting activist, educator and researcher for close to 20 years and coordinates the LGBTQ Parenting Network at the Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto, Ontario. She has published on a wide range of issues, including assisted human reproduction, queer spawn in schools, birth pregnancy, and the tensions between queer sexuality, radicalism and parenting. She is editor of *Who's Your Daddy? And Other Writings on Queer Parenting* (Sumach Press, 2009) and is the 2008 winner of the Steiner & Ferreiro Award (Community One Foundation), recognizing her leadership and pivotal contributions towards the support, recognition and inclusion of LGBTQ parents and their children in Canada.



Maria von Känel

"With visibility we will be able to break down prejudices."
Maria von Känel - wife of Martina, mother of 2 children and NELFA Board member



Catalina Pallas

"Democratic States should not deprive LGBT people of their right to marry, as there are no social or legal reasons to go against it. LGBT families do exist and so do their children, therefore policies to protect them should be developed urgently."



Mona Greenbaum

As LGBT parents, many challenges lie ahead of us in terms of the social recognition of our families. Even though we have increasingly gained legal recognition, certain institutions in society still lack knowledge about our families and are not aware of our particular needs. Social service employees, as well as health care practitioners, must be made aware of the diversity of family structures. Myths and stereotypes about our families need to be exposed. Combating homophobia in primary and secondary schools is the major area where we need to apply our efforts, because this is where our children experience exclusion.

Editorial

Regardless of different legal, political and social circumstances around the world, the dramatic increase in the numbers of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) people choosing to raise children is a global phenomenon.

The **International Family Equality Day (IFED)** was launched as a sign of solidarity and strength and to promote equality for all families. On 6 May 2012, several events were held throughout Europe, Canada and the U.S. Families, friends, interested parties, experts from government agencies and other institutions as well as politicians and representatives of all parties were invited to celebrate the rainbow of families in our world.

This annual report introduces the organizations involved in IFED as well as the work done by the IFED Committee, and highlights the activities that were held in the different countries to celebrate this day. The annual report aims to serve as an inspiration for the Second International Family Equality Day, which will take place **5 May 2013**.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the countless activists who tirelessly champion the visibility and equality of rainbow families around the world!

Happy reading. Yours cordially,

The International Family Equality Day (IFED) Network



Lisa Herrmann-Green

"International Family Equality Day is a great opportunity to publicly celebrate rainbow families, their coexistence in society with other diverse family forms and the advances we've made in the civil rights towards equality of all families while not losing sight of the changes still need to made."



Ron Poole-Dayan

President,
Integrow
Marketing
Development



Brent Wright

Director of Programs,
Family Equality Council

1. International Family Equality Day 2012

The first International Family Equality Day took place on 6 May 2012. Fifteen organizations from nine countries participated. Some snapshots and short reports of the events can be found throughout this brochure on the purple pages; additional information and impressions (videos, personal reports of the events) can be found on the IFED website www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org



2. Chronicle of the International Family Equality Day (IFED)

In terms of legal protection and political and social equality, rainbow families are faced with different circumstances around the world. In many countries these families have no protection at all, a fact which entails massive social, financial and legal uncertainty.

In July 2011, LGBTQ family activists from around the world gathered for the first ever International Symposium of LGBTQ parenting organizations. The symposium provided an opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide. The goal of the symposium was to help foster a sense of global community among the families, to increase the visibility and raise awareness about the challenges that rainbow families are faced with for social and legal acceptance.

As a key outcome of the symposium the involved family organizations from the U.S. (Family Equality Council), Canada (LGBTQ Parenting Network) and Europe (NELFA) took the opportunity to launch an official day for equality and recognition of all types of family: the International Family Equality Day (IFED), which will take place every year on the first Sunday in May.

IFED aims to highlight the diversity of family structures and to strengthen solidarity among families. At the same time it calls on administrative, institutional and political representatives to support equality and recognition for all families.

