

LGBTQ Families - Research Article Summaries**11. The Children of Same-Sex Parents:  
How Marriage Equality Might Impact Their Well-being**

Meezan, W., & Rauch, J. (2005). Gay marriage, same-sex parenting, and America's children. *The Future of Children, 15*, 97-115.

This paper explores same-sex parented families and how same-sex marriage could impact the well-being of children. The authors review research and find that lesbian and gay parents are much like other parents and their children are doing as well as children in other families. Children of lesbian and gay parents show no significant differences in cognitive abilities, behavior, overall emotional development, self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. Children do not appear to have heightened difficulty with peers. Children show typical gender identity development and are no more likely to be lesbian or gay. Some studies find no differences in gender behavior, but others find that boys tend to be less aggressive and girls more "masculine" when raised by lesbian rather than heterosexual mothers. In particular, daughters of lesbian mothers have more open and accepting attitudes about sexuality.

However, it remains a question whether the studied parents and children are typical of the general population of same-sex parented families. Challenges to studying these families include the difficulty of finding representative and diverse samples, identifying whether married heterosexual parents are an appropriate comparison group, and accurately gauging how children are faring by asking or observing them directly.

For all same-sex parented families, same-sex marriage could confer three types of benefits to children: increased material well-being through pooling of their parents' economic resources, increased stability and durability of their parents' relationship, increased social acceptance and support of families headed by same-sex parents. However, there is to date no empirical study on how same-sex marriage affects children.