







Thailand 2020

## Table of Contents

- 3. Editorial
- 4. Foreword by Björn Sieverding
- 6. UN Side Event by Caroline Ausserer
- 10. IFED 2020 on social media
- 16. Family Diversity in Education - AFDA, Argentina
- 20. Family Diversity in Education - Famiglie Arcobaleno, Italy
- 24. The Family Tree Project
- 26. The International Family Equality Day (IFED)
- 28. Promoters of the International Family Equality Day
- 32. Get involved!
- 36. Cooperating Partners
- 40. IFED 2021 - Families - being our authentic best
- 42. Participating Associations
- 44. Copenhagen Pride 2021
- 48. Overview of Research on LGBT Parent Families
- 64. Special Thanks



## Editorial

This 2020 IFED Report is different from previous editions. In fact, IFED 2020 celebrations were very different from those of previous years.

IFED normally aims at promoting visibility, networking, partnerships building, exchanges and mutual support through lively and informal events, bringing people together to know each other, appreciate the richness of diversity, share experiences, and connect to build together a more inclusive space. Consequently, IFED has been hit strong by the heavy limitation to in-person gatherings and interactions put in place to counter the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, most families faced special difficulties during such health emergency including additional duties of care for elderly, children and sick relatives, job losses and higher economic vulnerability, diminished social and institutional support as well as complex legal and logistic challenges for those not legally recognized in their countries or separated by borders.

Finally, especially in those countries with stronger institutional discrimination against LGBTIQ\* people, the legal limitations to public and personal gatherings isolated even further rainbow families undermining their ability to connect and support each-other.

Nevertheless, despite such unprecedented circumstances, despite the generalized impossibility of going out and celebrating together in person as usual, IFED supporters and allies did not give up and took it to the internet to celebrate family diversity and to connect with each other. Even so, IFED continued to grow in the number of countries, cities and individuals willing to show their support to all kind of families.

It took a bit of creativity, improvisation and determination to find new and alternative ways to celebrate. The content of this report is not exhaustive. More examples, testimonies, pictures, messages and reports about IFED 2020 can be found across the different social networks.

IFED 2020 testifies the resilience, flexibility and resolve of rainbow families. There's still a lot to learn and to improve but IFED will continue to do its best to keep connecting, supporting and celebrating all types of families, no matter the circumstances.

Images from Finland, France and Germany, playing IFED celebrations

## Foreword

by Björn Sieverding, NELFA Board Member

How to celebrate the International Family Equality Day during the corona-lockdown? This is a pretty tough question, isn't it? Normally, you would go outside with your children, a little picnic in the luggage, perhaps equipped with a rainbow flag and some other colourful gimmicks, to see your friends and like-minded people on a nearby meadow with cakes, drinks and some funny games. But in May 2020, COVID-19 prevented this in most parts of the world. In addition, the mood was not really to spend a joyful day full of pride. Many of us were just exhausted – combining home office, school education and family life, often in a quite small place and this already since weeks.

For many rainbow families, the corona-crisis meant and still means an extra burden. The lack of legal protection, adequate parenthood rights and the recognition of your familial ties became even more obvious than usual. LGBTIQ\* people were i.e. not able to see their partners for a long time, because only married people could travel. Intended parents were not able to visit their fertility clinics abroad, they had to interrupt their treatment or were not able to take care of their new-borns. Mothers and fathers with different households had to cope with constantly changing rules and restrictions for family meetings. Who is really seen as a “family” without a certain proof on a paper? And who is seen as a “family” where governments declare that LGBTIQ\* people are a “threat to society” [like in Poland], where political leaders devalue same-sex marriage as “experiment” of the Western world [like in Hungary] or where MPs propose Constitutional amendments to define “family” only as relationship between man, woman and their (biological) child(ren) [like in Romania]?

This is why our yearly IFED celebration is so incredibly important. Not only to praise our well-being and our permanent achievements, but also to share our shaky legal status, our vulnerability, our calls for a better recognition and protection of our children... for family diversity in education.

Luckily, social media open new possibilities for such public statements – even in corona-times. Sharing pictures of happy rainbow families, drawings of proud children with LGBTIQ\* parents – this was a great idea to celebrate



the International Family Equality Day despite the pandemic. In 2020, NELFA was not able to organise a special IFED face-to-face event, but we collected colourful contributions from all over Europe and posted them on Facebook: nice videos from member organisations in Spain and France, many drawings and family trees (i.e. from Austria, Finland and Croatia) and/or photos from Germany, Belgium, Greece and Hungary (etc.). I was positively surprised by the number and variety of contributions. This has shown that LGBTIQ\* activism is still possible when you are locked up in your four walls, when you are quite tired and concerned about your future. Well, of course, we all wish that the next IFED 2021 will take place again in sunny parks...

By the way – we finally celebrated IFED by baking some little hedgehogs. Our two children enjoyed sprinkling them with chocolate hail. Honestly, the kitchen was a battlefield, but all the little cakes turned out well - some bigger, some smaller, some brighter, some darker. But... you know... they all were just sweet, crispy and a pure treat. Diversity is delicious!

### Björn Sieverding

NELFA Board member



## Diverse families at the UN: „Limited definitions of family are harmful“

The Recognition and Respect of Diverse Families in Times of A Global Pandemic was the topic of an online side event at the 44th UN-Human Rights Council, co-organized by IFED, the Global Interfaith Network (GIN) and COC-Netherlands and co-sponsored by South Africa and Switzerland.

### Responsibility of UN system

The health crisis related to the worldwide spread of the COVID-19 has added vulnerability to already marginalized populations, both individuals and families. At the side event, which I moderated, we discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on the communities and the demands and recommendations to states and UN agencies when it comes to COVID relief.

### All forms of family must be protected

At her opening statement the Deputy Permanent Representative of the delegation of South Africa to the UN, Nelia Barnard, assures that “all forms of families must be protected“. Anita Bhatia, Deputy Director of UN Women

**“Diverse family and community models have always been part of human history. The UN system, including states, have a responsibility to continue to promote the human rights of all family members without distinction of any kind and this is of particular importance in times of crisis, when inequalities are highlighted and enhanced. We believe in an international human rights system which gives space for various family models comprised of diverse individuals who are supported in their physical, mental, and emotional well-being and personal growth.“**

**Simon Petitjean, GIN**



Simon Petitjean

## The Recognition and Respect of Diverse Families in Times of a Global Pandemic

Sponsored by:

SOUTH AFRICAN PERMANENT MISSION GENEVA

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

worries: „Quarantine measures have resulted in hostile homes or abusive relationships.“ She complains that some governments are rolling back on human rights and calls upon the states that social protection measures, as well as „laws and policies on COVID need to be based on the reality of families today“.

„I want to dismantle the idea that my family is not normal“, says Tuisina Ymania Brown, Fa’afafine and international trans activist, former Co-Chair of GIN and current Co-Secretary General of ILGA World. She talks about her two adopted children and denounces the patriarchy, the nuclear family supremacy, as well as the gender binary supremacy. “You accept everything made y God but you refuse to accept sexual orientation and gender identity as spectrum in the creation.“

„The life of LGBTIQ parented family is an everyday struggle, they remain vulnerable, many live in fear“, tells Benny Ondongo, a Kenyan non conforming trans activist, founder and director of Coast Women for Women and IFED

board member. Kenya is one of the 70 countries worldwide that still criminalize same-sex activities. Benny complains that religion has been used as a weapon denying LGBTIQ persons to practice their faith. The activist claims for a change of narrative and an increase of research on LGBTIQ parented families. „Through research and documentation it will tell states that we exist.“

The South African theologian Nontando Hadebe of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians proposes to reframe the theological discourse about family and LGBTIQ „in the language of human rights, dignity, inclusion and non-harm“. „The response to the crisis must be an effort work together multilaterally and with LGBTIQ people“, says Andrea Rivas from Argentina, the co-founder and president of AFDA – (Asociación Familias Diversas en Argentina), board member of IFED and Member of the CSO Core Group of the Equal Rights Coalition. She points to intersectional forms of discrimination that affect the most vulnerable population, including rainbow families, and calls for non-discriminatory measures against COVID.

#### Protection of children in the focus

For Dominic Johnson from UNICEF the COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to make the social policy legislation more inclusive and to stop excluding diverse families from it. „In doing so, countries are in contravention of the

Convention on the Rights of the Child, which establishes the right of children to protection of their rights, regardless of the form of their family.“ He calls to end the debate on what constitutes a family and asks that instead „protection, recognition and respect of diverse families should be at the heart of the challenge“.

Also Victor Madrigal-Borloz, the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity at the UN problematizes an exclusionary understanding of family. A definition of family „cannot have point of departure in discrimination“. He criticizes that religion is being used as instrument to construct „stigmatizing and deeply violatory narratives“ and emphasizes that „narratives of hate and hate speech are not protected under international human rights law“. The objective must be to destroy these hateful narratives. He agreed with previous speakers that inclusive protection is crucial for efficient COVID-19 responses.

#### Caroline Ausserer

Journalist, diversity trainer and moderator, LGBTIQ\* activist, former NELFA board member and IFED liaison person, web—> [www.presspectives.net](http://www.presspectives.net).



#### Links:

Video recording of the event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIBUwlvivyg&feature=youtu.be>

Advocacy Toolkit

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xcbU21E6D18e7WwWKR-6S1KPN-VEjcrZL?usp=sharing>



**„It is our objective to make family diversity more visible and thereby represent experiences and realities from rainbow families in different regional, cultural and religious contexts. Static and limited definitions and concepts of family are harmful and undermine our efforts to promote human rights. This is one of many issues that we strive to illustrate and push to be taken into consideration by decision- and policy-makers.“**

**Maria von Känel, IFED**

## IFED 2020 on social media worldwide

Creativity, resilience and willingness to celebrate even in the most difficult situations are in the DNA of rainbow families.

