

## SELECTED REFERENCES ON LGBT PARENTING

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Emphases added by The Schubert Center for Child Studies, Case Western Reserve University.

### I. Selected Articles and Published Abstracts by C.J. Patterson

For a complete list visit: <http://people.virginia.edu/~cjp/publications.html>

Farr, R. H., Forssell, S. L., & **Patterson, C. J.** (2010). Parenting and Child Development in Adoptive Families: Does Parental Sexual Orientation Matter? *Applied Developmental Science*, 14(3), 164–178. doi:10.1080/10888691.2010.500958

Available at: <http://people.virginia.edu/~cjp/articles/ffp10b.pdf>

**Abstract:** This study investigated child development and parenting in 106 families headed by 27 lesbian, 29 gay, and 50 heterosexual couples (80% White, M1/4 42 years) with young adopted children (41% White, M1/4 3 years). Parents and teachers reported that, on average, children were developing in typical ways.

**Measures of children’s adjustment, parenting approaches, parenting stress, and couple relationship adjustment were not significantly associated with parental sexual orientation.** However, several family process variables—parenting stress, parenting approaches, and couple relationship adjustment—were found to be significantly associated with children’s adjustment, regardless of parental sexual orientation. Implications for understanding the role of gender and sexual orientation in parenting, as well as for legal and policy debates, are discussed.

Farr, R. H., & **Patterson, C. J.** (2013). Coparenting Among Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual Couples: Associations With Adopted Children’s Outcomes. *Child Development*, 84(4), 1226–1240. doi:10.1111/cdev.12046

Available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.12046/abstract>

**Abstract:** Coparenting is associated with child behavior in families with heterosexual parents, but less is known about coparenting among lesbian- and gay-parent families. Associations were studied among self-reported divisions of labor, coparenting observations, and child adjustment (Mage = 3 years) among 104 adoptive families headed by lesbian, gay, or heterosexual couples. Lesbian and gay couples reported sharing child care, whereas heterosexual couples reported specialization (i.e., mothers did more child care than fathers). Observations confirmed this pattern—**lesbian and gay parents participated more equally than heterosexual parents during family interaction.** Lesbian couples showed the most supportive and least undermining behavior, whereas gay couples showed the least supportive behavior, and heterosexual couples the most undermining behavior. **Overall, supportive coparenting was associated with better child adjustment.**

Lick, D. J., **Patterson, C. J.**, & Schmidt, K. M. (2013). Recalled Social Experiences and Current Psychological Adjustment among Adults Reared by Gay and Lesbian Parents. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 9(3), 230–253. doi:10.1080/1550428X.2013.781907

Available at: <http://people.virginia.edu/~cjp/articles/lps13.pdf>

**Abstract:** Children of gay and lesbian parents are a diverse group, but existing studies offer limited information about individual differences in their social experiences and subsequent psychological outcomes. In this study, 91 adults reared by gay and lesbian parents responded to measures of recalled social experiences as well as current depressive symptoms, positive and negative affect, and life satisfaction. Participants reported differing social experiences (e.g., stigma) as a function of their sex, family type, gay/lesbian parent's sex, and age at which they learned that a parent was gay or lesbian. **Despite such diverse experiences, participants reported no significant differences in long-term psychological adjustment.** It could be the case that children of gay and lesbian parents learn to cope with difficult social experiences, leading to positive adjustment overall. Indeed, the current sample perceived their social experiences as becoming significantly more positive over the life course, with less stigma and more benefits related to their family situation during adulthood than during earlier developmental periods. Future studies of adaptive coping processes and longitudinal changes in social experiences among offspring of gay and lesbian parents are warranted.

