

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 377 985

PS 022 942

AUTHOR Carter, Margie  
 TITLE Supporting the Growing Identity and Self-Esteem of Children in Gay and Lesbian Families.  
 PUB DATE Dec 93  
 NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Anaheim, CA, November 10-14, 1994).  
 PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Childhood Needs; Early Childhood Education; Family (Sociological Unit); Family Characteristics; \*Homophobia; \*Homosexuality; \*Parent Child Relationship; \*Self Esteem; Social Bias  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Anti Bias Practices; Children of Homosexual Parents; \*Homosexual Parents; Homosexual Teachers

ABSTRACT

Noting that children in gay and lesbian families have many of the same needs as children in other families, this paper provides a rationale for the inclusion of gays and lesbians in early childhood anti-bias practices. The paper begins with an overview of who and what are gay and lesbian families, and discusses why they need to be included in anti-bias practices. The issues examined in the remainder of the paper are: (1) meeting the needs of children in gay and lesbian families, especially helping children develop identity and self-esteem; (2) including gay and lesbian families in the curriculum that emphasizes families as a cornerstone; (3) supporting children's identity formation in cross-gender related play; (4) welcoming and including gay and lesbian parents in early childhood programs; (5) supporting gay and lesbian staff members in the program and profession; and (6) activities and resources for ongoing cultural sensitization for children of gay and lesbian families, parents, and co-workers. Four lists of books appropriate for adults and children are attached, reflecting diversity and issues in family life, including gay and lesbian family life. (BAC)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

## Supporting the Growing Identity and Self-Esteem of Children in Gay and Lesbian Families

by Margie Carter  
Conference Paper  
NAEYC Anaheim 1993 Conference

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.  
 Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

\* Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

### 1. Overview: why include gays and lesbians in our anti-bias practices?

Children in gay and lesbian families have many of the same needs children in any other family have; like others, there are also some particular aspects of their family life which need to be understood, supported and reflected in our programs.

Who/what are gay and lesbian families?

Gay and lesbian families are another way people form families based on love. These families have one or more parents who are lesbian or gay. There is no one gay or lesbian way of living, just as there is no one Asian-American, Jewish-American, or other group lifestyle. A gay or lesbian life includes, but is not limited to a same-sex partnership. As with families in most other groups there are single parent gay and lesbian families, two parent families, and families with parents living in two different households. These families are found in most racial and ethnic groups and there are also inter-racial gay and lesbian families.

Gay and lesbian people have children in many different ways. Some are the result of a previous heterosexual relationships or marriage; some are adopted; some are conceived through artificial insemination, with a known or unknown donor.

As with heterosexual families, gay and lesbian families differ in how much information they give their children about their circumstances. Some very openly identify as gay or lesbian and proactively teach their children to identify as part of a family with this label, be aware of homophobia etc.; others don't use this label with their children or offer much information, but wait until the children ask questions. However information and identity is handled, gay and lesbian families want their children to grow up with good self esteem and feeling their family is as normal as any.

There is a long history of bias against gay people. Some of this has fundamentalist religious origins. The term "faggot" as a slang word for gay men came from the historical period of the witch burnings when gay men were tied at the foot of the stakes and used as the kindling where women suspected of being witches were burned. Under Hitler and the Nazis gays and lesbians were forced to wear pink triangles and taken to concentration camps along with Jews. When the concentration camps were ultimately liberated by the Allied Forces, surviving gay people were transferred to prisons.

While it used to be even more true in the past, in the 1990's mothers who identify as lesbians still live under the threat of having a custody suit brought against them with the homophobia claim that they are unfit to parent. There are many, many women who have lost custody of their children simply because they were lesbians. Likewise lesbians and gay men have lost jobs, housing, family and friends when their homosexuality was discovered. Many suffer continual verbal abuse and name-

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Margaret B.  
Carter

calling, while others have been physically assaulted, and some killed as part of what is now called "hate crimes".

With over 30 years of activism inspired by the courageous acts of African Americans in the Civil Rights Movement, lesbians and gay men have made some progress in gaining justice. Some states, cities, and places of employment now specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Some churches sanction gay weddings and domestic partnership rights and benefits are beginning to be offered by some employers. Gays and lesbians can openly adopt children in some states. The President has called for a lift of the ban on gays in the military.

For all these gains, there continue to be places with active efforts to discriminate against lesbians and gay men and increasing incidents of physical violence against them. This is the history and current climate under which our lesbian and gay colleagues and families in our programs live. It is why some chose to be very quiet about their lifestyle. Many of them have been rejected or outcast by their own parents. No wonder they are eager to make new families that are healthy and loving. Lesbians and gay men who choose to have children are eager raise a new generation that knows first hand there is nothing abnormal or fearful about their lives. Statistically most of their children will be heterosexual, but hopefully not heterosexist.