3. Network of International Family Equality Day (IFED)

As a sign of solidarity and strength and to promote equality for all type of families, the LGBTQ family organizations LGBTQ Parenting Network, Family Equality Council, NELFA and Coalition des familles homoparentales took the opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide.

Each organization puts forward representatives for the IFED Committee. The organizations and their respective representatives are introduced below:

About Coalition des familles homoparentales



With over 1200 families the LGBT Family Coalition (Coalition des familles homoparentales) is the largest LGBT organization in Quebec. The media has become increasingly focused on alternative families, as adoption, surrogacy and assisted procreation have become “hot” issues. But even as we have increasingly gained legal recognition, society’s institutions still remain closed to our families and ignorant of our particular needs.

Over the years our role has broadened to one not only of support and information exchange for families with LGBT parents, but also to one of social activism.

The LGBT Family Coalition works for the legal and social recognition of our families in collaboration with government bodies and the media. We work to increase our visibility and to raise public awareness about our diverse realities. Another mandate of the LGBT Family Coalition is to create new resources that can be used in primary and secondary schools, day-care, doctors’ offices, community organizations and social services to sensitize the public about the diversity of family structures, as well as the impact of homophobia, heterosexism and gender-based harassment. Our training sessions have reached out to thousands of professionals across Quebec.

www.familleshomoparentales.org

About Family Equality Council



Over the past 30 years, Family Equality Council has become a leading advocate for the one million parents in the United States who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and their the two million children

by taking a multi-level approach to supporting our rapidly growing community.

A significant focus of current efforts revolve around Family Equality Council's commitment to empowering LGBT families to share their story. We do this by creating both local and national level opportunities for LGBT parents to advocate for equality through programs like our Outspoken Generation – a program in which young adults with LGBT parents are given platforms to tell what it was actually like to grow up in their family. Another of these programs, our Pearls of Wisdom program, celebrates the grandparents in our community, encouraging them to share their experiences and their wisdom regarding the importance of supporting our families.

This summer marked the 17th year of our signature event, annual Family Week. Family Week is the largest gathering of the LGBT family community in the United States and takes place in the iconic Provincetown, Massachusetts. Family Week features unique opportunities for LGBT parents and their children to come together in a affirming community, creating life-long connections. Family Equality Council helps support and foster similar experiences for LGBT parents at the local level, such as through our work with Parent Groups around the country. For Parent Groups we provide programming tools and a community space for LGBT parents those considering parenthood to connect with one another. In our Policy department, we strive to educate the American public on issues relevant to the LGBT community in a way that is accessible and genuine – changing as many hearts and minds as possible along the way. We work to ensure that the laws that govern our country best recognizes all individuals who have made the commitment to be parents

Through all of these initiatives, Family Equality Council is hoping to create a better world, a world where all loving families are recognized, respected and celebrated equally.

www.familyequality.org

About LGBTQ Parenting Network

The LGBTQ Parenting Network (PN) is a program of the Sherbourne Health Centre, an innovative health centre located in downtown Toronto. The program currently employs two full-time staff, as well as contract staff, students and volunteers.

The PN promotes the rights and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer parents, prospective parents and their families through education, advocacy, research,



In Vienna we celebrated the first "International Family Equality Day" or "Rainbowfamily Day" with a picnic in one of the central parks. FAMOs, the Austrian Association of Rainbow-families, invited members and friends to start the tradition of celebrating this important day in the Augarten. On a warm sunday afternoon we decorated the trees with our banner and many rainbow flags. It was an amazing variety of families coming with relatives and friends. Children gathered around a central square playing ball and running games. Parents had brought lots of food and goodies to share in a joint celebration. A radio journalist recorded interviews for a feature on "Rainbowfamilies in Austria". FAMOs greets all the other partners of IFED. We are looking forward to next years celebration!



Austria



Canada

Greetings from Canada, where LGBTQ parents and their children gathered in Toronto on Sunday, May 6 to celebrate International Family Visibility Day. We had a picnic in the

park, created framed photos of our families, and distributed packages for teachers with ideas for how to integrate issues of family diversity into school curriculum.

