

Does living in a same sex home effect how a child will grow up

[Health & Medicine](#), [Sex](#)



Winters 1 Jynai Winters 16 November 2012 Psychology 100 Sabrina Does Same-Sex parenting affect a child? I choose this topic because I love children and I don't like to see children hurting. I also choose it because I always wondered if it made a difference if a child grows up in a heterosexual home or living in homosexual home.

Another reason why I choose to do this topic is because a lot of people believe that homosexual parents are not fit to raise their children if they come from a heterosexual relationship however, they do not have any proof that they are unfit for parenting their children and people do not like the fact that a child is growing up around homosexual activity and they also believe that if they grow up with a homosexual parent that they will not have choice about their sexuality.

The earliest known idea about developmental psychology was presented by Jean Jacques Rousseau around the late 18th century. Developmental psychology studies the human growth and development that occurs throughout the entire life span. Most people that studies this field focuses on one stage of development. There are seven stages of life that they could choose from; they are Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, Early Adulthood, Middle Adulthood, Other Adults and Developmental Disabilities. To become a psychologist you must earn a Bachelors degree in psychology.

However you must have a Master's or doctoral before you start working as a psychologist. Most psychologists often work in schools and learning centers. They could also work in hospitals, mental facilities and nursing homes. They are even a few psychologists that work at colleges and for the government

as teachers or to do perform research. Winters 2 A developmental psychologist salary depends on their training, geographic location and the work setting. Usually psychologist make between \$69, 007 and \$90, 326 a year.

There are also those few that make more than \$101, 088 per year. As a psychologist some of their task will included evaluating children to determine if they have a developmental disability, investigating how language skills are acquired, studying how moral reasoning develops in children and finally exploring ways to help elderly individuals remain independent. Most developmentalists study and research contextual influences that impact change such as socioeconomic conditions, culture, and genetics.

There are many other changes that developmentalists study which arefamily, parenting style, divorce, friends, religion physical and mental abuse and educational levels. My research will focus on the Boswell vs. Boswell case of 1998, the Bottoms vs. Bottoms case of 1995 and also the Hugginsinterviewof 1989. I will also talk about the Wainright, Russell, and Patterson 2004 study, the King and Black study of 1994, the MacCallum & Golombok of 2004, Vanfraussen study of 2002, the Fulcher of 2008, and finally the Patterson study of 1992 and 2000.

The first study I will talk about is Huggins's 1989 and O'Connell of 1993. The small body of research that has focused on adolescent offspring of families headed by same-sex couples includes Huggins's (1989) study of 36 adolescents (13-19 years old, 18 with divorced heterosexual mothers and 18 with divorced lesbian mothers), which reported no differences in adolescent

self-esteem as a function of mothers' sexual orientation. In another early study, O'Connell (1993) studied 11 young men and women, 16-23 years old, were the offspring of divorced or separated lesbian mothers.

Participants expressed strong love, loyalty, and protectiveness toward their mothers and a desire for others to understand the benefits of having a lesbian mother. Participants, however, also Winters 3 described concerns about losing friends, and some described attempts to control information about their mothers' sexual orientation. These two studies were about how the child felt after their parents divorced. The Huggins's study reported that the children that they had no difference in their self-esteem.

While the O'Connell study reported that the children showed strong love, loyalty and protectiveness towards their mother's. However, both studies showed that the children lost friends and some children even tried to hide their mother's sexual orientation. Wainright, Russell, and Patterson (2004) reported a study of family and relationship variables on the one hand, and adolescent personal and social adjustment on the other. They studied adjustment in a sample of 44 teenagers (12-18 years old) with same-sex parents and a matched sample of 44 teenagers with opposite-sex parents.

On a range of psychosocial outcomes including depressive symptoms, anxiety, and school adjustment, Wainright and her colleagues found no significant differences as a function of family type same-sex or opposite-sex parents. Among their findings they found that there were no significant effects for family type on adolescent reports of sexual behavior or romantic relationships. Wainright and her colleagues did, however, find significant

associations between parental perception of parent-adolescent relationship quality and adolescent school adjustment.

Similar findings were reported for delinquency, substance use, and victimization by Wainright and Patterson (2006). The Wainright, Russell, and Patterson study talks about family and relationship vs. adolescent personal and social adjustment. The results to the study was that there was no significant difference as a function as a family, there was also no significant effect for the family type with sexual behavior or romantic relationship. However, they did find that there was difference between parental perception and school adjustment. Winters 4

The few negative findings for children with two mothers were equivocal. Teachers in a Belgian study (Vanfraussen et al. , 2002) reported more attention and behavior problems for such children (about a half standard deviation difference), but this did not match teachers' ratings of the children's adjustment, and neither the children nor their mothers concurred. A second more plausible finding was that such children reported being teased about their families more, but this speaks to social disapproval of their parents' sexual identity rather than their gender.