This year more than ever the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic that have made it impossible to organise public and private gatherings in most countries haven't stopped our celebrations! Family celebrations, virtual events, zoom meetings, photo contests have joyfully coloured social media using the hashtags #IFED2020 #familydiversityeducation and #internationalfamilyequalityday

Check out the great and diverse collection of #IFED2020 posts and contributions under the following link: <https://internationalfamilyequalityday.org/live/>



Australia



Argentina



Austria



Brasil



Chile



Costa Rica



Croatia



Finland



Germany



Germany



Italy



Peru



Switzerland



Russia



Russia



Serbia



Taiwan

## Family Diversity in Education - AFDA, Argentina

At AFDA Familias Diversas NGO we carried out a research to make visible the implementation of the Comprehensive Sexual Education law with a focus on the experience in the educational system of families led by LGBTIQ+ people and also their children.

Today in the context of Covid-19 all the data that we found prior to the pandemic, are aggravated. To achieve equality for our families we need comprehensive sexual education to be implemented with LGBTIQ+ perspective and to listen to the most vulnerable populations.

“Out of the Margins”, an international program in which AFDA participates and that generates evidence and global action on LBT + rights led by Stonewall, allowed us to carry out this research.

Its key results in LGBTIQ+ adults who lead families were:

86% responded that there are no representations of family diversity in school facilities (corridors, classrooms), while 14% were able to see representations in some places of the institution.

79% said they did not receive any information on protocols for action in the event of bullying or discrimination, 13% mentioned that they did, and 8% did not know if they exist.

A father from the Province of Tucuman, in the north of our country, told us: “There were many inconveniences to find a school for the children, it was due to the composition of our family. In some schools they told us that they feared that other parents would have problems and in others that there were no vacancies “

What did the children and youth say?

They expressed that beyond the composition of each family, the basis is love and respect.

In the case of being bullied due to their family diversity, 69% said they would not do anything, 19% mentioned that they would ask the teaching staff for help, 6% indicated that they would react by complaining or fighting, and 6% did not respond.



62% said they did not have family diversity classes at school, while 38% said they did.

94% answered that they did not use books or had representations in school about family diversity and only 6% said yes.

63% expressed that their classmates made some type of comment about their family diversity while 31% said no and 6% did not respond.

The request of children was “talk, talk and talk about family diversity at school.” Pablo, a 12 year old boy, told us: “It would be good if we talked more about this issue because many take it as a bad thing that there are gays, lesbians or trans people”

The invisibility of LGBTIQ+ families and sexual diversity in schools is remarkable. The low percentage of knowledge and information on the action protocols in bullying cases creates a situation of multiple violation of the rights of children, youth and their families. The 2030 Agenda and its Global Sustainable Development Goals require significant actions to achieve real equality and quality education as well as gender equality.

With these data, the celebration of the IFED and its incorporation as a public policy by governments is key as a tool for promoting rights and education.

Last year with the opening of the Pride House, the first LGBTIQA + Community Centre of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, which is under my direction, we were able to make this date visible and included it within the visits of the schools. This gave us the opportunity to speak to the educational community of our families and the importance of their visibility.

During the quarantine because of Covid-19 pandemic in Argentina we commemorate the IFED in a different way. We had the challenge of making our family diversity visible in education at a time when face-to-face classes were suspended and the distance education system was the only way to continue with classes. The measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 have made the pre-existing inequalities regarding access to rights and the lack of visibility of our families more evident and deepened.

This is how we decided to celebrate the IFED by inviting the families and also the teaching staff to do a task at home with the children related to the visibility of the families and we achieved a high adherence. From there, the idea arose to adapt the face-to-face educational visits that we had at the Pride House to a virtual way and to be a support for comprehensive sexual education classes during the quarantine for middle schools.

After this action and over the course of a long quarantine, today we are giving zoom classes to schools on sexual and reproductive rights and family diversity, so that comprehensive sexual education with an LGBTIQA + perspective can be present.

Incorporating IFED as a public policy and also as a comprehensive sexual education tool has been a collective achievement of all the organizations and activists and allies that have been giving their contribution to making our families visible. Undoubtedly, it is also possible due to the commitment of those in the public function who understand that there must be express policies for the promotion of our rights, as did the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires under the management of Pamela Malewicz, Undersecretary of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism of that City.

In this sense, Pamela Malewicz said: "From the Undersecretariat for Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism we celebrate, support and work to achieve full inclusion and respect for the rights of diverse families in both public and private spheres.

For families, in all their diversity, the context of isolation represented a great challenge regarding the organization of domestic and care tasks as well as the support that educational tasks require. This situation was especially complex for single-parent families. The way in which the care of children and youth is organized requires rethinking in this new context in a coordinated way with the way in which the education and working life of adults is planned, contemplating the inclusion and protection of rights of diverse families.

Ensuring compliance with the Comprehensive Sexual Education law during isolation and distance education is essential to ensure the inclusion of diverse families as well as to eradicate the stereotypes on which care is organized.

From the General Directorate of Family Development of the Undersecretariat of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism, from the start of isolation, we began to offer support to families so that, according to their configuration, they can go through this moment in the best possible way."

We agree that the course to follow is to continue with the celebration of IFED and also deepen its significance in the face of the demands that families in all their diversity need. Advancing in a more egalitarian care organization policy designed by the State is undoubtedly urgent, as the crisis unleashed by Covid19 has shown.

It was difficult for our NGO, for the Pride House and also for those who had to face this crisis from the responsibility of public management. Today we know that the possibility of networking in support of inclusion made us stronger and gives us hope that the learning obtained by the impact of Covid19 will open a path for major transformations.

**Andrea Rivas**

AFDA - Asociación de Familias Diversas de Argentina

[afda.org.ar](http://afda.org.ar)



## Family Diversity in Education - Famiglie Arcobaleno, Italy

The place where the greatest concerns of Italian rainbow families are stirred is certainly the school. Very often, thanks to teachers and school managers available and open to discussion, these remain only fears. But sometimes it happens that school is a nightmare that becomes reality.

The biggest problem in general is the lack of representation of homogenitorial families, in school texts, in images, in posters, in speeches. Our children, from an early age, are forced to justify their family by answering questions such as “how is it possible that you do not have a father / mother?” “Where do you come from if you don’t have a father and a mother?” “Are you sure you haven’t been adopted?”. Having to constantly tell, explain, demonstrate can be very stressful for many children and teenagers.

The greatest level of frustration is reached when teachers deny the words and images to say it, stubbornly bringing the representation and narration of the family back to the only recognized track: that of the heterosexual family, defined as universal and natural.

This situation grows on a fertile ground of historically rooted sexism, homophobia, machismo and new grafts of denial of the existence of gender and its social and existential consequences. The “no gender” movements in recent years have made part of the political and social discourse a threat that they themselves have invented. The “gender” in common

language, between parents, on social networks, up to political speeches, in Parliament, on television, at rallies and obviously also from the Pope’s mouth, has gone from being a meaningless word to a word full of dangers: the danger of deviance and manipulation of defenseless minors.

In a context, therefore, in which most bullying and cyberbullying has a homophobic and sexist character, but the words “homosexuality” and “gender violence” have become unspeakable taboos in the school environment, the work of training and information and combating discrimination it’s not downhill.

This climate has led to the terrible consequence of almost totally eliminating sexual and sentimental education from schools, and fewer and fewer school managers are willing to promote and implement projects in this sense. The Italian school in fact moves between national regulations, such as the decree called “Good school” which establishes the need for training actions to combat bullying and gender-based violence, and school autonomy, which allows school leaders to decide what to do and not to do concretely.

Despite everything, Famiglie Arcobaleno continues its commitment in this crucial area for the well-being of our children, especially through training dedicated to teachers starting from those who work in the 0-3 age group up to those in secondary schools.

In fact, in our opinion, teachers are the fundamental element that connects school managers, families, colleagues and obviously children / teenagers, and we have been focusing on their training for years.

The goal is not to give univocal answers to often complex problems, but to provide cognitive and didactic tools, which can allow them to solve problematic situations, even in an imaginative and personal way, but always animated by the cardinal principle of inclusion of all their pupils, not just the children of same-parent families.

In high schools, Famiglie Arcobaleno often intervene directly addressed by students, during moments of self-management in which young people express the need to know and discuss an increasingly controversial topic but with legal and social implications, often obscure.



Collaboration is also active with many Italian universities, from north to south, in which our interventions are increasingly included in seminar form within some university courses, in particular those aimed at students of social services, sociology, psychology , anthropology, legal clinic.

Finally, for some months, Famiglie Arcobaleno have been part of the National Forum of Parents' Associations at School (FONAGS), a ministerial consultation table headed by the Ministry of Public Education, of which other large Catholic and lay family associations are members; by virtue of this participation, Famiglie Arcobaleno also participates in the regional counterparts, convened and audited by the regional school authority.

These are contexts in which it is necessary to manage the confrontation with very different family realities and sometimes politically hostile to us, without any decision-making power but only consultative.

In addition to cultural problems, the absence of a law that allows the recognition of birth by two mothers or two fathers has serious consequences on the lives of our families. Our children enter school with two parents but only one is recognized by the state and the educational institution. This results in the impossibility for the social parent to participate in interviews with teachers, to elect and be elected in the representative school bodies. It is a painful problem that is often obviated by the willingness of many teachers and parents to postpone, but it is a solution that is entrusted to the good heart (or prejudice) of individuals.

Training is certainly an area in which we believe and invest a lot also at the European level, where, thanks to Nelfa, the European Network of Rainbow Families Associations, we participated in Erasmus + courses, which opened up new opportunities of self training and networking with other European associations, confirming once more the importance of the supranational and European context.