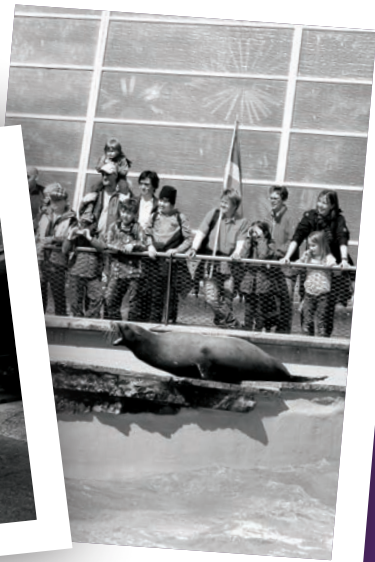


Finland

Finns celebrated first International Rainbow Family Day in towns of Helsinki and Turku. In the capital a huge gay night club turned 'family' and listening to great live music by famous childrens' acts. In Turku families participated in a photographing workshop that took them to various points all over the town. The results of the workshops will be put on Exhibition during the IFED celebrations of 2013.



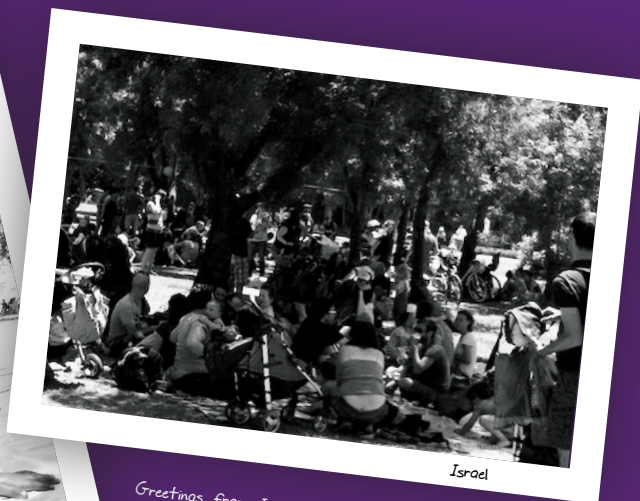
Germany



Greetings from Germany, where the first International Family Visibility Day was celebrated in the zoos in Stuttgart, Hamburg, Hannover and Erfurt organized by ILSE (Initiative of Lesbian and Gay Parents) and the LSVD (Lesbian and Gay Federation). Parents and children had a lovely though rainy day with seals, salamanders, giraffes, elephants and bears, with picnic, special zoo attractions and of course created framed photos of our families. In Stuttgart e.g. we were heartily welcomed by the zoo director and discussed with the vice president of parliament in the state of Baden-Württemberg, who stated "family is where children are!" and generations take responsibility for each other - whether married or single, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

Greece

Greetings from Greece, where OLKE in collaboration with Lesbian Group of Thessaloniki and Partnership for Gender Issues, were organised a workshop about LGBT parenting in Greece and the national legislation about LGBT parenting on May 13th 2012. Lesbian mothers with their children have joined us and talked about their daily life in small cities where they live. It was the first time in Thessaloniki, the city of the North, that people had the chance to talk, listen and meet LGBT parents. It was the best way to celebrate International Family Visibility Day! And we will do it again, in many cities all around the country!



Israel

Greetings from Israel. We're very happy to tell you we had a marvelous picnic today, our Sabbath, with great attendance of more than 300 family members, all different family settings and all different ages - from new born to grand parents and parents to be. We already decided to make this picnic a new tradition every year, to celebrate this international day with all of you. Thank you for letting us know and giving us the opportunity to take part in this great event. Happy Equality Day and enjoy all your festive gatherings tomorrow, all over the world. Together with you in our hearts with love and joy. The Rainbow Families in Israel.



Spain

FLG organised a large scale wedding and celebrated the International Family Equality Day, on the 1st of May, and as the final and closing ceremony of the 2nd European Meeting of LGBT Families - Catalonia 2012. We did a wonderful ceremony with 13 couples from different European countries. We enjoyed the ceremony freely and publicly and in the company of their children.