Particular stereotypes or myths to watch out for:

- These children will probably grow up to be gay or lesbian under the influence of their parents
- Gay and lesbian parents sexually molest their children
- These families live with rigid sex roles, one parents always playing the role of the opposite sex
- Children in these families may be subjected to watching or participating in sexual activity
- They will likely get AIDS from these parents
- Lesbian families hate or excluded men from their lives; they never let the fathers come in contact with the children
- Male children in these families don't have any role models and vice versa with female children in gay male families
- There are none of "those people" in our program or community so this is not an issue we need to take up. (Remember programs that were all European American saying this about including multicultural images and practices in their program?)

One of the current myths perpetuated by anti-gay campaigns is that lesbians and gays are seeking special rights or privileges. The issue here is justice, civil rights, protection from discrimination and physical attack because of one's sexual orientation. Whether or not we have openly gay and lesbian families enrolled in our programs or on our staff, the forms of bias against this group is one which we must take seriously. There are probably more gay people related to our early childhood programs than we imagine. There are families and colleagues who don't openly identify as lesbian or gay. A great many of us have gay members of their family, circle of friends, co-workers, neighborhood, temple, mosque or church, and

these numbers will continue to grow. If children grow up learning to counter homophobia, we will be much further along in our efforts to embrace diversity and live in a just world.

## 2. Meeting needs of children in gay and lesbian families

In meeting the needs of these children early childhood educators have three tasks before us:

- facing our own biases and overcoming them
- getting more information and sensitivity
- applying what we already know about the development of self-esteem in young children.

Children develop self-esteem in a number of ways. For example:

- by having their individual and group identity consistently reinforced in a positive manner
- by having role models and positive images of people like them around
- by having their feelings and thoughts affirmed and taken seriously
- by having the opportunity to take initiative in their behalf

Conversely, things that undermine self-esteem include:

- hearing and seeing no examples of your individual and group identity
- hearing and seeing negative, stereotypical or untrue representations of your life
- having to keep secrets to feel safe
- having repeated experiences of being a victim, rather than empowered to act in one's behalf

Here's a story of a child who at the age of 5 already recognized the bias towards his family.

- Jesse was adopted as an infant from Columbia by a Euro-American and Latina lesbian couple who had been together for six years. Their family talked openly about his adoption, and followed Jesse's lead in supplying other information he asked for. He seemed to be growing up with a strong self-esteem and ease in his family. After the first week in his new class at the child care center he came home exclaiming, "I hate it when we have to talk about families at school." Concerned, his mothers asked him why this was so. "Because they keep asking me questions and I don't know the answers. Should I just pretend I have only one mom?"

Stories like Jesse's are instructive because they help us understand what children are wrestling with and they also help us discover more of our own biases. There is sometimes a tendency to "blame the victim" with thoughts like "they should never have done this to this child." A more appropriate response would be eagerness to work closely with Jesse's mom's in helping him find a way he feels comfortable with answering questions, while providing other resources to share information

with children in the class, so that the burden of feeling called upon to explain his "difference" doesn't always have to fall on Jesse. His story gives us a keen lesson of the importance of this anti bias work in our programs.

In order to support the self esteem of any child in our program we need information, policies, resources and materials that are inclusive and reflect their lives. In addition to general information to dispel myths about gay and lesbian people, we need specific information about the family structure and home situation. How are different family members referred to or called by name? Who else is important in this child's life. With all our families it's helpful to know something about the family's beliefs and traditions, cultural heros and heroines, symbols and celebrations.

Using information gathered, teachers can support the child's developing self esteem in the language and references used in the classroom, for instance, when talking about families, the way they live, important events and celebrations for them. Use actual pictures of families in the program or ones from magazines to include images of each child's family in your room and activity projects. Have relevant pictures available for the children to dictate stories about or make family collages. You can add teacher made lacing cards, puzzles, matching games, people props which reflect different kinds of gay and lesbian families.

### **3. Including gay and lesbian families in our family curriculum**

Whatever approach to curriculum is used nearly every program includes families as a cornerstone. Reflecting the families in one's programs through visual collages, family tree activities and celebrations is an immediate way to build curriculum based on the classroom community. If the group is fairly homogenous it is important to help the children also learn that there are different kinds of families. This can be done simply in the language used to refer to families, in visual displays learning materials and props around the room and through books and personal doll stories. In each case it is important to take care to counter possible stereotypes.

Any number of adaptations can also be made with songs and games to include reference to a variety of family structures. For instance the words to "The Farmer in the Dell" can be adapted to say, "The farmer takes a partner"; in graphing or classification activities categories such as "people with know who have 1 mommy", "2 mommies", etc. Enactments of stories can allow same-sex children to play the part of the mommies; duplicate sets of family figure props can be purchased or made to allow for a variety of combinations of family structures and cultures.

If children have no experience with certain family structures they may say such things as, "You can't have 2 mommies". This provides a wonderful opportunity to casually mention that indeed some families have two mommies—sometimes they live together in one house as a family with their child and sometimes they live in different houses. Sometimes children will say such things as, "Boys can't marry boys, only girls", which provides a teachable moment to convey the idea of activism against injustice with a response something like, "That used to be true, but some

people are working very hard to change that unfair rule so that people can marry whoever they love and want to make a family with."