**Daniela Vassallo**

Famiglie Arcobaleno

[famigliearcobaleno.org](http://famigliearcobaleno.org)



Daniela Vassallo



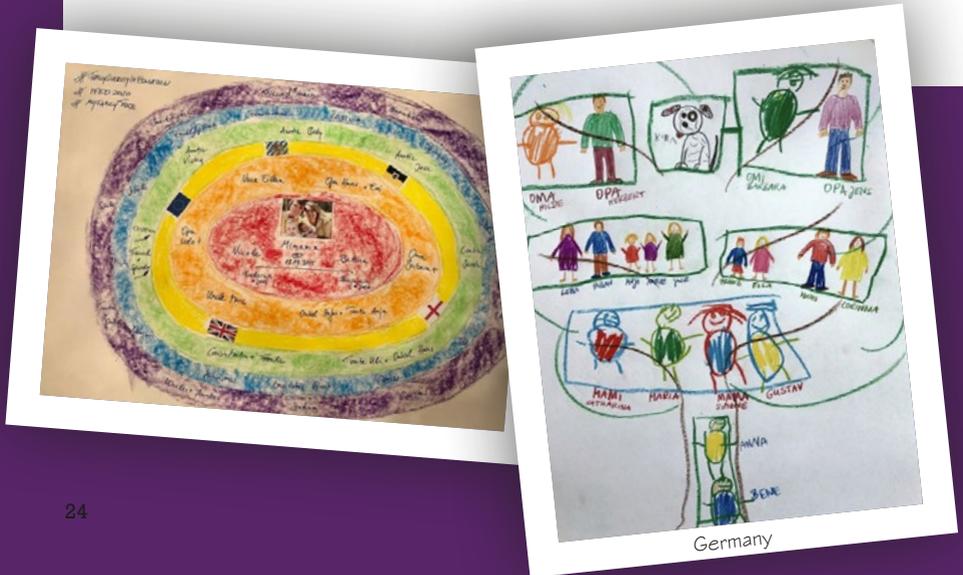
## The Family Tree project

A family tree is a chart representing family relationships in a tree structure. It is also a powerful symbol within cultures and a tool often used by teachers of young students. Along with the theme of IFED 2020 “Family Diversity in Education” we have used the Family Tree as a powerful symbol that highlights the diversity in families and challenges the conservative assumption of what a family is.

Normally the drawing of family trees in educational settings can easily leave children with non-traditional families feeling not adequately represented, marginalized and discriminated. IFED 2020 reclaimed the use of such tool to flexibly and creatively represent all types of families and their significant relationships.

This project testifies the importance for all children of seeing their families acknowledged and celebrated in order to be able to thrive. It also shows how any tool can be used either to exclude or to include.

Our families’ trees are just one more example of how inclusiveness can expand the creativity, knowledge, understanding and skills of the entire community. By acknowledging and celebrating diversity we can welcome everyone into a richer, safer, more colorful and inclusive world for everyone.



## The International Family Equality Day (IFED)

The first International Family Equality Day took place on May 6th 2012. Fifteen organizations from nine countries participated then and numbers have been increasing ever since! A few snapshots and short reports of the latest events can be found throughout this brochure; additional information and impressions (videos, personal reports of the events) can be found on the IFED website.

In a successful event hosted by the City of Geneva, the new NGO “International Family Equality Day” was officially launched at the beginning of May, 2018.

## Chronicle of the International Family Equality Day

In terms of legal, political and social equality, rainbow families face very different standards depending on where in the world they live. In many countries these families have no protection at all, a fact which entails massive social, financial and legal uncertainty.

In July 2011, LGBTQ family activists from around the world gathered for the first ever International Symposium of LGBTQ parenting organizations. The symposium provided an opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide. The goal of the symposium was to help foster a sense of global community among the families, to increase the visibility and raise awareness about the challenges that rainbow families must overcome for social and legal acceptance.

As a key outcome of the symposium the involved family organizations from the U.S. (Family Equality Council), Canada (LGBTQ Parenting Network) and Europe (NELFA) took the opportunity to launch an official day for equality and recognition of all types of family: the International Family Equality Day, an official LGBT awareness day, which takes place every year on the first Sunday in May.

IFED aims to highlight the diversity of family structures and to strengthen solidarity among families. At the same time it calls on administrative, institutional and political representatives to support equality and recognition for all families.



*Celebrating the Rainbow of Families in our World!*

[www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org](http://www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org)

## Promoters of the International Family Equality Day

As a sign of solidarity and strength and to promote equality for all type of families, the LGBTQ family organizations LGBTQ Parenting Network, Family Equality Council, NELFA and Coalition des familles homoparentales took the opportunity to establish ongoing international cooperation in areas such as research, visibility and advocacy, and the development of resources and programs for LGBTQ families worldwide.

### Family Equality



2019 has marked the 40th anniversary of Family Equality, the leading advocate in the United States for the more than three million parents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) and their six million children. We do our work by fostering supportive communities, educating the public and pursuing policy change, all to advance both legal and lived equality for LGBTQ families, and those who wish to form them, across the United States.

Family Equality creates lasting change for our families at the policy level by organizing our work into campaigns, which are executed at the federal, regional and state levels.

We target areas where we are needed most, and we maintain a focus on three pillars of work that we believe are critical to truly changing lives and laws in the U.S. today:

1. **LGBTQ Parent Networks:** With the evolution of social media, online LGBTQ family networks have sprung up across our nation. Family Equality Council serves as the coordinating body, supporting these networks, sharing curricula and best practices, and further empowering them at the local level through the National Network of LGBTQ Family Groups.

2. **Storytelling:** Family Equality Council recognizes that public opinion (and indeed the policy formation that follows) can be dramatically impacted by emotional appeals, sometimes even more deeply than by facts and statistics. Family Equality strives to raise the visibility of LGBTQ families within main-stream America, using the power of family narratives to combat efforts to roll back or block LGBTQ equality.

3. **Family Building:** The 2018 Family Building Survey revealed that 63% of LGBTQ millennials are considering starting or growing their families in the coming years, and that the gap between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ family building aspirations is almost non-existent for the first time. Family Equality is committed to making family building as accessible for women of color in the south as it is for white men in urban areas.

We are working to ensure that family-building organizations (like fertility clinics, pharmaceutical companies, cryobanks, family law practitioners, adoption and foster care agencies) are prepared to respond sensitively and appropriately to our families.

We are connecting with employers to help them offer LGBTQ-family-friendly policies, benefits and education. And we are, of course, working with our community to make sure they have the information and support they need to access whatever path to parenthood feels like the best fit for them. The political landscape has shifted dramatically under the new administration.

We are seeing an increase in the number of bills targeting LGBTQ individuals and families, nominations of anti-LGBTQ persons to the executive branches of government and key decision-making positions across the administration. We know there is no “finish line” in this work – Family Equality represents LGBTQ families and their needs, which continue to evolve. But one thing has and will remain the same: love makes a family.

Collectively, we are a community of parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, that reaches across the globe. By standing together, we continue to change attitudes and policies, and better ensure a world where all families are respected for their commitment to one another, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

[www.familyequality.org](http://www.familyequality.org)

**Are you interested to join as promoter of IFED?  
Feel free to contact us!  
[info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org](mailto:info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org)**

## NELFA

NELFA is the Network of European LGBTIQ\* Families Associations. It was created in 2009 to unite European associations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual and queer parents (LGBTIQ\*) and their children under one umbrella organisation. NELFA was incorporated under Belgian law in 2012. The official headquarters are located in the Rainbowhouse in Brussels.



With 42 associations representing 33 European countries (as of September 2020) and thousands of LGBTIQ\* families, NELFA promotes the exchange of information among its members and assists in creating and developing LGBTIQ\* families associations.

NELFA works to ensure that children raised in LGBTIQ\* families in Europe are granted the same rights as others. NELFA encourages European governments to adopt legal systems and equal opportunity policies that do not discriminate against LGBTIQ\* families, whether it be legally, financially, educationally or socially.

NELFA is member of ILGA-Europe, Transgender Europe (TGEU) and COFACE Families Europe. In 2016, the Network has been granted participatory status with the Council of Europe. Currently, NELFA's Board has eleven members (all of them are volunteers) from all over Europe. Besides their support for IFED, they are working on other major events and projects, i.e., co-organised conferences as well as workshops and speeches for other organisations. NELFA is the voice for rainbow families at EU level and gives its expertise, most recently for strategies concerning LGBTIQ\* people in cross-border situations and children's rights.

Another important field is capacity building: In June 2020, NELFA has started its 4th Erasmus+ project, entitled "Rainbow Families 2020 – Together For a Better Future" with training courses and job shadowing opportunities.

Furthermore, NELFA is partner in a Rights Equality Citizenship project ("Rainbow Shield") with the aim to enhance the legal protection for LGBTIQ\* people in Bulgaria. In the recent past, NELFA made a lot of effort to better the cross-border situation for rainbow families within the EU – by raising awareness in the institutions and by accompanying rainbow families to send official

complaints and petitions to Brussels. The first success is that the first-ever EU Commission's Strategy on LGBTIQ\* Equality promises a legislative initiative in 2022 regarding the free movement of rainbow families. Furthermore, NELFA is part of several third-party interventions in cases at the European Court of Human Rights in Starsbourg.

At the moment, NELFA develops a specific exchange program for adolescents in rainbow families. RAF.TEENS ("Rainbow Families For Teens") will offer a dedicated webpage where families can present themselves and invite other teens to spend a week with them.