Researchers consistently find that children with lesbian parents contend with homophobia among their peers, but disagree over whether these children suffer more teasing overall or if the teasing focuses on their parents' sexual identity (Bos et al. , 2008; Tasker ; Golombok, 1997; Wainright ; Patterson, 2008). The only clear negative finding appeared in the first wave of the UK study of fatherless families described above (Golombok et al. , 1997).

Six-year-old children in mother-only families (whether lesbian or heterosexual) described themselves as less competent physically and cognitively than their peers (0.75 SD averaging the two), but the difference disappeared when the children were interviewed again 6 years later (MacCallum ; Golombok, 2004). Because this study did not control for the number of parents in mother-only families, it could not help us determine whether the absence of a male parent or just of a second parent contributed to the lower self-esteem the younger children expressed.

The Vanfraussen study of 2002 was one of the two studies that show that the children will misbehave if they live with a homosexual parent. However, when asked by the teachers they said the child is a good child and does not misbehave, they asked their parent too and they give the same answer. So this study is not a really good study because their results did prove the opposite of what they stated. Should a parent's sexual identity be considered relevant in deciding a child's best Winters 5 interest, for purposes of child custody and visitation?

Answers to this question have shown tremendous variability from one jurisdiction to another. In some states, such as Massachusetts and California, parental sexual orientation is considered irrelevant to custody and visitation disputes. In these states, a connection, or nexus, must be demonstrated between a parent's sexual orientation, on the one hand, and a negative outcome for the child, on the other. Because a connection of this type can be difficult to establish, nexus rules have often resulted in judgments favorable to lesbian and gay parents.

For instance, in *Boswell v. Boswell* (1998), a Maryland visitation case, the court refused to limit children's visitation with their gay father in the presence of his same-sex partner because there was no evidence of harm to the children from such visitation. The *Boswell vs. Boswell* case of 1998 a father was limited to see his children because of his sexuality, so he took his wife to court and the judge agreed with him because there was no evidence that the child would be harm because of their father's sexuality. In a custody case involving a lesbian mother (*Bottoms v.*

Bottoms, 1995), for example, the Virginia Supreme Court reiterated its earlier holding that a lesbian mother is not unfit as a matter of law but included the mother's sexual orientation among factors considered to make her an undesirable parent. Thus, in some states, lesbian and gay parents must overcome formal or informal presumptions that their sexual identities make them less than ideal parents. With the case of *Bottoms vs. Bottoms* the judge agreed in the favor of the mother because her sexuality did not make her unfit parent, it just made her an undesirable parent.

I know has nothing to do with a child but I just wanted to show how a parent is sometimes looked upon as an unfit parent just because of their sexuality. In connection with this bias, Patterson, who would later serve as sole author of the *Winters 6 2005 APA Brief's " Summary of Research Findings on Lesbian and Gay Families"*, reported: Despite the diversity of gay and lesbian communities, both in the United States and abroad, samples of children and parents have been relatively homogeneous.... Samples for which

demographic information was reported have been described as predominantly Caucasian, well-educated, and middle to upper class.

In spite of the privileged and homogeneous nature of the non-representative samples employed in the studies at that time, Patterson's (1992) conclusion was as follows: Despite shortcomings in the studies, however, results of existing research comparing children of gay or lesbian parents with those of heterosexual parents are extraordinarily clear, and they merit attention... There is no evidence to suggest that psychosocial development among children of gay men or lesbians is compromised in any respect relative to that among offspring of heterosexual parents.

Patterson's conclusion in a 2000 review was essentially the same: Central results of existing research on lesbian and gay couples and families with children are exceptionally clear. The home environments provided by lesbian and gay parents are just as likely as those provided by heterosexual parents to enable psychosocial growth among family members. The Patterson study was about showing if homosexual parents make a difference with how the child is raised or affected.

There results showed that there was no evidence that showed that the development among children of gay or lesbian is compromised compared to the offspring of heterosexual parents. Then they looked back at the study in 2000 and found that home environments is just as likely to have the same problem no matter if the parents are lesbian, gay or heterosexual. Associative stigmatization of children with lesbian mothers might be expected, based on the degree of stigmatization directed toward the

parents. Although there seems to be a growing willingness among Americans to extend basic civil liberties to gay men and lesbians (Herek, 1991), stigma is still associated with same-gender sexual orientations (Herek, Kimmel, Amaro, & Melton, 1991), and researchers agree that negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians are widespread (Kite, 1994). This study talks about stigmatization against children whose parents are homosexual and also how Americans still have attitudes against homosexual. It was also saying that people attitudes towards to homosexual affects the child because the child is thinking that their parent is not liked by anyone because who they are.