Around 80 moms, dads and children got together to celebrate the First International Family Equality Day in Geneva. Due to the uncertain weather conditions, the picnic was moved to the Dialogai premises - a big thank-you to Dialogai! After a pleasant lunch, everybody enjoyed a great time with the shows. Kids and grownups practiced blowing giant soap bubbles and Keeping up with the Capoeira! A heartfelt thank-you to Chatty Escoffery, Dialogai and everybody else who helped make the event possible! We look forward to next year! Happy International Family Equality Day from the Swiss rainbow families!



Switzerland



USA

Across the US, LGBT families celebrated together on May 6. Family Equality Council organized community events from East Coast to West Coast in partnership with local organizations. Families relaxed and had some fun at picnics and play days in New England and New Mexico. Our families publicly showed that love and commitment are what makes a family by gathering for photo shoots in Times Square in NYC and under the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles. In New York City, celebrities joined our families to speak about the importance of equality for all families.

social networking and community organizing. Much of our current work across the spectrum of LGBTQ identities grew from the historical insistence on the part of queer women on their right to parent free from discrimination. In 1997, Dykes Planning Tykes (DPT), a course for lesbian/bi/queer women considering parenthood, was born in Toronto. In many ways, the work of the PN grew from and was informed by the content and popularity of this course and the courses it has spawned – Daddies & Papas 2B, Trans-Masculine People Considering Pregnancy, and Queer and Trans Family Planning(s).

The work of the PN aims to counter historically entrenched, and often internalized, negative ideas about LGBTQ-led families, and to foster the attitude, both individually and institutionally, that LGBTQ people not only have the right and the ability to be parents, but that LGBTQ families provide children with unique and interesting opportunities. We affirm the existence and visibility of LGBTQ families through events, workshops, and the development of resources. We add to knowledge of LGBTQ parenting by conducting community-based research that informs our practice, and we advocate for LGBTQ parents and prospective parents, individually and systemically, in areas such as assisted human reproduction, adoption, family recognition and schools.

www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca

About NELFA

The Network of European LGBT Families Associations (NELFA) was created on 1 May 2009 to unite European associations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their children under one umbrella organization representing Rainbow Families at the European level.



NELFA was incorporated under Belgian law as an international non-profit association (AISBL) on 12 March 2012. The official NELFA headquarters are located in the Rainbow House in Brussels. With the incorporation of NELFA aisbl, thirteen NELFA founding members from Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland took a major step towards further consolidating NELFA's work on behalf of LGBT families in Europe.

With 22 associations representing 14 European countries and thousands of LGBT families, NELFA promotes the exchange of information among its members and assists in creating and developing LGBT families associations in Europe. NELFA works to ensure that children raised in LGBT families in Europe are granted the same rights as children from other families. NELFA encourages European governments to adopt legal systems

and equal opportunity policies that do not discriminate against LGBT families, whether it be legally, financially, educationally or socially. NELFA also works to ensure the freedom of movement of LGBT families within the European Union without their family life being compromised by entering or settling in another Member State.

4. Committee of the International Family Equality Day (IFED)

The IFED Committee is composed of representatives from the various LGBTQ family organizations (Family Equality Council, LGBTQ Parenting Network, Coalition des familles homoparentales und NELFA). Communication takes place via a mailing list (listserv) and quarterly video conferences, during which cooperation and joint projects are discussed.

A website serves as a common platform. It introduces the involved organizations as well as ongoing and completed projects in connection with IFED and provides opportunities for networking.

Goals & Future Projects

The IFED Committee encourages families to join the IFED network by starting their own traditions in celebration of their family pride and ongoing efforts for full family equality. To that end, the Committee strives to identify and connect existing LGBTQ family organizations worldwide.

Workgroups are generating an international inventory of legal and social situations of LGBTQ families.



Celebrating the Rainbow of Families in our world !