#### 4. Supporting children's identity formation in cross-gender related play

Many individuals and some cultures and religions have strong beliefs about the roles of men and women, appropriate dress and behaviors. We need to be sensitive to this as we strive to counter harmful sexism and the confining limitations around sex role definitions and behaviors. When conflicts or discussions erupt around these issues in the classroom, it's useful to remind children that "people have different ideas about these things and we need to listen and learn from each other and always treat each other with fairness and respect." It's helpful to invite visitors to the classroom that counter any stereotypes or invisible aspects of family life that become obvious in your classroom.

Children's experimentation in the dress up area is typically where these teachable moments arise. Some children love to experiment and try out different roles or engage in dramatic play which crosses over gender lines. In most cases this has little to do with their eventual sexual orientation or gender identity. However, our society is full of messages about power belonging with the male gender and compliance and caretaking with the female gender and young children quickly learn and communicate this. Most of us have heard children express strong convictions about a person's gender based on the length of hair, clothing, presence or absence of body hair. The following little story shows how deeply children absorb this association.

One day Sherry and Monique came running home to tell their mother about seeing the new little baby at the next door neighbors who just came home from the hospital. When their mother asked if the baby was a boy or a girl Sherry and Monique looked at each other puzzled and then Monique responded, "We couldn't tell. It didn't have any clothes on."

Many children will swear to you that there are no female dinosaurs, only males. "Dinosaurs can't be girls. There are only boy dinosaurs." These examples may sound cute or illogical to us, but they reveal the deep associations of being male with being powerful.

Because homophobia also runs very deep in our society, many adults are uncomfortable with some aspects of children's play, for instance when young girls say they want to marry their girl friends or young boys like to put on skirts or dresses. Telling them they can't do this not only restricts their imagination and experimentation, but it perpetuates homophobia. Directly and indirectly children get numerous messages that there's something wrong with you if you like to do these things. In most cases they will grow up passing along this bias, if not more directly acting on it. In the cases of children who do grow up with a gay or lesbian orientation, we've contributed to shakey self-esteem and emotional life, rather than laid a positive foundation of self acceptance and pride in who one is.

Joan, a pre-school teacher, described one of the happiest children in her room. C.J. is a five year old boy who loves to dress up in girls clothing. When he arrives in the classroom, he immediately puts on a skirt and wears it for much of the day. He comes to circle time, works with blocks and puzzles and his friends moving with ease in the skirt. He loves dramatic events and gestures and likes to cast others in his playscripts. Joan describes watching C.J. looking at himself in the mirror while wearing a woman's wig. "He was so pleased. I had a gut feeling there was more going on than this just being a childhood dress-up phase. It seemed to mean a great deal to him." Joan once referred to C.J. as a "one-man Broadway musical".

After four months of happy days at preschool things dramatically changed for C J. His mother remarried and C.J.'s behavior changed from being his usual good natured self to having frequent bouts of anger and aggression. "At first I thought it was just the adjustment to a new stepfather", Joan reported. "But the hitting, kicking and spitting at other children continued. Then one day we found him wearing a skirt while hiding in a bookcase. He screamed when anyone came near so we just left him alone. A week later he was discovered hiding in the storage closet, wearing a dress, beads and wig, Bursting into tears he told me his new dad said he couldn't dress up any more. He said wearing skirts would get him in trouble."

#### **5. Welcoming and supporting gay and lesbian parents in our programs**

Supporting a child's self-esteem, means supporting their family as well. There are many things our programs can do to pro-actively make our programs welcoming and safe places for diverse families. It's useful to examine things like our program policies, forms, handbooks, visual displays, open house arrangements and conference notices to see if our tone, language and references are inclusive. We can create enrollment forms with open-ended references to parents, co-parents, family members or significant others. We can specifically mention the welcoming of all families—one or two or more parents, lesbian or gay, adopting, multi ethnic and intergenerational, employed or unemployed and include images of this diversity on our walls and in our printed material.

Ensuring a supply of resource and referral materials is another way to demonstrate inclusiveness, making visible books, articles and listings of support services for single parents, bi-racial families, lesbian and gay families, bi-lingual, homeless etc.

#### **6. Supporting gay and lesbian staff members in our programs and profession**

Many of the things we need to do to support gay and lesbian families in our program, should be done with regard to our colleagues as well. They may be wrestling with the uncertainty of social acceptance, job security or other aspects of homophobia that compel them to keep silent or "closeted" about their life style. Clear references in non-discrimination and job protection clauses is an obvious

form of support. So are all the other considerations of open-end language and references to create an inclusive atmosphere that assumes lesbian and gay staff members as well as parents may be part of the program and are welcome and supported there. Other practices may include domestic partnership health benefits, acknowledgements of special occasions such as gay pride day, and specific encouragement for lesbian or gay partners to attend when spouses are included in social events.

Gay and lesbian teachers don't want to teach children about homosexuality, but rather to share their lives with their co-workers, children and families in their program. Contrast these two stories.

