

LGBTQ Families - Research Article Summaries**21. Lesbian and Gay Parents and their Children:
A Review of Past Empirical Research in the Field of Lesbian and Gay Parenthood**

Tasker, F., & Patterson, C. J. (in press). Research on lesbian and gay parenting: Retrospect and prospect. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*.

This paper reviews the empirical research on lesbian and gay parenting conducted over the past few decades. Researchers have used a variety of methods to investigate child outcomes and to promote understanding of lesbian and gay (LG) parenting experiences.

Families with LG parents are diverse. Many LG parents have had children through a previous heterosexual relationship. Alternatively, many lesbian- or gay-identified individuals (single or partnered) have become parents through adopting or fostering children. Donor insemination, with known or anonymous sperm donors, and surrogacy arrangements also occur. The U.S. Census 2000 revealed that in nearly 600,000 same-sex partner households, 34% of lesbian couples and 22% of gay male couples were involved in parenting. One national U.S. survey found that roughly one in five lesbians and one in ten gay men are parents. Research is needed to explore how cultural variations impact the family life of LG parents and their children.

Research on families with LG parents has shown that parent-child relationships are generally positive, that co-parenting lesbian couples tend to divide childcare equally, and that LG parents face heightened pressure in deciding when and how to disclose their sexual identity to others. Children of LG parents have regular contact with grandparents and other adults, do not experience heightened victimization from peers, and are not more likely to become lesbian or gay themselves. They are developing normally in areas of personality, self-concept, gender identity, moral judgment, peer relations, school adjustment, and intelligence. More research about gay fathers is needed.