[www.nelfa.org](http://www.nelfa.org)

## LGBT+ Family Coalition

With over 1,700 families, the LGBT+ Family Coalition (Coalition des familles LGBT+) is the largest LGBT+ organization in Quebec in terms of membership. We offer services and resources in both English and French. The LGBT+ Family Coalition is the only advocacy group for families with LGBT+ parents in Quebec. The media has become increasingly focused on alternative families, as adoption, surrogacy and assisted procreation have become "hot" issues. But even as we have gained increased legal recognition, public institutions still have much to learn about our families and our particular needs. In collaboration with government bodies and the media, the Coalition works for the legal and social recognition of our families. We work to increase our visibility and raise public awareness about our diverse realities. Another mandate of the LGBT+ Family Coalition is to create new resources that can be used in primary and secondary schools, day care centers, doctors' offices, community organizations and social services to raise the public's awareness of the diversity of family structures and the impact of homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism, cissexism and gender-based harassment. Our training sessions have reached over 50,000 professionals across Quebec.



[www.famillesLGBT.org](http://www.famillesLGBT.org)

# Get Involved

The IFED NGO's goals & mission are:

- \* Raise awareness, provide advocacy, empower, demand social and legal acceptance for our families, and celebrate family diversity worldwide;
- \* Ensure that IFED remains a neutral, unbranded event;
- \* Highlight the scope and diversity of IFED mobilization (so that this visibility impacts global public opinion and decision makers) via our website, Facebook page and Twitter account, and Annual Report.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far and look forward to all the positive change and progress that we will be able to contribute towards!

By joining IFED you can:

- \* **support** global advocacy to empower rainbow families across the world to be out, proud and progress social change
- \* become part of a **global community** of people committed to creating a more open and diverse society worldwide
- \* join a **global network** of activists, institutions, associations and organizations exchanging ideas, information and best practices to promote equal rights for all families

Membership is open to everyone: individuals, associations, cities, institutions and companies, with flexible annual membership fees.

Becoming a member is easy, join us online at:  
[internationalfamilyequalityday.org/become-a-member/](http://internationalfamilyequalityday.org/become-a-member/)

**ADVOCACY EMPOWERMENT**

The current Board of the International Family Equality Day NGO has been elected on March 2020 and comprises nine members from different regions.

Co-Presidents: Maivon Wahid (Fiji) and Derricia Castillo-Salazar (Belize);

Secretary: Amanda Hopping-Winn (USA)

Treasurer: Maria von Känel (Switzerland);

Board members: Ging Cristobal (Philippines), Polina Gamburg (Russia), Bess Hepworth (Hong Kong), Matcha Phorn-In (Thailand), Andrea Rivas (Argentina).

Steering Committee: Gurchaten Sandhu, Switzerland, Roberta Cecchetti, Switzerland, Anja McConnachie, United Kingdom, Nadia Ayem, United Kingdom

IFED Team: Markus Stehle, Switzerland (IFED Media), Francesca Silvestri, France (IFED Annual Report and Banner design), Virginie Broer, France (IFED Logo design), Miriam Förster, Germany (IFED website).

The 2021 edition of IFED coincides with a couple of changes in the organization's leadership. Former Co-Presidents Maivon Wahid (Fiji) and Derricia Castillo-Salazar (Belize) pass the torch to Matcha Phorn-in (Thailand) and Benny Odongo (Kenya), who were both elected as Co-Presidents at the IFED General Assembly at the end of March 2021. Castillo-Salazar and Wahid both remain on the IFED board and Tai Yamada from Japan joins the ranks of the IFED board as its latest member.

**SOCIAL AND LEGAL ACCEPTANCE**

## Introducing Tai Yamada

Let's meet Tai, a Japanese activist who is candidate to the IFED board in 2021. We have asked Tai to tell us something about herself and her family and what brings her to IFED.

My name is Tai and I am one of the members of Nijiiro Kazoku ("rainbow family" in Japanese). Apart from being a parent, I work as a social worker and have spent many years working with the LGBTQ community. I also teach ZUMBA as a hobby job and love dancing, Latin music and Spanish language.

I live in the Kanto region of Japan with my two boys. My kids are mixed Japanese/Australian and I had them with my Australian ex-partner. As a family we spent a number of years in Melbourne, Australia until 2 years ago when my father needed care because of terminal cancer. In Melbourne, we met many rainbow families and we are still in touch with some of them. We are now involved in Nijiiro Kazoku and my kids and I are becoming good friends with many beautiful families here in Japan as well. We love exploring new places and one of our favourite places is a local farm where we can get very fresh ice cream.

We joined the Japanese rainbow family group when we returned from Australia. The group leaders encouraged me to be part of the IFED board to get a stronger connection with the international community, as my family happens to be culturally mixed and English speaking as well (we only have less than a handful of English speakers in the group). Prior to the suggestion brought to me by the Japanese group, I was not aware of IFED, so it was great to find such an inspirational community initiative. I am also looking forward to being part of it.

If elected as IFED board member I am hoping to bring some of the regionally specific issues/ concerns to the forum.

I am very excited for the Japanese rainbow family community to be part of the broader international IFED network.



**“We are at our authentic best when surrounded by the culture, environment and people we love. And when that loving circle continues to grow bigger“.**

**Taeko Yamada, Japan**

## Cooperating Partners

### ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe are a driving force for political, legal and social change in Europe and Central Asia. We are an independent, international non-government umbrella organisation bringing together more than 600 member organisations from the region, and are part of the wider ILGA organisation.

[www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)



### European Parliament Intergroup on LGBTI Rights

In 2014-2019, the LGBTI Intergroup gathered 151 elected Members of the European Parliament from all EU Member States and 5 political groups. They will continue to uphold the fundamental rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in 2019-2024.

[www.lgbti-ep.eu](http://www.lgbti-ep.eu)



### ECSOL

The European Commission on Sexual Orientation Law (ECSOL) is a non-governmental and non-political network of legal experts. Its origins lie in the European Group of Experts on Combating Sexual Orientation Discrimination which appointed by the Commission of the European Communities operated between 2002 and 2004.

[www.sexualorientationlaw.eu](http://www.sexualorientationlaw.eu)



### TGEU

TGEU is an umbrella organization working to advance the human rights and wellbeing of all transgender people in Europe and Central Asia through advocacy, community building, and research. Founded in 2005, today, the organization counts over 157 member organisations in 47 countries.

[www.tgeu.org](http://www.tgeu.org)



### European Green Party

The European Green Party (EGP) is a European political party whose members include the 42 national Green parties from all across Europe, both within the EU and beyond. Human rights are the core of our beliefs and work. Through structures such as European Queer Greens, we work with all European Greens, civil society and other stakeholders to develop and enhance human rights on the national and European levels.

[www.europeangreens.eu](http://www.europeangreens.eu)



### Rainbow Rose

Rainbow Rose, the LGBTI network within the PES (Party of European Socialists), works to promote LGBTI rights, equality and diversity throughout Europe. It is an umbrella organization relaunched in 2013, gathering 30 socialist and social-democrat structures. It works at local, national and European level with NGO's, politicians and political member parties of the PES.

[www.rainbowrose.eu](http://www.rainbowrose.eu)



In the photo on the right, the European Parliament Intergroup supporting IFED

## ILGA World

ILGA World – the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association – is a worldwide federation of more than 1,700 organisations from over 160 countries and territories, campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex human rights through advocacy, research, trainings and convenings, and communications. Established in 1978, ILGA World has ECOSOC consultative status at the United Nations. Governed by an elected Board of 19 activists representing our global family, ILGA World is queer democracy in action!

[www.ilga.org](http://www.ilga.org)



## GIN-SSOGIE

The Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions (GIN-SSOGIE) is an organization headquartered in South Africa that comprises more than 400 individuals and organizations engaged in faith and spirituality. We are committed to using our beliefs and traditions to ensure that the views, values and rights of people of all sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions are recognized, respected and valued.

[www.gin-ssogie.org/](http://www.gin-ssogie.org/)



# IFED GROWS!

- May 6th, 2012:** 15 cities in 9 countries
- May 5th, 2013:** 44 cities in 17 countries
- May 4th, 2014:** 48 cities in 22 countries
- May 3rd, 2015:** 67 cities in 32 countries
- May 1st, 2016:** 74 cities in 36 countries
- May 7th, 2017:** 102 cities in 44 countries
- May 6th, 2018:** 111 cities in 48 countries
- May 5th, 2019:** 117 cities in 50 countries
- May 3th, 2020:** 152 cities in 62 countries

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY EQUALITY DAY

#IFED2021

families: being our  
**AUTHENTIC**  
best

**Join us and organize your own IFED local event**

Community organizations wishing to participate please contact IFED at [info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org](mailto:info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org)

**Interested in becoming a cooperating partner for IFED? Contact us!**

[info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org](mailto:info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org)



## IFED 2021 - Families: being our authentic BEST

Next year's motto emphasizes how crucial it is for all rainbow families to be able to be themselves, to be proud of who they are and of the family they have built, irrespective of what may be considered conventional in their community..



The joy I experience daily is possible because of my family and community's freedom to live every day as our best and authentic selves. Protect your authenticity, grow it, teach it, and most of all, celebrate it!

Serena Johnson, USA



"IFED is about celebrating the beauty, uniqueness and value of every family, no matter their composition, origins or legal status. I am very much looking forward to seeing rainbow families around the world taking pride in who they are as well as sharing invaluable moments of mutual encouragement and support."

Matcha Phorn-in, Thailand

families: being our  
**AUTHENTIC**  
best

"Family is such a great and essential pillar in life. It doesn't, however, matter how the term is defined. It's all about the families that we create."

Benny Odongo, Kenya



Participating Associations



IFED 2020 Russia



## Rainbow Families welcome at Copenhagen 2021!

From 12-22 August Copenhagen in Denmark and Malmö in Sweden will host the world's most significant LGBTI+ event in 2021, and rainbow families will be made especially welcome.