During the first staff meeting of the fall the director welcomed new teachers and asked everyone to share the most exciting thing they did during the summer. People talked about vacations they took, family reunions, a child's graduation and marriage. Over the summer Paul had a commitment ceremony with his partner of three years, Charlie. In many ways it was like a wedding, but that was not a legal option where they lived. New to the staff and unsure of their reaction, Paul remained silent about his most exciting summer event and instead mentioned enjoying having his parents visit.

Dorothy ended circle time on Thursday by telling the children that they were going to have a substitute the day because she was going to be gone. When the children asked where she was going she said, "I'm going to Washington D.C. to march for justice for gay people. Does anybody here know anyone who is gay?" One child said his uncle was gay while others asked what that meant. "It's the special person you love," the boy continued. "Uncle Frank loves his friend Jake." There were more responses, "I love lots of people" said one, while another child said, "I don't know anybody like that." "Well, you know me," Dorothy explained. "I'm gay and you know me." "Will there be balloons and clowns in the march?" a child asked.

Gay and lesbian staff members not only need to work in an environment that is free of jokes about queers, they need to know their co-workers and supervisors will stand behind them in the face of any homophobia among the parents. It's important not to leave the initiative for supporting gay and lesbian families up to gay or lesbian colleagues.

example of teacher union statement (see attached)

## **7. Activities and Resources for ongoing cultural sensitization and professional development**

Because homophobia is so pervasive in our society, it takes a concerted effort to unlearn it and provide concrete, pro-active support for children of gay and lesbian families, parents and co-workers. There are a number of things you can do to gain more awareness, information and resources.

- 1) Try to understand homophobia in the shoes of its victim.
  - Wear, do, or say something that may create the impression you are gay or just support gay people and note the reaction you get from both acquaintances and strangers.
  - Draft a fictitious "coming out" letter to your parents and reflect on how you feel during and afterwards.
- 2) Read more about the lives of gay men and lesbians. The following list is a starter.
- 3) Attend a meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) to hear first hand how people are working out their feelings and changing their attitudes. include address

## **8. Children's books representing diverse family life**

see attached list

## Starter Library for Early Childhood Educators on Gay and Lesbian Family Life

These books, along with a variety of other multi-cultural children's and adults' titles, are available from:

Red and Black Books  
432 15th Ave East  
Seattle, WA 98112  
(206) 322-READ

### Adult Resource Books

Barret, Robert L. and Robinson, Bryan E. *Gay Fathers*. Lexington Books, Lexington, MA. (1990) ISBN 0-669-19514-6. \$18.95.

Barrett, Martha. *Invisible Lives: the Truth About Millions of Women-Loving Women*. Harper Collins, New York, NY (1990) ISBN 006097331-5. \$9.95

Berzon, Betty. *Permanent Partners: Building Gay and Lesbian Relationships that Last*. Penguin Books, New York, NY. (1989) ISBN 0-452-26308-5. \$12.00

Blumenfeld, Warren, ed. *Homophobia: How We all Pay the Price*. Beacon Press. Boston, MA (1990), ISBN 0-931188-92-X. \$17.00.

Butler, Becky, ed. *Ceremonies of the Heart: Celebrating Lesbian Unions*. Seal Press, Seattle, WA (1990). ISBN 0-931188-92-X. \$14.95

Burke, Phyllis, *Family Values: Two Moms and Their Son*. Random House, New York, NY (1993). ISBN 0-679-42188-2. \$21.00

Clark, Don. *Loving Someone Gay. A gay therapist offers sensitive, intelligent guidance to gays and those who care about them*. Celestial Arts. Berkeley, CA. (1987). ISBN 0-89087-505-7. \$9.95

Clunis, D. Merilee and Green, G. Dorsey. *Lesbian Couples: Creating Healthy Relationships for the '90's*. Seal Press. Seattle, WA. (1988). ISBN 1-878067-37-0. \$12.95

Eichberg, Rob. *Coming Out: An Act of Love*. A Plume Book, New York, NY (1991) ISBN 0452 26685 8. \$10.95

Fairchild, Betty, and Hayward, Nancy. *Now That You Know: What Every Parent Should Know About Homosexuality*. Harcourt Brace & Co, New York, NY. (1989). ISBN 0-15-667601-X. \$8.95.

Griffin, Carolyn. *Beyond Acceptance: Parents of Lesbians and Gays Talk About Their Experiences*. St. Martins Press.. New York, NY (1990) ISBN 0-312-0499-35. \$9.95

Hanscombe, Gillian E. and Forster, Jackie. *Rocking the Cradle: Lesbian Mother, A Challenge in Family Living*. Alyson Publications, Boston, MA (1982) ISBN 0-932870-17-1. \$6.95

