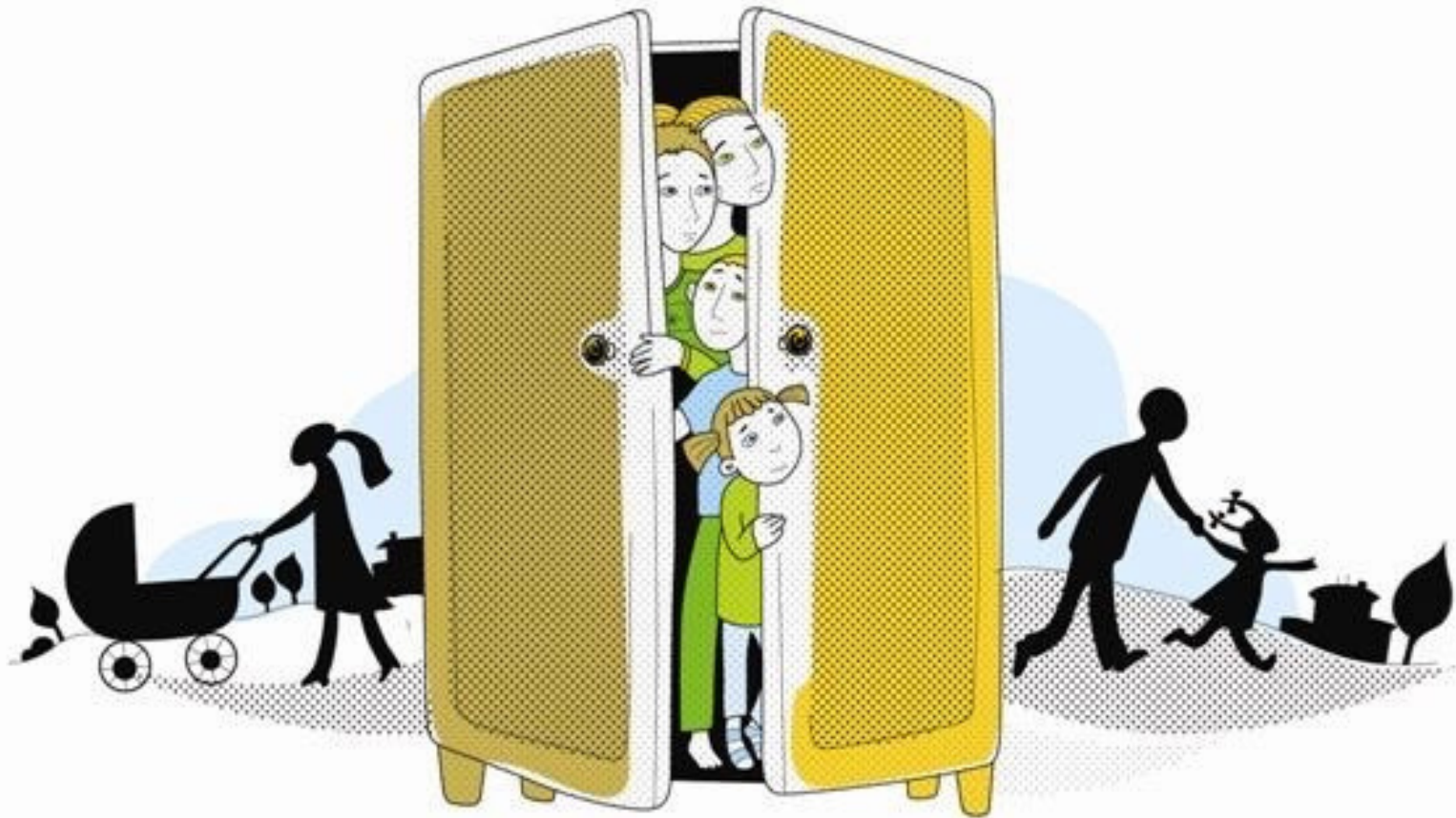




LGBTQ+
PARENTS

This little book is written for moms and dads, brothers and sisters, relatives and close friends of queer people planning on having children. We really hope that we will help you to find the answers to some questions regarding the specifics of raising a child in a same-sex family.

It often happens that the older generation does not accept the sexual orientation and the new family of their child. We will be very happy if this book becomes an occasion for an open conversation and helps parents and their adult homosexual children to take a step towards each other.



Real-life stories

From a conversation with a child during a discussion of a family drawing:

"And what is that dot in the far corner?"

"This is Grandma. She's far, far away, you have to go by train first, then by bus. I've never seen her, so I don't know how to draw her. But Mom always says that we are a family, and we will go to her."