Lick, D. J., Tornello, S. L., Riskind, R. G., Schmidt, K. M., & **Patterson, C. J.** (2012). Social Climate for Sexual Minorities Predicts Well-Being Among Heterosexual Offspring of Lesbian and Gay Parents. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 9(2), 99–112. doi:10.1007/s13178-012-0081-6

Available at: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13178-012-0081-6>

**Abstract:** Social climate—specifically, the level of support for sexual minorities in a given locale—helps to explain well-being among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals. No published reports have examined whether well-being also varies as a function of social climate for family members of LGB individuals. We present results from two studies (Study 1, n=69; Study 2, n=70) demonstrating that social climate predicts well-being among adults reared by LGB parents, regardless of their own sexual orientation. Across both studies, population characteristics (e.g., density of same-sex couples in an area) emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictors of well-being. Some variables assessing local politics (e.g., LGB hate crime policy) also predicted well-being, though these associations were less robust. Overall, findings suggest that the **social environment for sexual minorities is an important correlate of psychological adjustment for many Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation.**

**Patterson, C. J.** (2009). Children of lesbian and gay parents: psychology, law, and policy. *The American Psychologist*, 64(8), 727–736. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.64.8.727

Available at: <http://people.virginia.edu/~cjp/articles/p09b.pdf>

**Abstract:** Legal and policy questions relevant to the lives of lesbian and gay parents and their children have recently been subjects of vigorous debate. Among the issues for which psychological research has been seen as particularly relevant are questions regarding child custody after divorce, same-sex marriage, adoption, and foster care. This article provides an overview of the current legal terrain for lesbian and gay parents and their children in the United States today, an overview of relevant social science research, and some commentary on the interface between the two. It is concluded that **research findings on lesbian and gay parents and their children provide no warrant for legal discrimination against these families.**

Tasker, F., & **Patterson, C. J.** (2007). Research on Gay and Lesbian Parenting. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 3(2-3), 9–34. doi:10.1300/J461v03n02\_02

Available at: <http://people.virginia.edu/~cjp/articles/tp07.pdf>

**Abstract:** Gay and lesbian parenting is a fertile research field with many important new developments in content and methodology over the last decade. Gay and lesbian parenting occurs in a wide diversity

of family constellations, yet the cultural context of lesbian and gay parenting is a neglected topic. **The relative depth of knowledge of lesbian parenting is contrasted with the lack of research on gay male parenting across different routes to parenthood.** Gay and lesbian parenting researchers have employed a wide variety of methodological designs in their investigations, and the field has benefited from the employment of quantitative and qualitative techniques to investigate developmental outcomes for children and increase understanding of the variety of experiences of gay and lesbian parenthood. This review highlights significant developments in the field and suggests new directions.

## II. Selected Peer-Reviewed Articles and Published Abstracts by Others

Biblarz, T. J., & Stacey, J. (2010). How Does the Gender of Parents Matter? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(1), 3–22. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00678.x

**Available at:** <http://www.squareonemd.com/pdf/Does%20the%20Gender%20of%20Parents%20Matter%202010.pdf>

**Abstract:** Claims that children need both a mother and father presume that women and men parent differently in ways crucial to development but generally rely on studies that conflate gender with other family structure variables. We analyze findings from studies with designs that mitigate these problems by comparing 2-parent families with same or different sex coparents and single-mother with single-father families. **Strengths typically associated with married mother-father families appear to the same extent in families with 2 mothers and potentially in those with 2 fathers.** Average differences favor women over men, but parenting skills are not dichotomous or exclusive. The gender of parents correlates in novel ways with parent-child relationships but has minor significance for children's psychological adjustment and social success.

Crowl, A., Ahn, S., & Baker, J. (2008). A Meta-Analysis of Developmental Outcomes for Children of Same-Sex and Heterosexual Parents. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 4(3), 385–407. doi:10.1080/15504280802177615

**Available at:** <http://www.squareonemd.com/pdf/Crowl%20Ahn%20%20Baker%202008%20Same%20Sex%20Parenting%20Meta%20Analysis.pdf>

**Abstract:** While there has been a recent upsurge in the number of studies related to children raised by gay and lesbian parents, the literature in this area continues to be small and wrought with limitations. This study presents a meta-analysis of the existing research and focuses on the developmental outcomes and quality of parent-child relationships among children raised by gay and lesbian parents. A total of 19 studies were used for the analysis and included both child and parent outcome measures addressing six areas. Analyses revealed statistically significant effect size differences between groups for one of the six outcomes: parent-child relationship. **Results confirm previous studies in this current body of literature, suggesting that children raised by same-sex parents fare equally well to children raised by heterosexual parents.** The authors discuss findings with respect to the implications for practitioners in schools.