- Harbeck, Karen M. ed. *Coming Out of the Classroom Close: Gay and Lesbian Students, Teachers and Curriculum*. Harrington Park Press. Binghamton, NY \$19.95
- Lewin, *Lesbian Mother: Accounts of Gender in American Culture*. Cornell University Press. (1993) \$13.95
- MacPikes, Lorelee. *There's Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You*. Naiad Press. Tallahassee, FL (1989) \$9.95
- Marcus, Eric. *Is it A Choice? Answers to 300 of Most Frequently Asked Questions About Gays and Lesbians*. Harper. San Francisco, CA, (1993) ISBN 0-06-250664-1. \$10.00
- Marcus, Eric. *The Male Couple's Guide*. Harper Collins. New York, NY (1988). ISBN 0-06-096936-9. \$14.00
- Martin, April. *Lesbian and Gay Parenting Handbook*. Harper Collins. New York, NY (1993). ISBN 0-06-096929-6. \$15.00
- McConnell-Celi, Sue. ed. *Twenty First Century Challenge: Lesbians and Gays in Education, Bridging the Gap*. Lavender Crystal Press. Redban, NJ (1993). ISBN 0-9636909-0-6. \$17.95
- Pharr, Suzanne. *Homophobi: A Weapon of Sexism*. Chardon Press. The Women's Project, Little Rock, AR (1988) ISBN 00-9620222-1-7. \$9.95
- Pies, Cheri. *Considering Parenthood* Spinsters Press Minneapolis, MN (1988) \$12.95
- Pollack, Sandra and Vaughn, Jeanne. *Politics of the Heart: A Lesbian Parenting Anthology*. Firebrand Books, Ithaca, NY (1987). ISBN 0-932379-35-4. \$11.95
- Rafkin. L., *Different Daughters: A Book By Mothers of Lesbians*. Cleis Press. Pittsburgh, PA (1987) \$9.95
- Rafkin. L., *Different Mother: Sons and Daughters of Lesbians Talk About Their Lives*. Cleis Press. Pittsburgh, PA (1990) ISBN 0-939416-41-7. \$9.95
- Scanzoni, Letha and Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? Another Christian View*. Harper. San Francisco, CA. (1978) ISBN 0-06-067076-2. \$11.00
- Sherman, Susan, ed. *Lesbian and Gay Marriage*. Temple University Press. Philadelphia, PA. (1992) ISBN 0-87722-974-0. \$16.95
- Sidaway, Caroline et al. *The Lesbian in Front of the Classroom: Writings by Lesbian Teachers*. McNaughton and Gunn, Herbooks. Santa Cruz, CA. (1988) ISBN 0-939821-31-1. \$6.50

## Children's Books That Specifically Include Gay or Lesbian Families

Aldin, Joan. *A Boy's Best Friend*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1992) ISBN 1-55583-203-2. \$12.00 (a boy with asthma wants a dog and gets a surprise from two moms)

Bosche, Suzanne. *Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin*. Gay Men's Press, London, GB (1981) ISBN 0-907040225. \$7.95 (a four year old has great fun living part-time with her dad and his male partner)

Elwin, Rosamund and Paulse, Michele. *Asha's Mums*. Women's Press, Toronto, Ontario, CAN. (1990) ISBN 0-88961-143-2. \$5.95 (a child faces having to put two mom's names on a field trip permission slip)

Heron, Ann and Maran, Meredith. *How Would You Feel If Your Dad Was Gay?* Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA. (1991) ISBN 1-55583-188-5. \$9.95 (several children deal with teasing about their dads being gay)

Jenness, Aylette. *Families: A Celebration of Diversity, Commitment, and Love*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA (1990) ISBN 0-395947-038-2. \$13.95 (photographs and stories of all kinds of families)

Newman, Leslea. *Belinda's Bouquet*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991) ISBN 1-55583-154-0. \$6.95. (a fat child in a lesbian family struggles with her self-esteem)

Newman, Leslea. *Gloria Goes to Gay Pride*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991) ISBN 1-55583-185-0. \$7.95 (a child describes a special holiday for her lesbian family and friends)

Newman, Leslea. *Heather Has Two Mommies*. In Other Words Publishing. Northampton, MA. (1989) ISBN 0-06922789-0-4. \$6.95 (a child of lesbian mothers learns of her conception by artificial insemination and the special love in their family)

Newman, Leslea. *Saturday is Pattyday*. New Victoria Publishers, Inc. Norwich, VT. (1993) ISBN 0934678-51-0. \$6.95 (a child struggles to adjust to the separation of her two mommies)

Valentine, Johnny. *The Day They Put a Tax on Rainbows*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1992) ISBN 1-55583-201-6. \$12.95 (Three original fairy tales with unconventional characters)

Valentine, Johnny. *The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991) ISBN 1-55583-199-0. \$12.95 (five original fairytale type stories with non-traditional characters.)

Valentine, Johnny. *Two Moms, the Zark and Me*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1993) ISBN 1-55583-236-9. \$12.95 (a cartoon-like story about a child with two moms)

Willhoite, Michael. *Daddy's Roommate*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1990) ISBN 1-55583-178-8. \$14.95 (a child visits his dad and his dad's male partner and learns from his mother that gay is just another kind of loving)

Willhoite, Michael. *Families: A Coloring Book*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991) ISBN 1-55583-192-3. \$2.95 (pages to color featuring a variety of families)

Willhoite, Michael. *Uncle What-is-It is Coming to Visit*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1993) ISBN 1-55583-205-9. \$12.95 (two children encounter comic stereotyping in search of what "gay" means in reference to an upcoming visit from their uncle)

