**Same sex couples**

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**Introduction**

In 1995, there were 9 Million gay and lesbian households in the United States.

The expert takeaway is children need loving parents; the gender isn’t important.

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**Socioeconomic Status of Same Sex Couples**

- Gay couples are at a socioeconomic disadvantage because of discrimination.
- In the U.S census same sex couple parents tend to be more working class then heterosexual couples.
- Gay men make up to 32 percent less than equally capable heterosexual men.
- “Termination of an employee based on sexual orientation remains legal in 31 American states.”
- Very few companies offer health care benefits to same-sex couples or unmarried heterosexual couples.

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**Adoption Laws**

- When it comes to Federal Law, there is no law of the land, meaning that the government has not made a decision on this issue. Instead it is up to the states.
- There are three states that ban same sex couples from adopting at all: Florida, Mississippi, and Utah, with Michigan banning couples from adopting, but not single parents.
- New York State allows same sex couples to adopt.
- New York State also allows single gay parents to adopt.
- New York State is only one of nine states to allow second parent adoption in same sex couples.
- Second Parent Adoption is when one partner in an unmarried couple adopts the other partner’s biological or adoptive child, and this can occur in both gay and straight relationships.

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**Perspectives on Gay and Lesbian Parents**

- 14 million children in the United States have lesbian or gay parents based on a study done in 1992. As one can imagine, this number increased dramatically over the last 20 years. Due to the legalization of gay marriage and adoption in many parts of the United States, gays and lesbians find it easier to live healthy and happy lives.
- The majority of these children were born while their biological parents were still in heterosexual marriages. The parent subsequently came out as gay or lesbian during some point in the relationship. The reactions of the children are different depending on the circumstances, but in general they accept the parent and still maintain the same loving relationship.

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**Effect of Gay Parents on Children**

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<tr>
<th>Positive Outcomes</th>
<th>Negative Outcomes</th>
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<td>• Children and teens are more likely to accept their mother’s wife who is their “stepmother” rather than their mother’s husband who would be considered their “stepfather”.</td>
<td>• Studies show about half of the kids surveyed with lesbian mothers have received welfare.</td>
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<td>• These children and teens viewed their gay parents as more dependable and more available for them.</td>
<td>• Children and teenagers get picked on at school for having gay parents.</td>
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<td>• Children and teenagers who were raised by gay parents are just as happy as any other kid raised by a mother and a father.</td>
<td>• Studies show children and teenagers of lesbian and gay parents are more likely to live a troubled life by getting into trouble with the law, and doing drugs due to being mistreated out in the public because of their gay parents.</td>
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<td>• Gay parents adopted children who have been abused and neglected, and these children in the future have higher rates of success than they otherwise would have.</td>
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- No significant proof exists that children raised by gay parents will grow up to be gay. Two parents raising the child are a better indication of positive outcomes. Gender plays little part in this.
- Conditions such as neighborhoods, education and standard of living might vary between heterosexual couples and gay couples, but that’s about it.
- Dr. Peggy Drexler: “Sexual orientation of parents is largely a non-factor in the sexual orientation of children.”
- Based on research; “boyness” is instilled.
- Gay households attitude toward the labels instills early independence and strong position on beliefs.

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**What are the obstacles facing the acceptance of gay adoption?**

The biggest obstacle that gay couples confront when they want to adopt a child is that adoption agencies rather have a married couple than an unmarried couple. Since most states haven’t legalized gay marriage, these couples run into a brick wall. These couples have a choice though; they are able to adopt the child as a individual.

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**Conclusion**

- Whether it’s coming out as being gay or lesbian, or adopting children as gay or lesbian parents, sexual orientation shouldn’t play a role in whether or not someone is able to raise a family.
- Even though there are obstacles to overcome, attitudes and laws are moving in the direction of supporting the existence of families led by gay parents.

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**References**