Erich, S., Kanenberg, H., Case, K., Allen, T., & Bogdanos, T. (2009). An empirical analysis of factors affecting adolescent attachment in adoptive families with homosexual and straight parents. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(3), 398–404. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.09.004

**Available at:** <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740908002326>

**Abstract:** Data were collected on 154 adoptive families with gay/lesbian and straight adoptive parents (154 parent respondents and 210 adolescent respondents). This study was principally interested in factors affecting adolescent attachment including parent sexual orientation, adolescent and parent life satisfaction, and parent level of relationship satisfaction with their adopted child as well as other key parent, child and adoption characteristics. **The results suggest that higher level of adopted adolescent attachment to parents is not related to adoptive parent sexual orientation. Adolescent attachment to** 3

**parents is related to adolescent life satisfaction; parent level of relationship satisfaction with their adopted child, number of placements prior to adoption, and adolescent's current age.** Adolescent life satisfaction, like level of attachment is an indicator of youth well-being. This variable was found to have a significant relationship with parent level of relationship satisfaction with their adopted child. The results also indicated parent's level of relationship satisfaction with their adopted child was related to parent life satisfaction. The variable child's age at adoption was found to have significant relationships with parent life satisfaction, parent's level of relationship satisfaction with their adopted child, and number of placements prior to adoption. Implications for policy, practice, education and further research are discussed.

Gartrell, N., & Bos, H. (2010). US National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study: Psychological Adjustment of 17-Year-Old Adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 126(1), 28–36. doi:10.1542/peds.2009-3153

**Available at:** <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/1/28.abstract>

**Abstract:** OBJECTIVES: The objective of this study was to document the psychological adjustment of adolescents who were conceived through donor insemination by lesbian mothers who enrolled before these offspring were born in the largest, longest running, prospective, longitudinal study of same-sex-parented families.

METHODS: Between 1986 and 1992, 154 prospective lesbian mothers volunteered for a study that was designed to follow planned lesbian families from the index children's conception until they reached adulthood. Data for the current report were gathered through interviews and questionnaires that were completed by 78 index offspring when they were 10 and 17 years old and through interviews and Child Behavior Checklists that were completed by their mothers at corresponding times. The study is ongoing, with a 93% retention rate to date.

RESULTS: According to their mothers' reports, the 17-year-old daughters and sons of lesbian mothers were rated significantly higher in social, school/academic, and total competence and significantly lower in social problems, rule-breaking, aggressive, and externalizing problem behavior than their age-matched counterparts in Achenbach's normative sample of American youth. Within the lesbian family sample, no Child Behavior Checklist differences were found among adolescent offspring who were conceived by known, as-yet-unknown, and permanently unknown donors or between offspring whose mothers were still together and offspring whose mothers had separated.

CONCLUSIONS: **Adolescents who have been reared in lesbian-mother families since birth demonstrate healthy psychological adjustment.** These findings have implications for the clinical care of adolescents and for pediatricians who are consulted on matters that pertain to same-sex parenting.

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*.