### Children's Books Depicting Family Life with Unspecific References That Might Reflect an Aspect of Gay or Lesbian life

Caines, Jeannette, *Just Us Women*. Harper Collins, New York, NY (1982). ISBN 0-06-443056-1. \$4.95 ("No boys and no men—just us women will take a trip together," an aunt tells her niece, thrilled that they can do exactly as they please)

Galloway, Priscilla. *Good Times, Bad Times*. Women's Press. Toronto, Canada. (1980). \$5.95

Jordan, Mary Kate. *Losing Uncle Tim*. Albert Whitman & Co, Niles, IL (1989). ISBN 0-8075-4756-5. \$12.95. (a child learns his favorite uncle has AIDS)

Merriam, Eve. *Daddies at Work*. Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (1989). ISBN 0-671-73276-5. \$2.25. (all kinds of daddies doing all kinds of work)

Merriam, Eve. *Mommies at Work*. Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (1989). ISBN 0-671-73275-7. \$2.25 (all kinds of mommies doing all kinds of work)

Palmer, Kate. *A Gracious Plenty*. Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (1991). ISBN 0-671-73566-7. \$13.95. (children visit a favorite great aunt who lives alone, never got married, and never had children)

Severance, Jane, *Lots of Mommies*. Lollipop Power, Chapel Hill, NC. (1983) ISBN 0914996-24X \$5.00. (a young girl living with a group of women who share in her care encounters teasing and triumph at school)

Williams, Vera B. *Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe*. Wm. Morrow. Indianapolis, IN. (1981) ISBN 0688040721 \$3.95 (child, mom, aunt and her child go canoeing and learn about camping)

Williams, Vera B. *Music, Music for Everyone*. Wm Morrow. Indianapolis, IN (1984) ISBN 0 688078 117. \$3.95 (child wants to play a music and dances at party with mom and friends)

Ziefert, Harriet. *Where's Mommy's Truck?* Harper Collins, New York, NY. (1992) ISBN 069400377-8. \$5.95 (a pop-up book showing the different places mommy drives her truck after dropping her daughter off at child care)

printed on recycled paper  
12/93

## Children's Books Reflecting Diversity and Issues in Family Life

These books, along with a variety of other multi-cultural children's and adults' titles, are available from:

**Red and Black Books**  
432 15th Ave East  
Seattle, WA 98112  
(206) 322-READ

Adoff, Arnold. *Black is Brown is Tan*. Harper Collins, New York, NY. (1973) ISBN 0-06-443269-6. \$3.95. (a bi-racial family uses playful language to describe their different skin colors and family activities)

Aldin, Joan. *A Boy's Best Friend*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1992) ISBN 1 55583-203-2. \$12.00 (a boy with asthma wants a dog and gets a surprise from two moms)

Banish, Roslyn. *A Forever Family*. Harper Collins, New York, NY (1992) ISBN 0-06-446116-5. \$4.95. (a child describes her adoption after living in different foster families)

Bernstein, Sharon. *A Family That Fights*. Albert Whitman & Co, Morton Grove, IL (1991) ISBN 0-8075-2248-1. \$10.95 (a child's fear and shame about family violence)

Bosche, Suzanne. *Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin* Gay Men's Press, London, GB (1981) ISBN 0-907040225. \$7.95 (a four-year-old has great fun living part-time with her dad and his male partner)

Bunting, Eve. *Fly Away Home*. Clarion Books, New York, NY (1991) ISBN 0-395-55962-6. \$13.95 (a homeless family moves between airport terminals trying not to be noticed)

Bunting, Eve. *The Wednesday Surprise*. Clarion Books, New York, NY (1989) ISBN 0-395-54776-8. \$4.95 (a child teaches her grandma to read and this becomes a birthday present to dad)

Byers, Rinda. *Mycca's Baby*. Orchard Books, New York, NY (1990) ISBN 0-531-05828-X. \$13.95 (a child and her extended family await the birth of an aunt's new baby)

Caines, Jeannette, *Just Us Women*. Harper Collins, New York, NY (1982). ISBN 0-06-443056-1. \$4.95 ("No boys and no men—just us women will take a trip together," an aunt tells her niece, thrilled that they can do exactly as they please)

Cairo, Shelley. *Our Brother Has Down's Syndrome*. Annick Press LTD, Toronto, Ontario, CAN (1985) ISBN 0-920303-31-5. \$4.95 (a child describes the things that are the same and different about her brother with Down's)

Christiansen, C.B. *My Mother's House, My Father's House*. Puffin Books, New York, NY (1990) ISBN 0-14-054210-8. \$3.95 (a child describes her feelings moving between her mom's and dad's home)

Clifton, Lucille. *Everett Anderson's Goodbye*. Henry Holt and Company, New York, NY (1983) ISBN 0-8050-0800-4. \$5.95 (a child struggles through the grief of his dad's death)

Clifton, Lucille. *Everett Anderson's Nine Month Long*. Henry Holt and Company, New York, NY (1978) ISBN 0-8050-0295-2. \$4.95 (a child explores his feelings about his mother's pregnancy)

