

# Survey suggests children of gay fathers are well adjusted

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Compared to a national sample of heterosexual parents, gay fathers report similar parenting behavior and measures of wellbeing in their children, according to new research to be presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2016 Meeting. The study, "Experiences of Children with Gay Fathers," was conducted via an online survey, receiving responses from 732 gay fathers in 47 U.S. states. Participants responded to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, which includes questions about children's well-being, such as academic achievement, self-esteem and peer relationships.

Responses from gay fathers were virtually no different when compared with those in a federally assembled, national comparative sample, according to study authors. For example, 88 percent of the study respondents said it was "not true" that their child is unhappy or depressed, compared with 87 percent of the comparative sample. Similarly, 72 percent of participants responded that their child does not "worry a lot," compared with 75 percent of the general population.

According to the study, 36 percent of their [children](#) had been born in the context of a heterosexual relationship, 38 percent by adopting or fostering children, and 14 percent with the assistance of a surrogate carrier. Many of the fathers described having encountered barriers to sharing custody of their children (33 percent), to adopt a child (41 percent) or to become a father through a surrogate carrier (18 percent). In addition, between 20 and 30 percent of respondents reported stigmatizing experiences because of being a gay father, primarily from

family members, friend, and some people in religious contexts. One-third of parents reported that their children had been subjected to teasing, bullying or other stigmatizing experiences by friends.

Dr. Perrin noted that despite these barriers, there is a growing number of children whose parents are gay, reflecting a rapidly changing legal and social climate for prospective gay and lesbian parents. She cites the 2015 Supreme Court decision affirming the right to same-sex marriage, for example, as well as increased access to alternative reproductive technologies and adoption for openly gay individuals or couples.

"Because stigma continues to interfere with the efforts of [gay men](#) to become parents and with the lives of [gay](#) men and their children, our research underscores the need for social and legal protections for families headed by same-sex parents," said principal investigator Ellen C. Perrin, MD, MA, FAAP. "Our data add to those of other investigators showing that children of same-sex parents do as well in every way as children whose [parents](#) are heterosexual."

**More information:** [www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view ...  
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Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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