Copenhagen 2021 is the first ever joint celebration of WorldPride and EuroGames. Offering eleven days of Pride, inclusive sports, an eclectic arts and culture program and the world's most ambitious ever LGBTI+ human rights forum, there will be lots of interesting and exciting activities for everyone to take part in.

After all, the trials, challenges and grief of the last year means we all need the opportunity to come together as a community and spend time with like-minded friends and peers. And so over the last year our planning has had to change to account for the new world we now inhabit. Our COVID19 contingency plans are outlined on our website, and we're doing all we can to ensure a safe and secure event for all visitors.

So, what's on offer?

Huset 2021 embodies Copenhagen 2021's commitment to young LGBTI+ people. Situated in the more than 50-year-old institution Huset KBH, this space

will draw on the 'homeyness' that already exists here. It should feel as if you are at in a place where – even if you don't – you can take your shoes off, kick back and relax.

During the entire event there will be house parents present, not connected to any programming or stage but there to be ready to talk, listen and provide support to the young people present. The house will mimic a 'højskole'-feel, where routines, togetherness and homeyness is at the center. Here, the volunteers are not much older than the guests.

The outdoor area will provide space for self-expression, recognition and celebration of identities. There will be a DJ-set up, the possibility to lounge and hang out, have some food and something to drink. This will be a space for building community, and for making badges and signs for the WorldPride Parade and much more. Huset 2021 is alcohol and smoke free.

Then, at Rainbow Children @ BLOX we want the focus to be on creating a loving, caring and playful area where children will feel welcome and at ease. An area where we open up for the playfulness of gender.

BLOX will be the playground where children are proud to be who they are and we practice saying this out loud. Here, you can expect Drag Story Hour, tiny concerts, workshops, dancing and much more. The square adjacent at Bryghuspladsen will feature installations, workshops and events that are interactive, and during school hours there will be programming that is connected to knowledge and learning.

The Sports Village and Sports to the People program as part of EuroGames will give sporty children the opportunity to find out more about inclusive sport, and even have a go at more than 30 public sports events – although some of these have age restrictions.

Six separate events make up the Human Rights Forum, several of the topics of which consider children and young people's rights, sexual and reproductive rights, rainbow families, and health and well-being. Our partners on the Human Rights Forum include the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights and the UN FPA.

Alongside the more formal and structured human rights events we also have the 1:1 Democracy Festival, a public open space based on the Danish 'folkemødet'





where people are free to bring their ideas and discuss with others. Rainbow families and young people will be very welcome here and we look forward to hearing experiences.

One of the biggest legacies of Copenhagen 2021 will be the Øresund Declaration, an ambitious multi-level human rights statement to be signed by parliamentarians, participants and organisations alike and named after the iconic bridge connecting Denmark with Sweden. Aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Declaration will set out a series of key human rights goals to be achieved by 2030 on a Nordic, European and international basis.

And of course, children, young people and rainbow families are especially welcome at the WorldPride Opening Parade in Malmö, the WorldPride Parade in Copenhagen, and at the WorldPride Squares in both cities.

There is lots for Rainbow Families to do at Copenhagen 2021, and as my colleague Helle Bjørnstrup said in an interview for International Family Equality

Day last year: “We’re so looking forward to Copenhagen 2021 for norm-critical experiences for our children, who despite of being part of a rainbow family, grow up in a gender stereotypical world. From theatre plays to performances and games, we need to rethink the idea of gender and challenge the expectations that our society has to children based on their gender both in terms of relations, how they play, dress and act.”

Our cities are very child-friendly. Our city loves kids and kids usually love Copenhagen. There’s plenty of space, 125 public playgrounds, and child-friendly attractions set the scene for a good time in the city for kids of all ages alongside all the Copenhagen 2021 activities and events.

Parents can feel comfortable too as Copenhagen is a city designed to match the needs of kids and their parents. Just search online for ‘Copenhagen for children’ and you’ll see all that we have to offer.

We look forward to welcoming you and your Rainbow Family to Copenhagen 2021 in August!

Find out more at [copenhagen2021.com](https://copenhagen2021.com)! Copenhagen 2021 takes place in Copenhagen and Malmö from 12-22 August 2021.

### Steve Taylor

Director of Communications & Marketing for Copenhagen 2021



CELEBRATING  
**WORLDPRIDE  
& EUROGAMES★**

#YouAreIncluded

## LGBT Parent Families - Overview 2020

**Dr Anja McConnachie**

**Susie Bower-Brown**, Centre for Family Research, University of Cambridge

Since the 2019 IFED report, there have been a number of studies which offer an insight into the experiences of LGBT parent families. This report (non-exhaustively) reviews recent additions to the field of research, and reflects upon future directions for research.

### Lesbian and Gay (LG) Parent Families

Family functioning in LG parent families

An extensive body of research on lesbian mother families, and a growing body of research on gay father families, has demonstrated that there are few differences in family functioning between LG parent families and heterosexual parent families. Specifically, there are few differences in parent mental health, parent-child relationships or in child adjustment between LG parent families and heterosexual parent families (Averett et al., 2009; Biblarz & Stacey, 2010; Crowl et al., 2008; Farr, 2017; Fedewa et al., 2015; Golombok et al., 2014). This body of research has highlighted the importance of family processes, such as the quality of relationships within a family, over structural features of the family, such as the gender or sexual orientation of the parents (Farr, 2017; Farr et al., 2010; A. E. Goldberg & Smith, 2013; Golombok et al., 2014, 2017).

Recently, at the second phase of a UK longitudinal study, it was found that adopted children raised by gay fathers showed similar level of adjustment to their peers raised by lesbian mothers and heterosexual parents when they reached early adolescence, a time at which adoptee identity issues and associated adjustment problems are likely to arise (McConnachie et al., 2020). Consistent with previous research on adopted adolescents, children in all family types (gay father, lesbian mother and heterosexual parent families) showed high levels of adjustment difficulties. The findings of this study are noteworthy as they highlight that gay men are just as capable of parenting children with adjustment difficulties, which are common among children adopted through the child welfare system. Given the large number of children in need of adoptive families,



adoption agencies should give greater consideration to gay couples as prospective adoptive parents.

While the majority of research has demonstrated that lesbian and gay parents show a similar quality of parenting to heterosexual parents (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010; Farr, 2017; Farr et al., 2010; A. E. Goldberg et al., 2014), where differences in parent-child relationships have been identified, these have reflected more favorable outcomes in LG parent families compared to heterosexual parent families. For instance, some studies have found that non-biological mothers in planned lesbian mother families show greater parenting awareness (Flaks et al., 1995), and a higher quality of interaction with their children (Brewaeys et al., 1997; Golombok & Tasker, 1996), than do heterosexual fathers. More recently, Farr & Vázquez's (2020) study of U.S. adoptive families found that lesbian mothers, heterosexual mothers, and gay fathers all reported higher parenting competence than heterosexual fathers. Similarly, Neresheimer & Daum (2020) found that gay fathers show higher levels of warmth and cooperation with their

partner than heterosexual fathers. Gay fathers also reported lower levels of irritation if their oldest child exhibited a negative temperament. A possible explanation...

Taken together, these findings illustrate that the parenting quality of LG parents is at least as good as heterosexual parents; where differences exist, these point toward a higher quality of parenting in LG parent families, particularly in relation to heterosexual fathers. It is important to note that the differences with respect to heterosexual fathers are likely a reflection of the difference in the amounts of time that heterosexual mothers and fathers typically spend caring for their children, as nothing about a person's sex determines their capacity to be a good parent (Fagan et al., 2014; Lamb, 2012).

A common feature of planned LG parent families (i.e. those formed through donor insemination or surrogacy) is that only one parent is biologically related to the child. However, few studies have investigated differences between biological and non-biological parents within the same family, or the influence of biological status on couple functioning and parent-child relationships. Recently, an Italian pilot study of 20 biological mothers and 20 non-biological mothers in lesbian mother families, found no differences in parenting stress, attachment coherence, parental alliance or emotional availability between biological and non-biological mothers (Barone et al., 2020). Moreover, mothers' own attachment was associated with mother and child emotional availability during a parent-child interaction task, regardless of the biological status of the mother. This finding suggests that mothers' attachment coherence may have a greater influence on the quality of the relationship with their child than whether or not they have a biological connection to them. Future studies employing longitudinal designs with larger samples are required to determine causality as well as the generalisability of the findings. Future research should also investigate the influence of biological relatedness in gay father surrogacy families, whereby one father is biologically related to the child and the other father is not.

#### Stigmatisation toward LG parent families

Although families headed by LG parents function as well as those headed by heterosexual parents, one of the greatest challenges that LG families continue to face is stigmatization. Indeed, research indicates that homophobic stigmatization continues to influence both gay father and lesbian mother families. In a

47-state study of 732 U.S. gay fathers, Perrin et al. (2019) asked respondents if they experienced stigma in specific social contexts. Almost two-thirds reported that they had experienced stigma based on being a gay father and half had avoided situations for fear of stigma in the past year. The fathers reported experiencing the highest stigma from religious environments, neighbors, restaurants and stores, family and friends. Experiences of stigma were more commonly reported by fathers who resided in states with fewer legal protections. At the sixth wave of the longest running study of lesbian mother families to date, the U.S. National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS), lesbian mothers reported that their most challenging parenting experiences included distress about their children's experiences of exclusion and stigmatization; experiences of homophobia and hostility; and a lack of acceptance from their family of origin (Gartrell et al., 2019). Although lesbian mothers and gay fathers both face homophobic stigmatization, due to their shared sexual minority status, it has been suggested that gay fathers may experience an additional dimension of stigmatization due to their male gender, as females are expected to be more naturally suited to caregiving (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010). For example, gay fathers report experiencing unrequested offers of caregiving advice or assistance from strangers, particularly from women (Carroll, 2018). More research is needed to distinguish between the stigma that gay fathers experience due to their male gender, and due to their sexual orientation.