Anna's story



I am 27 years old, I have been living with my wife for four years, and this year we decided that it would be time for our family to replenish. The news that we will have a child, my mother took as a personal tragedy.

I didn't expect such a strong reaction. Mom was screaming that I was foredooming the child to torment, that it would become an outcast, that everyone would hate it... When I tried to explain that this was not so, my mother generally covered her ears with her hands and said that I had no right to make excuses... We did AI (artificial insemination) and now we are in the second trimester of pregnancy. For more than six months, I have not had any contact with my mother. I can't call and complain about toxicosis or doctors, or that in the subway nobody gave up a seat for me. I didn't share my joy when I found out about the pregnancy, I didn't show the results of the first ultrasound, I carry this first photo of our baby in my purse. It's very painful for me that I can't consult with my closest and most beloved person - my mother.



I want to know how she was coping with me, what the baby needs for the first time. This is especially disappointing, because the second grandmother (the mother of my significant other) is now providing us with more support than my own mother.

We cannot but hope that when the child is born and she sees him, my mother's heart will warm up and the ice will melt..."

Valentina's story



My wife, as I call my favorite person, gave birth 1,5 years ago. We were doing it together and all of my relatives were on the phone. After I told them our son had been born, my mom said that dad (now grandpa) jumped up and started looking for a coat.

Mom asked: "Where are you going?" and he said that he was going to buy a ball for football, he was going to play it with his grandson. Now it feels like he loves our son even more than me : he calls every morning to ask about our boy. Did we go for a walk? If we did, for how long? How did he sleep? Did he eat? Grandpa walks with him pretty often, and brings him to the park. My dad is the best grandpa in the world"

“Won’t I have grandchildren?”



These words is a common first reaction of parent on the news of homosexuality of their child. Don't worry! Homosexual people can have children, just like straight people. Women can have artificial insemination procedure with sperm of an anonymous (or not) donor.

Men can use the services of a surrogate mother or they can have a contract to upbringing a child with a woman he knows or with a lesbian couple. In addition, homosexual people can adopt a child (unfortunately, only one of the partners can legally formalize custody or adoption).

There will be a new child in the family! It would be a pity if, by fear, ignorance or stubbornness of adults, a little person would be deprived of contact with relatives. It is really sad when a grandmother doesn't know she has a grandson. Or if an aunt doesn't invite her nephew for a cousin's birthday because of judgmental neighbors. The pain of breaking the bond between homosexual children and their relatives can be experienced equally strong by both sides.

After the birth of a child, young moms and dads really need support. There are millions of questions about the upbringing and health of their children.

What if a child is bullied at school?

Well, again: don't worry! Firstly, it is not a fact that peers will pay attention to the composition of the child's family and even more tease a kid because of this. Secondly, all children pass the test of their "Me" for psychological strength sooner or later.



The child's reaction to such situations either assigns him the status of "weak" or the contrary, develops "immunity". The reason for school bullying is not important: this one is too fat or too thin, this one is too red or gets one A's.

At these moments, the child should not be left without support. The parents and relatives' job is to form a child's sense of a strong family, which includes not only moms or dads, but also grandparents, cousins, sisters and other relatives. It helps a lot if the child communicates with children from other homosexual families and sees that he is not the only person in the world with two dads/moms.

And if the child grows up gay too?

It's OK. There is such a probability - but no more than the probability of a homosexual child from heterosexual parents. It is probably not news to anyone that most homosexuals were brought up in families with parents of different sexes.

Sexual orientation is not a child's choice and is not determined by upbringing. According to the National Lesbian Family Survey (NLLFS), one of the longest-running surveys of lesbian families in the world, "when asked about sexual orientation, only 2.8% of adolescent respondents who grew up in lesbian families answered that they were most likely or exclusively homosexual ". (see annex)

“And won't the child's psyche suffer?”

The child's psyche is crippled by violence, distrust, and closeness. Love, acceptance, willingness to help, concepts contribute to the development of a harmonious and holistic personality. Usually, in same-sex families, children are desirable, and desire to become parents is conscious.

2 women or 2 men go through a long way to get a child, and they overcome many difficulties related to homophobia and social stereotypes.

That is exactly why a baby who has appeared in the family, can count on young parents to approach the issue of harmonious upbringing as responsibly as possible.



Except for all the above, relatives and friends can contribute to the development of the child, supporting the child's parents and showing them acceptance and approval. You have to find out how parents want to be called by the child: moms? Dads? By name? Or maybe they came up with some family nicknames? Talking to the child use those words as much as possible. Try to sincerely maintain respect and love for both parents in the child.

