

LGBTQ Families - Research Article Summaries**3. Adoptive Families with Lesbian and Gay Parents:
Study deals with family functioning and relationships in adoptive families that include lesbian, gay, and heterosexual parents and special needs children**

Erich, S., Leung, P., & Kindle, P. (2005). A comparative analysis in adoptive family functioning with gay, lesbian and heterosexual parents and their children. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies, 1*, 43-60.

The above study explored the level of family functioning of adoptive families with heterosexual, lesbian, and gay parents and their adopted children. Family functioning involves communication among family members, involvement and interest in one another's lives, and the provision of feelings of security and reassurance.

There were no significant differences between families with parents that were heterosexual and those who were lesbian or gay in measures of family functioning, child behavior problems or ratings of support from extended family and friends. In this study, parents' sexual orientation is not a significant predictor of any of these measures. These results suggest that sexual orientation is not valid to consider in determining the suitability of potential adoptive parents.

Families functioned better when parents had fostered children before adopting, when adopted children had experienced more placements previous to their adoption, and when family support was higher. Families didn't function as well when adopted children were older, had learning disorders, mental health diagnoses or other disabilities.

A total of 72 (45 lesbian or gay, 25 heterosexual) adoptive parents participated. They answered child behavior and family relationship questionnaires in regard to 111 of their adopted children (68 had lesbian or gay parents, 43 had heterosexual parents). Roughly half of the children were female and the average age of children was 6.5 years. A little over 25% of the children had been diagnosed with a learning or psychological disorder or physical handicap. There were 31 Caucasian children, 16 African American, 18 Hispanic, 16 Asian, and 28 Bi-racial included in the study. There were 65 Caucasian parents, 2 Hispanic, 1 Asian, and 3 who identified as a combination of ethnic backgrounds.