#### Relationships with Sperm Donors and Surrogates

Relationships between the adult offspring of lesbian parents and their sperm donors were explored for the first time at the sixth wave of the U.S. National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS; Koh, van Beusekom, Gartrell, & Bos, 2020). This cohort of 25-year-olds were among the first generation of children to be conceived using donor insemination to lesbian parents. Of the participants who had permanently unknown donors, most participants felt comfortable about not knowing them. For participants who knew their donors, two-thirds had ongoing relationships with them and half considered their donor as an acquaintance. Additionally, almost half expressed that they had a good relationship with their donor or positive feelings about them, although a minority of participants wished for more contact or expressed conflicted feelings about their donor. Where conflict was present between offspring and their donors, this was often related to mismatched expectations. The authors suggested that

this conflict may be attenuated by clear ongoing communication between lesbian parents and their offspring. Since registries and DI networks now make it possible for DI offspring to contact their donors who previously expected to remain unknown or anonymous, it is important for future research to investigate these donor-offspring relationships. In gay father surrogacy families, research has recently begun investigating how young children explore their surrogacy origins (Carone et al., 2020), yet future research will be valuable in understanding how children relate to their surrogate as they grow older.

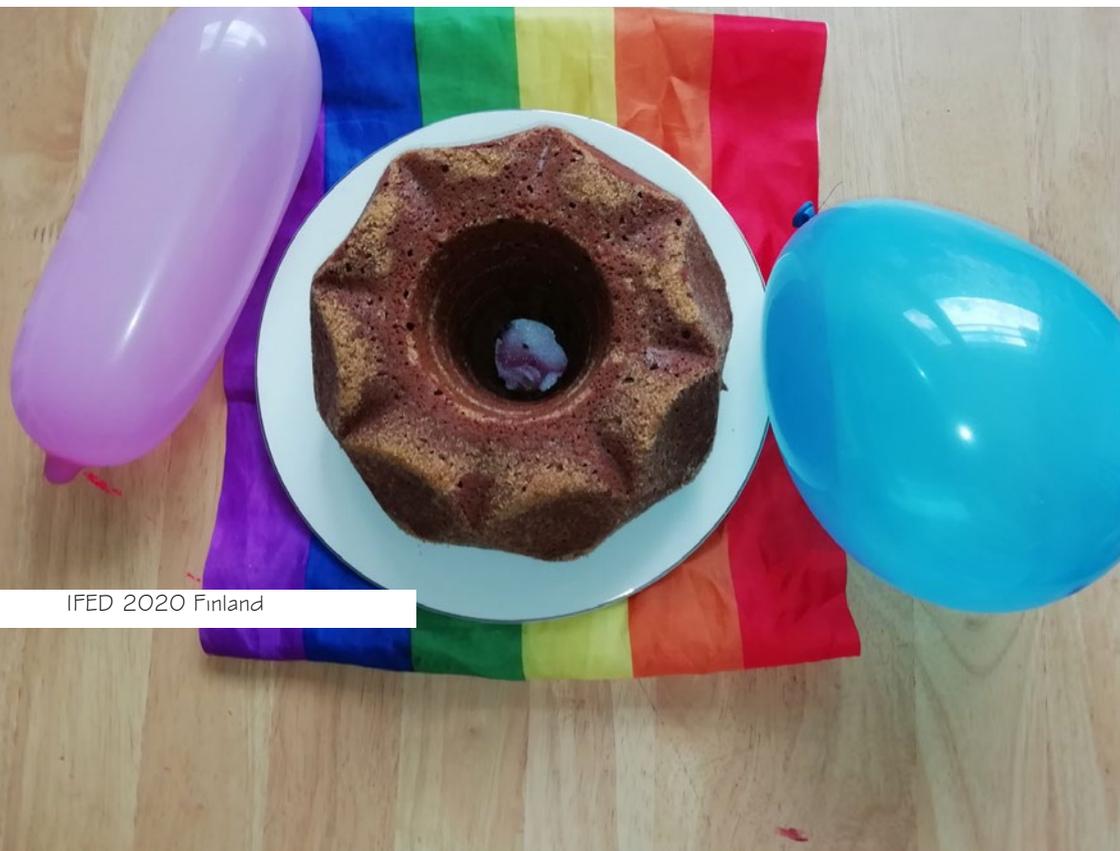
### **Bisexual parents**

It has been estimated that 60% of bisexual parents in the US live with a different-sex partner (Gates, 2015) and therefore may be missed by research on LG parents. Research also suggests that bisexual people report higher desire for parenthood than gay and lesbian people (Riskind & Tornello, 2017) suggesting that there are large numbers of bisexual parents and demonstrating the importance of studying their potentially unique experiences.

Although the majority of population based research has not made it possible to identify bisexual parents who are single or living with a different-sex partner, Calzo et al. (2017) conducted a study based on NHIS data in the US which included a measure of sexual orientation. They found that children with bisexual parents had greater emotional and behavioral difficulties than children of heterosexual parents, whereas children of lesbian and gay parents did not differ from children of heterosexual parents (Calzo et al., 2017). Adjusting for parental psychological distress, this difference disappeared, highlighting the importance of family processes, such as parental mental health on child adjustment.

Experiences of stigma have been found to be associated with mental health difficulties in LGB populations (Meyer, 2003) and therefore, some studies point to high levels of stigma for bisexual parents which may explain the higher levels of psychological distress found by Calzo et al. (2017). In a Canadian survey of 22 LBQ women, which compared 'invisible' sexual minority mothers (those who were partnered with men) and 'visible' sexual minority mothers (those who were partnered with women), mothers whose LGB identity was invisible were found to be at an increased risk for postpartum depression (Flanders et al., 2016). Although this study is small, it suggests that invisibility in bisexual mothers could be a risk factor for mental health problems. One study studied 28 plurisexual women with male partners (plurisexual being an umbrella term for people attracted to multiple genders, including bisexual and pansexual) and found that, over the first year of parenthood, they were generally seen as heterosexual by others, and often did not correct this (Abbie E Goldberg et al., 2019). Another study looked at the experiences of 29 plurisexual women during pregnancy and the postpartum period in the USA and Canada, finding that a number of mothers desired more connection to the LGBT community and felt that they didn't belong (Manley et al., 2018). Therefore, bisexuality may be particularly impactful for individuals with an 'invisible' identity, or those who feel disconnected from their community, and these factors are likely related.

The majority of research has focused on white, bisexual cisgender women who have given birth with male partners (Manley & Ross, 2020): there is a need for research on bisexual parents of different ethnic minorities and in different family forms. Additionally, most research has been focused on bisexual mothers, and there is a lack of research on bisexual fathers. It is also important to study the potential advantages of bisexual parent families – one qualitative study



found that bisexual parents see their identity as being advantageous in teaching acceptance to their children (Bartelt et al., 2017). There is a need for research to explore this further, and there is also a need for research on children's experiences of being in a bisexual parent family.

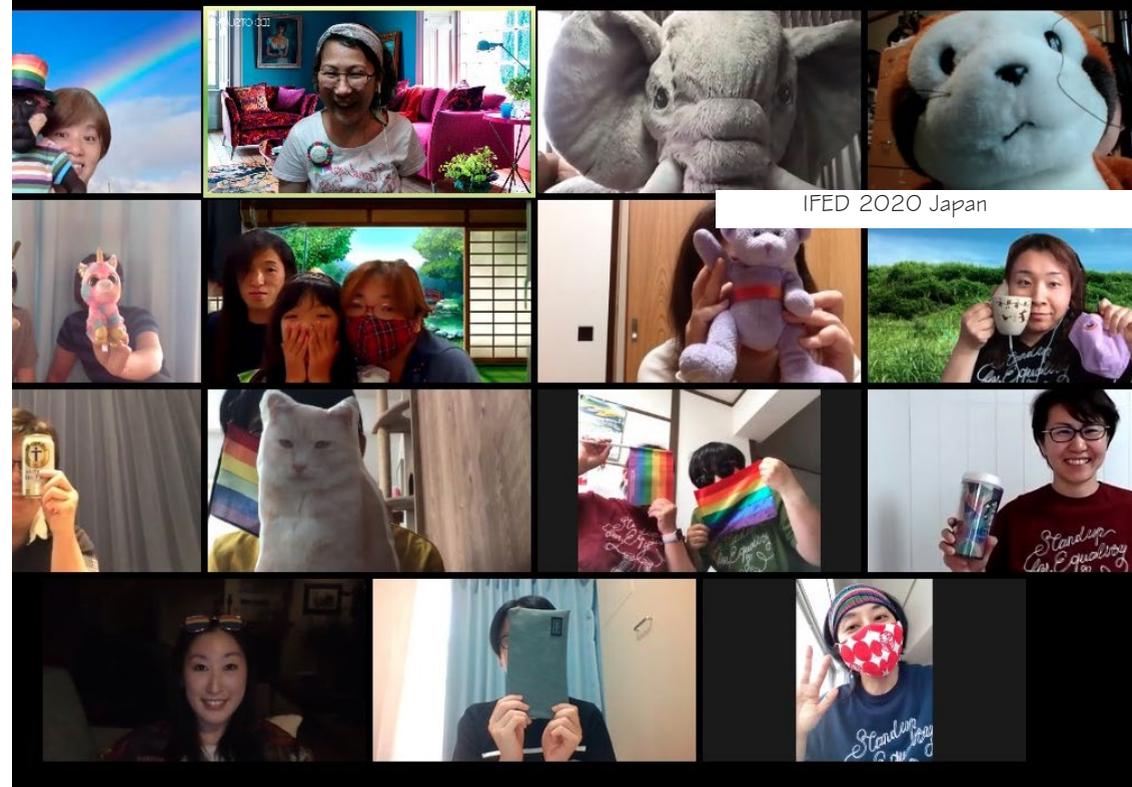
### Trans and non-binary parents

#### Journey to parenthood

Research has highlighted that there a number of barriers to parenthood for trans and non-binary people. A number of studies have highlighted the lack of information given to trans and non-binary people about fertility preservation and options for parenthood (Diane Chen et al., 2019; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018; Toze, 2018). Additionally, a recent UK study found that trans and non-binary adults felt put off from using certain routes to become parents (including adoption and fertility services) due to fears of discrimination within the system (Tasker & Gato, 2020). These findings highlight that discrimination is a barrier to trans parenthood. A US study found that trans adults had more fears about discrimination with the adoption system than LGB men and women, pointing to an elevated risk of discrimination for trans and non-binary parents (Abbie E. Goldberg et al., 2020). Goldberg et al. (2020) also found that trans adults were more willing to adopt children with behaviour problems and mental health diagnoses than cis LGB adults: Brown & Rogers (2020) suggest that trans and non-binary parents have a number of strengths and skills that are particularly valuable to adopting, including an ability to empathise with children who may feel misunderstood.