Cole, Joanna. *The New Baby at Your House*. William Morrow and Company, New York, NY (1985) ISBN 0-688-07418-9. \$4.95 (siblings in a variety of families prepare for and react to a new baby in the family)

Cowen-Fletcher, Jane. *Mama Zooms*. Scholastic. New York, NY. (1992) ISBN 059 0457748. \$14.95 (a child has fun riding on mom's lap in her wheelchair)

Elwin, Rosamund and Paule, Michele. *Asha's Mums*. Women's Press, Toronto, Ontario. CAN (1990). ISBN 0-88961-143-2. \$5.95 (a child faces having to put two mom's names on a field trip permission slip)

Eyvindson, Peter. *Old Enough*. Pemmican Publications, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CAN (1986) ISBN 0-919143-41-5. \$4.95. (a father becomes too busy to enjoy his growing son, but takes time to be with his grandson)

Farber, Norma. *How Does it Feel to Be Old?* E.P. Dutton, New York, NY (1979) ISBN 0-525-44367-3. \$3.95 (a child's grandma explains how it feels to be old, remember her youth and prepare for death)

Freeman, Don. *A Pocket for Corduroy*. Puffin Books, New York, NY (1978) ISBN 0-14-050352-8. \$3.95 (a child goes with mom to the laundromat and loses her teddy)

Galloway, Priscilla. *Good Times, Bad Times, Mummy and Me*. The Women's Press, Toronto, Ontario, CAN. (1980) ISBN 0-88961-066-5. \$5.95. (a child resents her mother having to work all the time and being left with grandma)

Galloway, Priscilla. *Jennifer has Two Daddies*. The Women's Press, Toronto, Ontario, CAN. (1985) ISBN 0-88961-095-9. \$5.95. (a child moves between her home with her mom and step dad and her single dad's apartment)

Garza, Carmen. *Family Pictures/Cuadros De Familia*. Children's Book Press, San Francisco, CA. ISBN 0-89239-050-6. \$13.95 (bilingual story of an Hispanic family and community life)

Girard, Linda. *Adoption is for Always*. Albert Whitman & Co, Morton Grove, IL (1986) ISBN 0-807500187-5. \$4.95 (a child struggles to understand why her birthmother gave her up and how her adoptive parents will always care for her)

Girard, Linda. *At Daddy's on Saturdays*. Albert Whitman & Co, Morton Grove, IL (1987) ISBN 0-8075-0473-4. \$5.95 (a child struggles with her feelings about her parents' divorce)

Henriod, Lorraine. *Grandmother's Wheelchair*. Albert Whitman. Morton Grove, IL (1982) ISBN 0807530 352. \$13.95 (a child spends time with grandmother who is in a wheelchair)

Heron, Ann and Maran, Meredith. *How Would You Feel If Your Dad Was Gay?* Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA. (1991). ISBN 1-55583-188-5. \$9.95 (several children deal with teasing about their dads being gay)

Jenness, Aylette. *Families: A Celebration of Diversity, Commitment, and Love.* Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA (1990). ISBN 0-395947-038-2. \$13.95 (photographs and stories of all kinds of families)

Johnson, Angela. *Tell Me a Story, Mama.* Orchard Books, New York, NY. (1989) ISBN 0-531-05794-1. \$13.95 (a child continually enjoys stories about her mother's childhood)

Jordan, Mary Kate. *Losing Uncle Tim.* Albert Whitman & Co, Niles, IL (1989). ISBN 0-8075-4756-5. \$12.95. (a child learns his favorite uncle has AIDS)

Kibby, Marsha. *My Grammy.* First Avenue Editions, Minneapolis, MN (1988) ISBN 0-87614-544-6. \$4.95 (grandma has Alzheimer's disease and comes to live with her children and grandchild)

Lindsay, Jeanne. *Do I Have a Daddy?* Morning Glory Press, Buena Park, CA (1982) ISBN 0-930934-44-X. \$5.95 (a never-married mom explains to her son that caring for a baby is a big job and daddy wasn't ready for that)

Litchfield, Ada. *Words in Our Hands.* Albert Whitman & Co, Chicago, IL (1980) ISBN 0-807509212-9. \$12.95 (a hearing child explains facts and feelings of living with Deaf parents)

Loh, Morag. *Tucking Mommy In.* Orchard Books, New York, NY (1987) ISBN 0-531-07025-5. \$4.95 (two sisters put their tired mommy to bed)

Mandelbaum, Pili. *You Be Me and I'll Be You.* Kane/Miller Book Publishers, Brooklyn, NY (1990) ISBN 0-916291-27-8. \$13.95 (a Euro-American dad plays with his bi-racial daughter's feelings about wanting to be white)

Martin, Bill and John Archambault. *Knots on a Counting Rope.* Henry Holt & Company, New York, NY. ISBN 0-8050-0571-4. \$14.95 (a blind child has his grandfather repeatedly tell the story of his birth and childhood in a traditional Native American community)

Maury, Inez. *My Mother and I are Growing Strong/Mi mama y yo nos hacemos fuertes.* New Seed Press, Berkeley, CA (1979) ISBN 0-938678-06-X. \$6.95 (a bi-lingual story of a child who lives with mom while dad serves time in prison for fighting back in a racial incident)