Get Involved

Community organizations who wish to hold a local event as part of the International Family Equality Day should contact the IFED Network by mail.

info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org





'A Key challenge for our modern society is the appreciation and respect of diversity. Rainbow families can regard themselves as a powerful and vivid indicator of this societal development. Let's challenge society self-confidently!'

Elke Jansen

Agenda – LGBT Family Events Worldwide

Date: 5 May 2013

Worldwide, International Family Equality Day

All countries that have held events to celebrate the IFED 2012 will do so again in 2013.

Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Greece, Israel, Lithuania, Spain, Switzerland and USA are all already planning their IFED 2013 events.

Make sure to join us next year by organizing your own event!



Date: 24- 25 May 2013

Switzerland, National Rainbow Families Symposium in Geneva

Scheduled are a Specialist Day for experts, teachers and representatives of the education system and family organizations as well as a Family Day for rainbow families and LGBT people with a desire to start their own families.

Organization: Swiss Rainbow Families Umbrella Organization

www.regenbogenfamilien.ch

Date: 2014

Germany, 3rd European meeting of LGBT families

We look forward to welcoming you at the 3rd European meeting of LGBT families in Germany in 2014.

Organization: Lesben und Schwulenverband Deutschland und Initiative lesbischer und schwuler Eltern

www.ilse.de und www.lsvd.de

Important Partners

ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe is the European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

www.ilga-europe.org



European Parliament Intergroup on LGBT Rights

The LGBT Intergroup gathers 140 elected Members of the European Parliament from 22 European countries and 6 political groups. They are committed to upholding the fundamental rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

www.lgbt-ep.eu



5. Overview of Research on Same-Sex Families (non-exhaustive)

by Martine Gross

Research on children raised by homosexual parents has been conducted for close to 40 years, the first of which taking place in the 1970s in the United States. Charlotte Patterson published a summary of this research in 1996, which was updated in 2005. The first studies covered women who became mothers within the context of a heterosexual couple prior to entering into a lesbian relationship. The objective of these studies was mainly to address two concerns: first, whether these children were stigmatized by their peers, leading to the development of psychological issues, and second, whether they suffered from gender identity or behaviour disorders. The results of these studies are highly consistent: children of lesbian mothers do not develop any pathology in their psychological development, do not experience difficulties in their relations with friends, do not suffer from gender confusion, and do not behave differently from boys and girls brought up by heterosexual parents. A longitudinal study from early childhood to adulthood conducted on young adults raised by lesbian parents demonstrates that they continue to do well as adults (Tasker & Golombok, 1997).

More recent studies on children raised since birth by lesbian mothers who were either single or living in a couple found no difference between these children and those of heterosexual parents in terms of gender development, relations with peers and psychological well-being (see, e.g., Bos, 2004; MacCallum & Golombok, 2004; Maria Gonzales, 2003). An extensive longitudinal study conducted in particular by Henny Bos and Nanette Gartrell from 1995 to 2012 in the United States on children raised from the time of birth to legal age by lesbian mothers confirms these results and explores other topics, such as the effect of stigmatization and remedial strategies (Bos & Gartrell, 2010). This longitudinal study indicates that girls are more likely to have a bisexual experience (Gartrell, Bos & Goldberg, 2010). Another recent study indicates that daughters of lesbian mothers are more often homosexual than daughters of heterosexual mothers (Schumm, 2010). In and of itself, this result is good news: it means that bisexuality and lesbian sexuality are increasingly considered acceptable.

Setting aside sexual orientation, a recent meta-analysis by Biblarz and Stacey (2010)



demonstrates that the parents' gender has no "measurable effect" on the psychological adjustment of children and their social success.

Significantly fewer studies have been performed on children of gay fathers, who are outnumbered by lesbian mothers. However, a few studies suggest that children of gay fathers do as well as others. Recent research demonstrates that young children adopted by gay fathers are no different, in terms of psychological adjustment from those adopted by heterosexual parents (Farr et al., 2010). Note, however, that most studies related to children of gay fathers focus on children born into a heterosexual environment, with the painful experience of their parents' separation, or adopted children who suffer from abandonment-related trauma. There are few studies on gay fathers who have raised their children since birth. Michael Lamb, Suzanne Golombok, Henny Bos, Olivier Vecho and I recently received a grant for a study on the parental behaviour of gay fathers with very young children born of gestational surrogacy and oocyte donation, and the relationship quality during the child's first year. This will be the first study on children brought up from infancy by gay fathers.