Therefore, the willingness of trans and non-binary people to adopt children with difficulties, coupled with their potentially increased sensitivity to children's difficulties demonstrate that trans and non-binary parents represent an untapped pool of adopters. This makes it particularly important to understand more about the discrimination faced by trans and non-binary parents who pursue adoption, and how to combat this discrimination.

There is a lack of research into the experiences of parents who have used adoption, although a recent UK study found that trans and non-binary parents experienced extensive direct and indirect discrimination when adopting (Bower-Brown & Zadeh, 2020). This unfortunately seems to confirm the worries and fears of discrimination of trans and non-binary adolescents and adults (Abbie



E. Goldberg et al., 2020; Pyne, 2012; Tasker & Gato, 2020). Some research suggests that routes to parenthood for trans and non-binary parents may be changing – research with current trans and non-binary parents has found that parents had mostly used biological parenthood (Tornello et al., 2019) whereas research with trans and non-binary adolescents has found whilst 35% were interested in future biological parenthood, 71% were interested in adoption (D Chen et al., 2018). The high proportion of trans and non-binary adolescents interested in adoption highlights the importance of improving adoption services for trans and non-binary parents (Brown & Rogers, 2020)

#### Trans and non-binary parent families

There have been a number of recent studies which have examined the experiences of parents and children with trans and non-binary parents. One UK study interviewed 29 children (aged 5-18) about their experiences of having a trans parent. This study found that the majority of children were accepting of their parent's gender identity, and did not find it to have a negative impact on their



relationship – although some children did find the experience of the transition challenging (Zadeh et al., 2019). Another article from this UK study found that, in a sample of 35 families with trans parents, parents and children had good quality relationships and the children were well adjusted (Imrie et al., 2020). Unlike previous research (Israel, 2005; Pyne, 2012; White & Ettner, 2004, 2007), this study found that child age at the time that the parent communicated their gender identity to the child was unrelated to child outcomes. This may reflect changing attitudes towards TNB parents, or methodological differences between the studies; for example, Imrie et al. (2020) measured the age at which the parent first communicated their gender identity to their child, rather than measuring ‘age at transition’ which has been done in previous research (White & Ettner, 2004, 2007). Measuring the time since the parent first communicated their identity may be more valuable, as a gender transition is a unique process which may or may not happen in multiple ways for each individual, although this should be further investigated. Imrie et al. (2020) did find that child adjustment problems were associated with parental depression and parenting stress, demonstrating the importance of family processes in influencing child outcomes.

Qualitative research with trans and non-binary parents has explored how parents negotiate their identity in different settings (Haines et al., 2014; von Doussa et al., 2017) and Bower-Brown & Zadeh (2020)’s study of 11 UK trans and

non-binary parents found that parents experienced tension between asserting their identity and limiting their visibility, with feelings of precarity and isolation associated with the former and frustration and invisibility associated with the latter. Intersectional approaches to research on trans and non-binary parent families are particularly important (Hafford-Letchfield et al., 2019; Haines et al., 2014). Bower-Brown & Zadeh (2020) found that participants’ experiences of discrimination were framed by their own unique identities (including disabilities, class and ethnicity) and there is a need for more research to explore this further.

#### **Future research**

Although research on trans and non-binary parent families is a growing field, there are still a number of gaps. In terms of research on the journey to parenthood, there is a need for research with diverse families in diverse contexts, and it is important for research to take an intersectional approach to understanding the discrimination faced by trans and non-binary parents further. There is also a need for research to distinguish between different identities under the trans umbrella, as research suggests that trans men, trans women and non-binary parents may have unique experiences. For example, one study found that fertility preservation was higher amongst transgender women compared to men, but the opposite was found in adolescents (Amir et al., 2020). Therefore, more research is necessary to understand more about the potential differences in experiences for trans men, non-binary and trans women who are parents.

Amir, H., Yaish, I., Oren, A., Groutz, A., Greenman, Y., & Azem, F. (2020). Fertility preservation rates among transgender women compared with transgender men receiving comprehensive fertility counselling. *Reproductive BioMedicine Online*, 41(3), 546–554. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rbmo.2020.05.003>

Averett, P., Nalavany, B., & Ryan, S. (2009). An evaluation of gay/lesbian and heterosexual adoption. *Adoption Quarterly*, 12(3–4), 129–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926750903313278>

Barone, L., Carta, A., & Ozturk, Y. (2020). Social-emotional functioning in planned lesbian families: does biological versus non-biological mother status matter? An Italian pilot study. *Attachment and Human Development*, 22(2), 143–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2018.1528620>

Bartelt, E., Bowling, J., Dodge, B., & Bostwick, W. (2017). Bisexual Identity in the Context of Parenthood: An Exploratory Qualitative Study of Self-Identified Bisexual Parents in the United States. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 17(4), 378–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1384947>

Biblarz, T. J., & Stacey, J. (2010). How does the gender of parents matter? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00678.x>

Bower-Brown, S., & Zadeh, S. (2020). Parenting in a “highly gendered world”: an intersectional exploration of the experiences of UK trans and non-binary parents.

Brewaeys, A., Ponjaert, I., Van Hall, E. V., & Golombok, S. (1997). Donor insemination: Child development and family functioning in lesbian mother families. *Human Reproduction*, 12(6), 1349–1359.

Brown, C., & Rogers, M. (2020). Removing gender barriers: Promoting inclusion for trans and non-binary carers in fostering and adoption. *Child and Family Social Work*, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12731>

Calzo, J. P., Mays, V. M., Bje, C., Bje Orken-Stam, E., Kosidou, K., & Cochran, S. D. (2017). Parental Sexual Orientation and Children’s Psychological Well-Being: 2013–2015 National Health Interview Survey. 00(0), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12989>

Carone, N., Barone, L., Manzi, D., Baiocco, R., Lingiardi, V., & Kerns, K. (2020).

Children’s Exploration of Their Surrogacy Origins in Gay Two-Father Families: Longitudinal Associations With Child Attachment Security and Parental Scaffolding During Discussions About Conception. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11(January), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00112>

Carroll, M. (2018). Managing Without Moms: Gay Fathers, Incidental Activism, and the Politics of Parental Gender. *Journal of Family Issues*, 39(13). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X18783229>

Chen, D., Matson, M., Macapagai, K., Johnson, E. K., Rosoklija, I., Finlayson, C., Fisher, C. B., & Mustanski, B. S. (2018). Attitudes Toward Fertility and Reproductive Health among Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63(1), 62–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physbeh.2017.03.040>

Chen, Diane, Kyweluk, M. A., Sajwani, A., Gordon, E. J., Johnson, E. K., Finlayson, C. A., & Woodruff, T. K. (2019). Factors Affecting Fertility Decision-Making Among Transgender Adolescents and Young Adults. *LGBT Health*, 6(3), 107–115. <https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2018.0250>

Crowl, A., Ahn, S., Baker, J., & Baker, J. a. (2008). A Meta-Analysis of Developmental Outcomes for Children of Same-Sex and Heterosexual Parents. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 4(3), 385–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15504280802177615>

Fagan, J., Day, R., Lamb, M. E., & Cabrera, N. J. (2014). Should researchers conceptualize differently the dimensions of parenting for fathers and mothers? *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 6(4), 390–405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12044>

Farr, R. H. (2017). Does parental sexual orientation matter? A longitudinal follow-up of adoptive families with school-age children. *Developmental Psychology*, 53(2), 252–264. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000228>

Farr, R. H., Forssell, S. L., & Patterson, C. J. (2010). Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Adoptive Parents: Couple and Relationship Issues. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 6(2), 199–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15504281003705436>

Farr, R. H., & Vázquez, C. P. (2020). Stigma Experiences, Mental Health, Perceived Parenting Competence, and Parent–Child Relationships Among Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual Adoptive Parents in the United States. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11(March), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00445>

Fedewa, A. L., Black, W. W., & Ahn, S. (2015). Children and Adolescents With

Same-Gender Parents: A Meta-Analytic Approach in Assessing Outcomes. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 11(1), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2013.869486>

Flaks, D. K., Ficher, I., Masterpasqua, F., & Joseph, G. (1995). Lesbians Choosing Motherhood: A Comparative Study of Lesbian and Heterosexual Parents and Their Children. *Developmental Psychology*, 31(1). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.31.1.105>

