

More evidence that kids of gay parents do just fine

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Studies show children raised by 2 moms or 2 dads consider themselves 'different,' but stigma is lessening.

(HealthDay)—On the heels of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide, new research suggests that children raised by gay parents are well-adjusted and resilient.

The four new studies to be presented later this week at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Toronto set out to assess the psychological and sociological health of [children](#) raised by [same-sex couples](#).

One study looked at the experience of 49 preadolescent youngsters adopted by either two-dad or two-mom households. The children's average age was 8.

Led by Rachel Farr, a research assistant professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, researchers interviewed both children and parents. Nearly 80 percent of the boys and girls said they felt "different" from other children because of their parents' status, the study found.

But less than 60 percent felt they had been stigmatized because of their same-sex family structure. And 70 percent appeared to respond to adversity with resilience, demonstrating an upbeat attitude about their family, the researchers found.

"Feeling different and experiencing some challenges with peers were not necessarily impacting children negatively," Farr said. "Rather, the majority of children described very positive feelings about their families and had ways of coping with peers who seemed confused or expressed negativity about having two moms or two dads."

She added that the results "may be important for parents and teachers in promoting children's positive sense of self and family identity through supportive discussion of family diversity at home and at school."

A second study compared rates of anxiety and/or depression among 3- to 10-year-olds raised by 68 [gay male couples](#) with those of youngsters raised by 68 heterosexual parents.

The team led by Robert-Jay Green, a retired professor of clinical psychology at the California School of Professional Psychology in San Francisco, found that all of the children were psychologically healthy.

Though both sets of parents were similar by most socioeconomic measures, daughters raised by two gay dads experienced less anxiety and depression overall than daughters raised by a mother and father, investigators found.

A third study—led by Henry Bos, an assistant professor in behavioral and social sciences at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands—found that 17-year-olds raised in households without a male role model were *not* psychologically maladjusted and appeared to engage in gender-appropriate behavior.

Bos' team compared 38 teens raised by two-mom families that included a male role model with 40 raised by lesbian couples without a male presence. Both groups showed similar displays of expected feminine or masculine gender roles.

A fourth study set out to compare the experiences of same-sex [parents](#) and [heterosexual parents](#) as they interacted with American kindergarten schoolteachers. The study, led by Abbie Goldberg of Clark University in Worcester, Mass., included 30 gay, 40 lesbian and 45 straight couples who were raising adopted children.

Roughly nine in 10 of the same-sex couples said they had discussed their family status with school personnel. And three-quarters of them said their status prompted no "major challenge" when dealing with their child's school.

Goldberg, an associate professor of psychology, said the findings were surprising in that "higher levels of disclosure about sexuality and lower levels of perceived stigma" were reported than in older studies.

The finding "likely reflects the passing of time and increased acceptance of LGB [lesbian, gay and bisexual] families," she said.

Nevertheless, Goldberg noted that "the instances of adoption stigma that were reported are troubling, and suggest that many educators need training in adoptive families."

More information: There's more on sexual orientation and parenting at [American Psychological Association](#).

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