



MPIPP

Michigan Project for Informed Public Policy

FACT SHEET

Second parent adoption is a legal procedure that allows unrelated couples to adopt their partner's biological or adopted child(ren) without terminating the first parent's right as a parent. Second parent adoptions give the child two legal guardians. It also protects both parents by giving both of them legally recognized parental status.

Second parent adoption protects the child by having continuity in parental relationships should the parent who is the legal parent die or become incapacitated or should the parents separate.

Michigan currently limits adoptions to married couples or to single people.

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH FINDINGS on Gay and Lesbian Parents and their Children

Major research on gay and lesbian parenting has focused on several issues:

- (1) gays and lesbians as parents
- (2) the mental and emotional adjustment of children of same-sex parents.
- (3) the impact on the sexuality of the children who are raised by gay and lesbian parents.

Gay and lesbian couples or individuals are psychologically fit for parenting

There is scientific evidence that indicates that gay or lesbian partners are equally as fit as heterosexual (straight) partners:

- Research conducted as far back as 1957 says that homosexual orientation does not impair psychological functioning. In fact, there is a wide body of sound research that finds that homosexuality is simply a normal variation of sexuality. ^{(2) (3) (5) (6) (7)}
- 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. ^{(8) (9) (10) (12)}
- Beliefs that lesbian and gay adults are not fit parents have no empirical foundation. ^{(8) (10) (11) (12)}
- Peer reviewed scientific research has found that lesbian and gay relationships are characterized by positive adjustment, even in the face of stressful conditions. ⁽⁸⁾
- Lesbian and heterosexual women do not differ significantly in their approaches to child rearing. Gay and lesbian couples with children have been found to divide the work involved in childcare evenly and to be satisfied with their relationships with their partners. ^{(7) (8) (9) (10) (12)}

Children of gay or lesbian parents are as well adjusted as those of heterosexual couples

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

- In a major 25-year longitudinal study of lesbian couples and children, the children from lesbian households were rated significantly higher in adjustment than children from heterosexual couples. ⁽⁴⁾

- 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.⁽¹⁰⁾
- 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.^{(9) (10) (11)}

Children of gay or lesbian parents experience no more difficulty in terms of their own sexual identity than children of heterosexual parents

There are a variety of families headed by a lesbian or gay male parent or same-sex couple. Findings from research suggest that children with lesbian or gay parents are comparable with children with heterosexual parents on key psychosocial developmental outcomes.

- Research suggests that sexual identities (including gender identity, gender-role behavior, and sexual orientation) develop in much the same ways among children of lesbian mothers as they do among children of heterosexual parents.⁽⁹⁾
- Having a lesbian or gay parent does not seem to influence gender role development, and the large majority of sons and daughters of lesbian or gay parents grow up to identify as heterosexual.^{(1) (12)}

REFERENCES CITED

Gay and lesbian parents and their children is a heavily researched area of social science. The references cited in this Fact Sheet and shown below are some of many examples of those on this topic.

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