

LGBTQ Families - Research Article Summaries**23. Interviews with Lesbian Mothers of Five-Year-Olds:
National Lesbian Family Study deals with Parenting Experiences and Child Adjustment**

Gartrell, N., Banks, A., Reed, N., Hamilton, J., Rodas, C., & Deck, A. (2000). The national lesbian family study: 3. Interviews with mothers of five-year-olds. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 70, 542-548.

This paper is the third report from a longitudinal study of 84 lesbian-parent families in which 150 mothers of 85 five-year-old children, conceived by donor insemination, were interviewed. Open-ended questions included the following themes: parenting experiences, health status, support systems, discrimination concerns, educational choices, and relationship issues.

Results showed that most of the children in the study were well-adjusted and healthy—87% of the children related well to peers, 63% had grandparents who acknowledged their grandchild's family with lesbian mothers, and 18% had experienced homophobia from teachers or peers. Parental preparation, such as role-playing healthy responses to homophobia, helped children cope with such adversity. Of the couples that remained intact (31% had broken up), 68% felt their child was equally bonded to both mothers. Co-mothers in couples felt less jealous of and competitive with biological mothers than when the child was born. Couples reported compatibility in their child-rearing philosophies and felt that having a child strengthened their relationship. Acceptance and support by families of origin increased from the time of the child's birth. Most mothers had strong friendship networks and were active participants in the lesbian community. Elementary schools selected by mothers were evenly divided between private and public, and most were multicultural, had lesbian or gay staff, or had lesbian and gay awareness in their curriculum.

Study participants were predominantly college-educated, managers or professionals, middle- to upper-middle class, Christian or Jewish, and White. Children were also predominantly White, but were slightly more ethnically and racially diverse than mothers. The average age of mothers was 40 years.