“How can you raise a kid without a mother/father?”



A pattern of a family based on love, support and understanding is a lot more important than patterns of «feminine» and «masculine» behavior. Nowadays, there are less and less exclusively feminine or masculine things.

No one is surprised by a woman with short haircut driving a car or a man doing housework. Loving partners help each other by sharing household chores.

Besides, family isn't an isolated system, and the more children communicate with family's acquaintances, friends and relatives, the more different behavior scenarios they see.

"When they grow up, they won't be grateful for your choice"

The problem of a child's rejection of their parents can come up in their teenage years, and it doesn't depend on family composition. If a kid grows up in an accepting environment and feels joy of interacting with adults, the family will be able to overcome the crisis of adolescence.



Any family can face difficulties of adolescence. In this case the most important thing is parents' behaviour during the crisis of a child's development: will they put pressure on the teenager or respect their opinion? Let them make their own decisions or decide everything for them? Show an example of how to act responsibly or choose permissiveness?

It is parents' behavior pattern that can lead to ruining relationship with their child, not parent's choice of a partner.

"What happens if you decide to break up?"



same—sex union is an ordinary civil marriage, but the law does not give homosexuals a choice whether to register their relationship or not. In case of divorce in a homosexual family the issue of determining the order of communication with a child cannot be regulated.

Nevertheless, it is very important for adults to agree among themselves and leave the child the opportunity to communicate with both parents, to whom he is accustomed and whom he loves. It is wrong to assume that the non-biological parent is less attached to the child.

After all, in the case of an adopted child, we do not question parental feelings and the right of both parents to communicate with him after the divorce.

We really hope that by gradually changing the attitude of society towards homosexual families, we will be able to influence the legislative framework, and in the future the homosexual family will become as legitimate as the heterosexual one.

Application / Study of lesbian families

American sociologists have been studying lesbian families since 1986. The purpose of the study is to trace how the intra-family relations of the first wave of lesbian couples who have undergone fertilization with donor sperm develop. The first interviews were with pregnant women, after which children (at the age of two, five, ten, seventeen and twenty-four) were interviewed together with their parents. At the beginning of the study, 84 families participated, and 79 of them still continue to participate. This is the longest-running and largest study in the field of psychology of child-parent relationships in homosexual families.

The study showed that children in such families demonstrate "higher social competence" and "significantly fewer behavioral problems" [compared to the general population]. "This is a very important indicator of mental health," emphasizes Dr. Nanette Gartrell, professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco. "Their performance is significantly better than that of the general teenage population"

When asked about the quality of their lives, almost 80% of seventeen-year-olds who grew up in lesbian families responded that they were satisfied with their lives and considered them valuable. Dr. Gartrell comments on these results: "These indicators are unusual for adolescents and indicate that their mothers are doing a lot to help children cope with the difficulties of adolescence."

Slightly more than half of teenagers believe that their mothers taught them well how to deal with homophobia. Those who succeeded better than others were mothers who fully accepted their homosexuality and participate actively in LGBTIQ+ community life. Parents let teenagers decide for themselves who and when to talk about their family. Moreover, mothers paid special attention to issues of discrimination in general, including racism, antisemitism and xenophobia.

And as for sexual activity among 17-year-olds, according to the anonymous poll, one half of teenagers have not been active sexually yet, the rest of them have had a sexual intercourse with opposite-sex partner. After seven years 2,8% of respondents said that they were more likely or exclusively homosexual. As we can see, the results disprove homophobes' predictions about the fact that there are disproportionately high number of homosexual children.

In the 24th year of study, on the 10th of November of 2010, Dr. Gartrell reported new results: 0% of children were subjected to physical or sexual abuse in lesbian families. This data stands in a sharp contrast to the country's average: 26% of American teenagers claimed to be physically abused by their parents or guardians and 8,3% – sexually abused in family.

More detailed information about the study is available on the website: <https://www.nllfs.org/> or <https://law.ucla.edu/academics/centers/williams-institute>

The research was conducted by Nanette Gartrell, MD, Henny Bos, PhD (The University of Amsterdam) and Naomi Goldberg, MPP (The Williams Institute). The Chairman of the study – Nanette Gartrell, MD, an honorable scientist at Williams Institute 2010, professor of Clinical psychiatry at University of California, San-Francisco, staff member at University of Amsterdam.

The Williams Institute focuses on amendments of legislation, legal research, public policy analysis, judicial training, and leadership development. Their core focus issues include employment discrimination, same-sex marriage, adoption, LGBTQ+ youth, public health, immigration, poverty, and violence. The institute also provides an LGBTQ+ analysis of the United States Census.



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