A large number of studies have sought to demonstrate the innocuousness of homosexual parenting in the face of homophobic prejudice and heteronormative biases. In so doing, research has neglected for too long many issues that can only be studied among these families, like a sort of social laboratory (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001). Many questions merit the attention of researchers but have not been the subject of a great number of studies: the impact of invisibility on spousal and parental relations, the effects of homophobia and related child-protection strategies, the sharing of household and parental tasks, family functioning and dynamics, intergenerational relations, how to deal with donor anonymity, the passing on of values and religious identity. Today, the research is leaning somewhat less towards the future of children brought up by same-sex parents and more towards the functioning of families. In particular, the distribution of household and parental tasks – as gender no longer in and of itself assigns household and parental tasks to women and bread-winning to men – has been the subject of an increasing number of publications over recent years.

With regard to the effects of homophobia and related child-protection strategies, one of my recent studies (Gross, 2011) on lesbian mothers indicates that the most effective strategies seem to be openness with early childcare personnel and teachers; parental involvement in school life, in particular the involvement of the social mother; and finally, welcoming the child's friends into the child's home. The visibility of same-sex parents, at least in early school years, is very effective in eliminating homophobic comments.

Bibliography

- Bos, H. (2004) Parenting in planned lesbian families. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA.
- Bos, H., & Gartrell, N. (2010). Adolescents of the USA National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study: Can Family Characteristics Counteract the Negative Effects of Stigmatization? *Family Process*, 49(4), 559-572.
- Del Mar Gonzalez Maria, Chacon F, Gomez A, Sanchez M.A, & Morcillo E (2003). Dinámicas familiares, organización de la vida cotidiana y desarrollo infantil y adolescente en familias homoparentales. Defensor del Menor de la Comunidad de Madrid, Estudios e investigaciones 2002, 521-606
- Farr, R., Forsell, S., & Patterson, C. (2010). Parenting and child development in adoptive families: Does parental sexual orientation matter? *Applied Developmental Science*, 14, 164-178.
- Gartrell, N., Bos, H., & Goldberg, N. (2010). Adolescents of the U.S. National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study: Sexual Orientation, Sexual Behavior, and Sexual Risk Exposure. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 1-11.
- Gross, M. (2011). Homophobie à l'école. Les stratégies des familles lesboparentales pour protéger leurs enfants. *Dialogue*, 194(4), 21-34.
- Laubjerg, M., Christensen, A. M., & Petersson, B. (2009). Psychiatric status among step-children and domestic and international adoptees in Denmark. A comparative nationwide register-based study. *Scand J Public Health*, 37(6), 604-612.
- MacCallum, F., & Golombok, S. (2004). Children raised in fatherless families from infancy: a follow-up of children of lesbian and single heterosexual mothers at early adolescence. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 45, 1407-1419.
- Patterson, C. (2005). Lesbian & Gay Parents & Their Children: Summary Of Research Findings. In <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/publications/lgpsummary.html> (Ed.): American Psychological Association.
- Schumm, W. R. (2010). Children of homosexuals more apt to be homosexuals? A reply to Cameron based on an examination of multiple sources of data. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 42(06), 721-742.
- Stacey, J., & Biblarz, T. (2001). (How) does the sexual orientation of parents matter? *American Sociological Review*, 66, 159-183
- Tasker, F., & Golombok, S. (1997). *Growing up in a Lesbian Family*. New York: Guildford Press.



Special Thanks

Thank you to all the people who are actively involved in bringing visibility to the diversity of family forms in society, to all who are prepared to stand up for the rights of every one of these diverse families.

Thank you especially to all those families, who exemplify rainbow families as part of the existing diversity through being visible.





