

## What Research Shows: Children of Same-Sex Families

### Introduction:

- As same-sex families become both more common and more accepted, researchers are asking if children raised in such families are more likely to adopt a same-sex lifestyle than children raised in traditional families with a father and a mother.
- To date, studies have been somewhat limited in size and often interpreted with bias: The American College of Pediatricians states that “mainstream health and mental health organizations have, in many cases, taken public positions on parenting by same-sex couples that are based on their own social and political views rather than the available science.”
- Gay men become parents through “foster care, variations of domestic and international adoption, diverse forms of surrogacy and kinship arrangements, wherein they may co-parent with a woman or women with whom they are not sexually involved (Berkowitz & Marsiglio, “Gay Men: Negotiating Procreative, Father and Family Identities,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69 (May 2007): 366-381.
- LGBT people become parents through current or former relationships, co-parenting, adoption, donor insemination, surrogacy; in some countries, LGBT people can act as foster parents (Butler, Katy, “Many Couples Must Negotiate Terms of ‘Brokeback’ Marriages,” *New York Times*, March 7, 2006.
- Many children do not know that they have a LGBT parent (Dunne, E.J., “Helping Gay Fathers Come Out to their Children” (*Journal of Homosexuality* 14 (1-2): 213-22 (1987).

### Statistics:

- In 2000, there were 594,391 same-sex unmarried partners in the USA. More than 39% of same-sex couples aged 25 to 55 were raising children; more than 250,000 children under age 18 (The Williams Project on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy, UCLA School of Law, September 2005).
- 31% of the children of same-sex couples are under five years old (The Williams Project).
- The number of same-sex households with children is increasing: in 2000, 34% of female same-sex households included children under 18, an increase of 72% since 1999; 22% of male households included children, a quadrupling since 1990 (“Do Children of Gay Parents Develop Differently” by Kevin Sack, 2006).
- As of 2005, an estimated 270,313 children in the US live in same-sex households (Williams Institute: Census Snapshot).
- Same-sex parents are more likely than different-sex partners to be black and Hispanic. 46% of children are children of color (The Williams Project).
- Same-sex parents have fewer economic resources to care for their children: lower incomes, lower home ownership rates and lower levels of education (The Williams Project).

## Behavior of children raised in same-sex households:

- Sociologists Judith Stacey and Timothy Biblarz have found that “children raised by same-sex couples are more likely to depart from traditional gender roles. In two studies, a greater number of children raised by lesbians had participated in or considered a same-sex relationship or had an attraction to the same sex” (Gilien Silsby, “Sociology: Study Examines Gender Roles of Children with Gay Parents,” University of Southern California, 2001).
- Dr. Michelle Cretella, a Rhode Island Pediatrician and board member of the American College of Pediatricians, stated “a meta-study conducted by two pro-homosexual researchers found that girls raised in homosexual households are more likely to be aggressive, boys are likely to be less masculine and [that] both girls and boys engage in sexual experimentation at earlier ages and are more sexually promiscuous” (Tom McFeely, “What About the Children?” *National Catholic Register*, June 8-14, 2008).
- “Multiple studies have found that homosexually behaving teens and young adults suffer increased rates of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, addictions and suicidal thoughts” (McFeely, *NCR*).
- “Boys who adopt a homosexual lifestyle because of the influence of their same-sex parents . . . face a 30% chance of being dead or HIV positive by the age of 30” (McFeely, *NCR*).
- Walter Schumm (2010) professor at Kansas State University, reviewed gay parenting literature, provided statistical analysis, examined cultural data regarding homosexuality as well as 26 research studies on gay parenting, finally combining data from prior studies published between 1978 and 2008 for a total sample of 2847 children, 2197 of heterosexual parents and 650 of lesbian, gay or bisexual parents (NARTH review by Christopher Rosik, PhD, “Study suggests greater likelihood of non-heterosexual offspring for gay and lesbian parents than for heterosexual parents”). Schumm’s findings included the following:
  - “Between 16% and 57% of children of gay and lesbian parents adopted non-heterosexual identities.”
  - “Daughters of lesbian mothers were most likely to report non-heterosexual identities with frequencies of 33% to 57%.”
  - “Female gender, of either parent or child, appeared to be associated with higher rates of non-heterosexual sexual orientation.”
  - “20.3% of children with LGB parents were non-heterosexual in identity or behavior compared with 4.3% of children with heterosexual parents. This divergence increased to 28.0% when the age of the children was restricted to over 17 (when sexual orientation would presumably be more clearly defined).”
  - “. . . [I]ntergenerational transfer in the academic literature appeared to be stronger for daughters than for sons.”
  - “Five pathways of transmission appeared to be possible: ‘parental modeling of sexual orientation, parental preference for child’s sexual orientation, child’s greater questioning of their sexual orientation, parental desire for grandchildren, and non-parental adult modeling of sexual orientation.’”

## Conclusion:

- The Center for Law and Social Policy states: “most researchers now agree that together [these] studies support the notion that, on average, children do better when raised by two married, biological parents . . .” (Mary Parke, “Are Married Parents Really Better for Children?” Center for Law and Social Policy, Policy Brief, May 2003, p. 1 [13]).
- “Given the current body of research, the American College of Pediatricians believes it is inappropriate, potentially hazardous to children, and dangerously irresponsible to change the age-old prohibition on homosexual parenting, whether by adoption, foster care, or by reproductive manipulation. This position is rooted in the best available science (Tom McFeely, “What About the Children?” *National Catholic Register*, June 8-14, 2008).
- In addition to the above, the Catholic Church (as opposed to pro-homosexual researchers) also considers children to be a gift, not a right; the church also considers the natural rights of children to be naturally conceived and raised by a mother and a father.