**Available at:** <http://www.nllfs.org/images/uploads/pdf/NLLFS-adolescents-sexuality-2010.pdf>

**Abstract:** This study assessed Kinsey self-ratings and lifetime sexual experiences of 17-year-olds whose lesbian mothers enrolled before these offspring were born in the longest-running, prospective study of same-sex parented families, with a 93% retention rate to date. Data for the current report were gathered through online questionnaires completed by 78 adolescent offspring (39 girls and 39 boys). The adolescents were asked if they had ever been abused and, if so, to specify by whom and the type of abuse (verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual). They were also asked to specify their sexual identity on the Kinsey scale, between exclusively heterosexual and exclusively homosexual. Lifetime sexual behavior was assessed through questions about heterosexual and same-sex contact, age of first sexual experience, contraception use, and pregnancy. The results revealed that there were no reports of physical or sexual victimization by a parent or other caregiver. Regarding sexual orientation, 18.9% of the adolescent girls and 2.7% of the adolescent boys self-rated in the bisexual spectrum, and 0% of girls and 5.4% of boys self-rated as predominantly-to-exclusively homosexual. When compared with age- and gender-matched adolescents of the National Survey of Family Growth, the study offspring were

significantly older at the time of their first heterosexual contact, and the daughters of lesbian mothers were significantly more likely to have had same-sex contact. **These findings suggest that adolescents reared in lesbian families are less likely than their peers to be victimized by a parent or other caregiver, and that daughters of lesbian mothers are more likely to engage in same-sex behavior and to identify as bisexual.**

Pawelski, J. G., Perrin, E. C., Foy, J. M., Allen, C. E., Crawford, J. E., Del Monte, M., ... Vickers, D. L. (2006). The effects of marriage, civil union, and domestic partnership laws on the health and well-being of children. *Pediatrics*, 118(1), 349–364. doi:10.1542/peds.2006-1279

**Available at:** <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/118/1/349.long>

**Abstract:** In 2005, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Board of Directors commissioned the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, the Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care, the Committee on Adolescence, the Committee on State Government Affairs, the Committee on Federal Government Affairs, and the Section on Adoption and Foster Care to develop an analysis examining the effects of marriage, civil union, and domestic partnership statutes and amendments on the legal, financial, and psychosocial health and well-being of children whose parents are gay or lesbian.

In developing this analysis, the involved committees and section held before them the AAP's core philosophy—that the family is the principal caregiver and the center of strength and support for children. Together with this philosophy, contributors recognized the reality that our gay and lesbian patients grow up to be gay and lesbian adults. Because many pediatricians are fortunate to care for 2 or more generations of a family, we are likely to encounter and remain involved with our patients, regardless of sexual orientation, as they mature and mark the milestones of establishing a committed partnership with another adult, deciding to raise a family, and entrusting the health and well-being of their own children to us.

**This analysis explores the unique and complex challenges that same-gender couples and their children face as a result of public policy that excludes them from civil marriage.** In compiling this report it became clear to the contributing committees and section that the depth and breadth of these challenges are largely unknown to the general public and perhaps even to many pediatricians. As such, the AAP Board of Directors approved the broad dissemination of this analysis to assist pediatricians with addressing the complex issues related to same-gender couples and their children.

Van Gelderen, L., Bos, H. M. W., Gartrell, N., Hermanns, J., & Perrin, E. C. (2012). Quality of life of adolescents raised from birth by lesbian mothers: the US National Longitudinal Family Study. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics: JDBP*, 33(1), 17–23. doi:10.1097/DBP.0b013e31823b62af

**Available at:** <http://www.nllfs.org/images/uploads/pdf/nllfs-quality-life-january-2012.pdf>

**Abstract:** **OBJECTIVE:** To compare the quality of life (QoL), a measure of psychological well-being, of adolescents reared in lesbian-mother families with that of a matched comparison group of adolescents with heterosexual parents. The adolescents in the comparison group were derived from a representative sample of adolescents in Washington state. The second aim of the study was to assess among teens with lesbian mothers whether donor status, maternal relationship continuity, and self-reported stigmatization are associated with QoL.

**METHODS:** In 1986, prospective lesbian mothers were recruited in Boston, Washington, DC, and San Francisco. Currently, 93% of the National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS) families are still participating in the study. This report is based on an online questionnaire completed by 78 NLLFS adolescent offspring—39 girls and 39 boys. Six items of the Youth Quality of Life Instrument were used to assess QoL. Also, the NLLFS adolescents were asked whether they had experienced stigmatization, and if so, to describe these experiences (e.g., teasing and ridicule). Mothers were queried about donor status and maternal relationship continuity.