Flanders, C. E., Gibson, M. F., Goldberg, A. E., & Ross, L. E. (2016). Postpartum depression among visible and invisible sexual minority women: a pilot study. *Archives of Womens Mental Health*, 299–305. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00737-015-0566-4>

Gartrell, N., Rothblum, E. D., Koh, A. S., van Beusekom, G., & Bos, H. (2019). “We were among the first non-traditional families”: Thematic perceptions of Lesbian parenting after 25 years. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(OCT), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02414>

Gates, G. J. (2015). Marriage and family: LGBT individuals and same-sex couples. *Future of Children*, 25(2). <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2015.0013>

Goldberg, A. E., Gartrell, N. K., & Gates, G. (2014). Research Report on LGB-Parent Families Executive Summary. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/lgb-parent-families-july-2014.pdf>

Goldberg, A. E., & Smith, J. Z. (2013). Predictors of psychological adjustment in early placed adopted children with lesbian, gay, and heterosexual parents. *Journal of Family Psychology : JFP : Journal of the Division of Family Psychology of the American Psychological Association (Division 43)*, 27(3), 431–442. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032911>

Goldberg, Abbie E., Tornello, S., Farr, R., Smith, J. A. Z., & Miranda, L. (2020). Barriers to adoption and foster care and openness to child characteristics among transgender adults. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 109(October 2019), 104699. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104699>

Goldberg, Abbie E., Manley, M. H., Ellawala, T., & Ross, L. E. (2019). Sexuality and Sexual Identity Across the First Year of Parenthood Among Male-Partnered Plurisexual Women. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*,

6(1), 75–87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physbeh.2017.03.040>

Golombok, S., Blake, L., Slutsky, J., Raffanello, E., Roman, G. D., & Ehrhardt, A. (2017). Parenting and the Adjustment of Children Born to Gay Fathers Through Surrogacy. *Child Development*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12728>

Golombok, S., Mellish, L., Jennings, S., Casey, P., Tasker, F., & Lamb, M. E. (2014). Adoptive Gay Father Families: Parent-Child Relationships and Children’s Psychological Adjustment. *Child Development*, 85(2), 456–468. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12155>

Golombok, S., & Tasker, F. (1996). Do parents influence the sexual orientation of their children? Findings from a longitudinal study of lesbian families. *Developmental Psychology*, 32(1), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.32.1.3>

Hafford-Letchfield, T., Cocker, C., Rutter, D., Tinarwo, M., McCormack, K., & Manning, R. (2019). What do we know about transgender parenting?: Findings from a systematic review. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, March, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12759>

Haines, B., Ajayi, A., & Boyd, H. (2014). Making trans parents visible: Intersectionality of trans and parenting identities. *Feminism and Psychology*, 24(2), 238–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353514526219>

Imrie, S., Zadeh, S., Wylie, K., & Golombok, S. (2020). Children with Trans Parents: Parent-Child Relationship Quality and Psychological Well-being.

Israel, G. E. (2005). Translove. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 1(1), 53–67. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J461v01n01\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J461v01n01_05)

Koh, A. S., van Beusekom, G., Gartrell, N. K., & Bos, H. (2020). Adult offspring of lesbian parents: how do they relate to their sperm donors? *Fertility and Sterility*, 7, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fertnstert.2020.05.010>

Lamb, M. E. (2012). Mothers, Fathers, Families, and Circumstances: Factors Affecting Children’s Adjustment. *Applied Developmental Science*, 16(2), 98–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2012.667344>

Manley, M. H., Goldberg, A. E., & Ross, L. E. (2018). Invisibility and involvement: LGBTQ community connections among plurisexual women during pregnancy and postpartum. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 5(2),

169–181. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000285>

Manley, M. H., & Ross, L. E. (2020). What Do We Now Know About Bisexual Parenting? A Continuing Call for Research. In A. Goldberg & K. R. Allen (Eds.), *LGBTQ Parent Families* (Second Edi, pp. 65–83).

McConnachie, A. L., Ayed, N., Foley, S., Lamb, M. E., Jadva, V., Tasker, F., & Golombok, S. (2020). Adoptive gay father families: A longitudinal study of children's adjustment at early adolescence. *Child Development*.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, Social Stress, and Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Populations: Conceptual Issues and Research Evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674–697.

Neresheimer, C. D., & Daum, M. M. (2020). Parenting Styles of Gay Fathers. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 0(0), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428x.2020.1806769>

Pyne, J. (2012). *Transforming Family: Trans Parents and their Struggles, Strategies, and Strengths*.

Riggs, D. W., & Bartholomaeus, C. (2018). Fertility preservation decision making amongst Australian transgender and non-binary adults. *Reproductive Health*, 15(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-018-0627-z>

Riskind, R. G., & Tornello, S. (2017). Sexual Orientation and Future Parenthood in a 2011–2013 Nationally Representative United States Sample. *Journal of Family Psychology*, April. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000316>

Tasker, F., & Gato, J. (2020). Gender Identity and Future Thinking About Parenthood : A Qualitative Analysis of Focus Group Data With Transgender and Non-binary People in the United Kingdom. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11(May), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00865>

Tornello, S. L., Riskind, R. G., & Babiak, A. (2019). Transgender and gender non-binary parents' pathways to parenthood. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 6(2), 232–241. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000323>

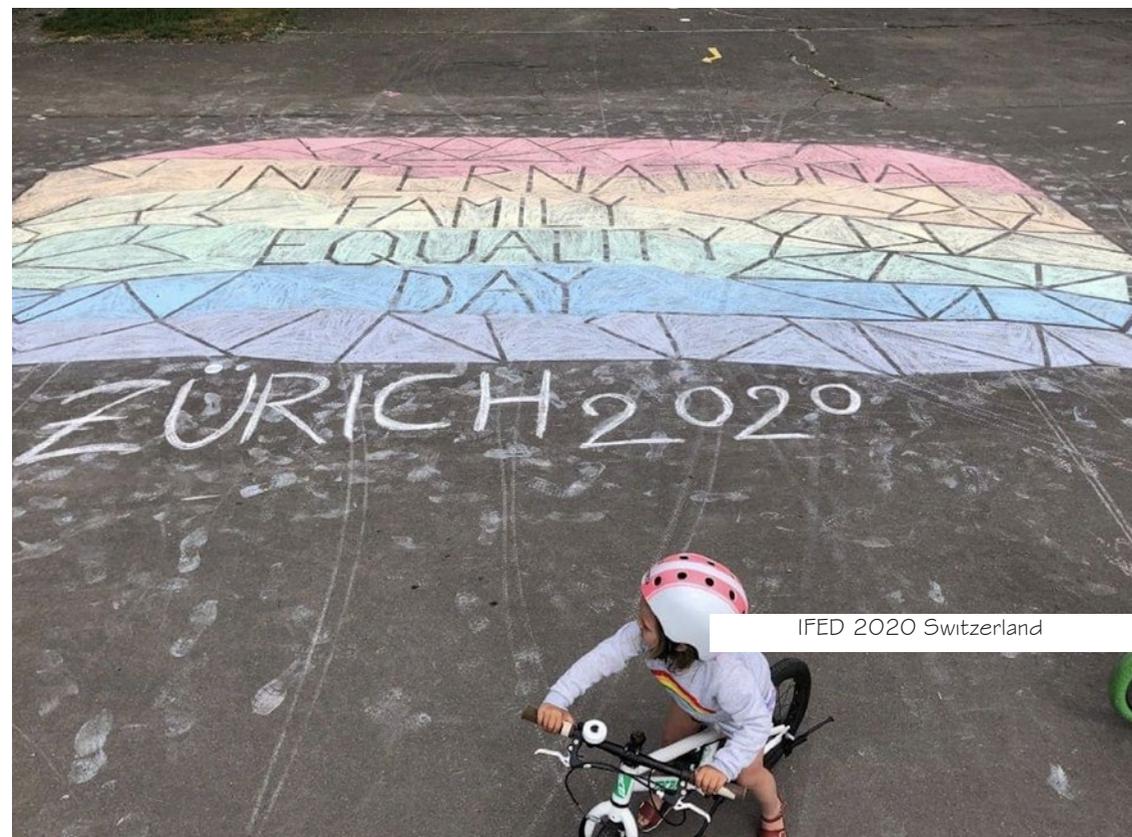
Toze, M. (2018). The risky womb and the unthinkability of the pregnant man: Addressing trans masculine hysterectomy. *Feminism & Psychology*, 28(2), 194–211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517747007>

von Doussa, H., Power, J., & Riggs, D. W. (2017). Family matters: transgender and gender diverse peoples' experience with family when they transition. *Journal of Family Studies*, 0, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2017.1375965>

White, T., & Ettner, R. (2004). Disclosure, risks and protective factors for children whose parents are undergoing a gender transition. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 8(February 2014), 129–145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2004.9962371>

White, T., & Ettner, R. (2007). Adaptation and adjustment in children of transsexual parents. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 16(4), 215–221. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-006-0591-y>

Zadeh, S., Imrie, S., & Golombok, S. (2019). Stories of Sameness and Difference: The Views and Experiences of Children and Adolescents with a trans\* Parent. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428x.2019.1683785>



IFED 2020 Switzerland

### Special Thanks

To all the people who are actively involved in bringing visibility to the diversity of family forms in society, to all who are prepared to stand up for the rights of every one of these diverse families.

To the over 750 volunteers were involved in the organization of the various events all over the globe and the IFED Board, IFED Steering Committee and IFED Team for the tremendous work.

The printing of this report has been possible thanks to the generous donations of Sateenkaariperheet (Finnish Rainbow Families Association) and Dachverband Regenbogenfamilien (Swiss Rainbow Families Association).

Photo credits: courtesy of Birgit Volk (11), Copenhagen 2021 (49-51)