Other researchers have noted that children brought up in a two-adult home, regardless of the gender of the adults, are in better emotional health than those raised by single parents, and that lesbian mothers who live with a partner are at a psychological advantage over single lesbian mothers. In addition to these indications that custody contingent on the absence of a live-in partner for the mother is not in the child's best interests, there is no evidence in the current study that potential stigmatization is increased by the presence of a female partner.

Some researchers have shown that children that are brought up in two-adult homes are better in emotional health than those raised by single parents. It also showed that lesbian mothers that live with a partner are at a advantage over a single lesbian mother because there is no evidence that shows that the potential of stigmatization will increased by the presence of a female partner. Children may indeed be stigmatized or embarrassed at times

because of characteristics of their parents — not just children of lesbians, but children of a variety of non-traditional parents.

That a parent is of a racial, political, or religious minority, is poor, has a physical impairment, or is otherwise different is not usually considered sufficient reason for denying that parent custody of a child (Falk, 1989). The same stigmatization argument that was used by courts 20 years ago to deny custody to women who married interracially after a divorce is now being used to deny custody to lesbian mothers. Winters 8 However in this study did show that children will be stigmatized and embarrassed because of their parents characteristic, but not just children f lesbians any child can be embarrassed or stigmatized by someone. Another thing is that with the custody of a child a mother or father could not be denied custody just because of their sexuality. The Falk study founded that perceptual stigmatization of children of divorced lesbians does occur; it was not designed to address the magnitude of that stigmatization. In related work on relational stigmatization, Falk have found that a majority of college students are willing to interact inrelationships with childrenof lesbians, although willingness decreases as intimacy of relationship increases.

As Falk has pointed out, legal decision-makers may be overemphasizing the severity of stigmatization toward children in the custody of lesbian mothers. Two types of studies would be informative in addressing this concern. One would seek to identify the number of participants in any given sample who are likely to stigmatize children of lesbians and would explore characteristics of these individuals that may be correlated with a tendency to engage in

stigmatization. Another would compare attitudes toward children of lesbian mothers with actual interaction with these children.

Future research on this topic should also utilize samples that are more demographically diverse, particularly in terms of age and education. Community samples, for example, may differ from college samples in their likelihood to stigmatize lesbians and their children. Even though a few of the studies of stereotyping and attitudes toward homosexuals that used both college and community samples found little difference between groups, this finding may or may not extend to children of lesbians.

Based on the published science, one could argue that two women parent better on average than a woman and a man, or at least than a woman and man with a traditional division of family labor. Lesbian co parents seem to outperform comparable married heterosexual, biological parents on several measures, even while being denied the substantial privileges of marriage. This seems to be attributable partly to selection effects and partly to women on average exceeding men in parenting investment and skills. Family structure modifies these differences in parenting.

Married heterosexual fathers typically score lowest on parental involvement and skills, but as with Dustin Hoffman's character in the 1979 film *Kramer v. Kramer*, they improve notably when faced with single or primary parenthood. Winters 9 The science world has shown that two women can out parent a married heterosexual couples on several different measures, even though being denied the privilege of getting married. In a heterosexual relationship the father usually scores the lowest in parental involvement and skills

however, in a homosexual relationship both parents pass parental involvement and skill part.

One thing they did notice was that the father usually increased his score when he is faced with single or primary parenthood. In conclusion, from my research it has shown that a child can live in a same sex home and not be affected by his or her parent's sexuality. The only thing they will have to deal with is being teased however; ever child is teased at some point in their life. The only thing that is being learned is that you cannot judge a parent because of their sexuality. I would also say that you cannot judge a child because of their parent's sexuality.

A child really does not really understand what the difference is between homosexual and heterosexual relationship. The child only knows that they have two parents that love them, so why would you try to change their vision of their family, if the child is happy let them be because they are innocent. Finally future research should focus on how the parent is affected. They could also survey the children when they get older and see how they felt growing up in a same sex home. Another thing they could do is see how they raise their children and how they grow up helped them choose on how they raise them.

These are just some things they could do in the future if they ever research this topic again. Winters 10 Works Cited Biblarz, Timothy J. " How Does Gender of Parents Matter. " ProQuest. Pro Quest, Feb. 2010. Web. 11 Nov. 2012. Cherry, Kendra. " What Is a Developmental Psychologist. " Psychology. About. com, n. d. Web. 16 Nov. 2012. " Developmental Psychology Careers. "

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