RESULTS: The results revealed that the NLLFS adolescents rated their QoL comparably to their counterparts in heterosexual-parent families. Donor status, maternal relationship continuity, and experienced stigmatization were not related to QoL.

CONCLUSION: **Adolescent offspring in planned lesbian families do not show differences in QoL when compared with a matched group of adolescents reared in heterosexual families.** By investigating QoL, this study provides insight into positive aspects of mental health of adolescents with lesbian mothers.

Van Gelderen, L., Gartrell, N. N., Bos, H. M. W., & Hermanns, J. M. A. (2013). Stigmatization and Promotive Factors in Relation to Psychological Health and Life Satisfaction of Adolescents in Planned Lesbian Families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 34(6), 809–827. doi:10.1177/0192513X12447269

Available at: <http://www.nllfs.org/images/uploads/pdf/nllfs-life-satisfaction-2013-van-gelderens.pdf>

**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to investigate whether stigmatization was associated with psychological adjustment in adolescents from planned lesbian families and, if so, to examine whether individual and interpersonal promotive factors influenced this association. Seventy-eight adolescents (39 girls, 39 boys; mean age = 17.05 years) completed an online questionnaire about psychological health problems and life satisfaction. In addition, information was obtained about androgynous personality traits (an individual factor) of the adolescents. The adolescents were also queried about family compatibility and peer group fit (two interpersonal factors). Hierarchical multiple-regression analyses revealed that stigmatization was associated with more psychological health problems and less life satisfaction, but family compatibility and peer group fit ameliorated this. **These findings suggest that stigmatization has a negative impact on the psychological adjustment of adolescents with same-sex parents.** Interpersonal promotive factors decrease the strength of this association.

### III. Selected Books

Brodzinsky, D., & Pertman, A. (2012). *Adoption by Lesbians and Gay Men: A New Dimension in Family Diversity*. Oxford University Press.

Goldberg, A. E., & Allen, K. R. (Eds.). (2013). *LGBT-Parent Families*. New York, NY: Springer New York.

### IV. Selected Other Resources

Brief for the APA, et al. as Amicus Curiae, p. 1, Dennis Hollingsworth, et al. v. Kristin M. Perry, et al. U.S. 37 (2013). Retrieved <http://www.apa.org/about/offices/ogc/amicus/hollingsworth-perry.pdf>

Gates, Gary J. 2013. *LGBT Parenting in the United States*. The Williams Institute. Available at: <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Parenting.pdf>

Gates, Gary J. 2014. *Same-sex Couples in Ohio: A Demographic Summary*. The Williams Institute. Available at: <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/OH-same-sex-couples-demo-apr-2014.pdf>

Human Rights Campaign. (2014). Resources: Social Science Research. Retrieved from <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/social-science-research>

Kosciw, J. G. & Diaz, E. M. (2008). *Involved, Invisible, Ignored: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Parents and Their Children in Our Nation's K-12 Schools*. New York: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. Retrieved from [http://www.familyequality.org/\\_asset/5n43xf/familiesandschools.pdf](http://www.familyequality.org/_asset/5n43xf/familiesandschools.pdf)

Movement Advancement Project, Family Equality Council and Center for American Progress. (2011) *All Children Matter: How Legal and Social Inequalities Hurt LGBT Families (Condensed Version)*. Retrieved from <https://lgbtmap.org/file/all-children-matter-condensed-report.pdf>

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. *Psychological and Social Outcomes for Children of Same Sex Parents*. Retrieved from [https://www.spspsi.org/\\_data/n\\_0001/resources/live/Psychological%20social%20outcomes%20in%20children%201-23-2014.pdf](https://www.spspsi.org/_data/n_0001/resources/live/Psychological%20social%20outcomes%20in%20children%201-23-2014.pdf)