

## **26. Reviewing Studies of Children with Lesbian and Gay Parents: What's Been Done, What We Know, and Where We Go From Here**

Anderssen, N., Amalie, C., & Ytteroy, E. A. (2002). Outcomes for children with lesbian or gay parents. A review of studies from 1978 to 2000. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43, 335-351.

This paper reviews 23 empirical studies published between 1978 and 2000 regarding children raised by lesbian and gay (LG) parents. A total of 615 children, ranging from 1.5 to 44 years, were surveyed in these studies. Children of LG parents were not systematically different from children of heterosexual parents on any of the following outcomes: emotional functioning, cognitive functioning, behavioral adjustment, gender role behavior, gender identity, sexual preferences, and stigmatization. Children of LG parents were found to be typical on all of these outcome variables and were not suffering from any adverse outcomes.

Most studies were published in North America, but three were British, one was Belgian/Dutch, and one was Danish. Twenty studies involved lesbian mothers and three involved gay fathers. Thirteen studies involved control groups of children with heterosexual parents, for a total of 387 control children. Twenty-one studies recruited participants through convenience methods—only two involved using a representative sampling frame. Fourteen studies mentioned adoption status and showed that 2% of children with LG parents were adopted while 0 % of children with LG parents were in the control group. To collect data, interviews were used in 16 studies, written questionnaires were used in 11 studies, children were tested with some type of standardized measure in at least 7 studies, and observation was used in 2 studies.

More studies, using larger and more representative samples, are needed-- including observational measures and gay fathers. In sum, the findings strongly indicate that lesbian women should not be barred from being parents based on their sexual orientation.