Maury, Inez. *My Mother the Mail Carrier/Mi mama la cartera.* The Feminist Press, New York, NY. (1976). ISBN 0-935312-23-4. \$7.95 ( a bilingual story of a child thrilled with her mother, a mail carrier, and their life in a small city apartment)

Merriam, Eve. *Daddies at Work.* Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (1989). ISBN 0-671-73276-5. \$2.25. (all kinds of daddies doing all kinds of work)

Merriam, Eve. *Mommies at Work.* Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (1989). ISBN 0-671-73275-7. \$2.25 (all kinds of mommies doing all kinds of work)

Morris, Ann. *Loving*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, New York, NY (1990) ISBN 0-688-06340-3. \$13.95 (mommies and daddies around the world loving and caring for their children)

Newman, Leslea. *Belinda's Bouquet*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991) ISBN 1-55583-154-0. \$6.95. (a fat child in a lesbian family struggles with her self-esteem)

Newman, Leslea. *Gloria Goes to Gay Pride*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991). ISBN 1-55583-185-0. \$7.95 (a child describes a special holiday for her lesbian family and friends)

Newman, Leslea. *Heather Has Two Mommies*. In Other Words Publishing. Northampton, MA. (1989). ISBN 0-06922789-0-4. \$6.95 (a child of lesbian mothers learns of her conception by artificial insemination and the special love in their family)

Newman, Leslea. *Saturday is Pattyday*. New Victoria Publishers, Inc. Norwich, VT. (1993). ISBN 0934678-51-0. \$6.95 (a child struggles to adjust to the separation of her two mommies)

Nomura, Takaaki. *Grandpa's Town*. Kane/Miller Book Publishers, Brooklyn, NY. (1991) ISBN 0-916291-36-7. \$13.95 (a bilingual story of a young boy visiting and caring for his grandfather in a small town in Japan)

Otto, Maryleah. *Never, No Matter What*. Women's Press, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (1988) ISBN 0-88961-133-5. \$5.95. (a child's mother chooses to leave an abusive family situation and go to a women's shelter)

Palmer, Kate. *A Gracious Plenty*. Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (1991). ISBN 0-671-73566-7. \$13.95. (children visit a favorite great aunt who lives alone, never got married, and never had children)

Quinlan, Patricia. *My Dad Takes Care of Me*. Annick Press, Toronto, Canada. ISBN 0-920303-76-5. \$4.95 (a child deals with embarrassment and concern for her father, who has lost his job)

Rohmer, Harriet. *Uncle Nacho's Hat/El Sombrero Del Tio Nacho*. Children's Book Press, San Francisco, CA. ISBN 0-89239-043-3. \$12.95 (a bi-lingual folktale playfully conveying the message of the difficulty old people have in changing their ways)

Severance, Jane. *Lots of Mommies*. Lollipop Power, Chapel Hill, NC. (1983) ISBN 0914996-24X \$5.00. (a young girl living with a group of women who share in her care encounters teasing and triumph at school)

Stanek, Muriel. *I Speak English for M. Mom*. Albert Whitman, Niles, IL (1989) ISBN 0-8075-3659-8. \$10.95 (a Mexican-American child translates for her mother until she learns English)

Valentine, Johnny. *The Day They Put a Tax on Rainbows*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1992) ISBN 1-55583-201-6. \$12.95 (Three original fairy tales with unconventional characters)

Valentine, Johnny. *The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991) ISBN 1-55583-199-0. \$12.95 (five original fairytale type stories with non traditional characters.)

Valentine, Johnny. *Two Moms, the Zark and Me*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1993) ISBN 1-55583-236-9. \$12.95 (a cartoon like story about a child with two moms)

Willhoite, Michael. *Daddy's Roommate*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1990). ISBN 1-55583-178-8. \$14.95 (a child visits his dad and his dad's male partner and learns from his mother that gay is just another kind of loving)

Willhoite, Michael. *Families: A Coloring Book*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1991). ISBN 1-55583-192-3. \$2.95 (pages to color featuring a variety of families)

Willhoite, Michael. *Uncle What-is-It is Coming to Visit*. Alyson Wonderland, Boston, MA (1993) ISBN 1-55583-205-9. \$12.95 (two children encounter comic stereotyping in search of what "gay" means in reference to an upcoming visit from their uncle)

Williams, Vera. *A Chair for My Mother*. Mulberry Books, New York, NY. (1982) ISBN 0-688-04074-8. \$4.95 (a child tells of a fire destroying her home and their life living with grandma while mother works as a waitress and struggles to save money to buy a new chair)

Williams, Vera B. *Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe*. Wm. Morrow. Indianapolis, IN. (1981) ISBN 0688040721. \$3.95 (child, mom, aunt and her child go canoeing and learn about camping)

Williams, Vera B. *Music, Music for Everyone*. Wm Morrow. Indianapolis, IN (1984) ISBN 0 688078 117. \$3.95 (child wants to play a music and dances at party with mom and friends)

Ziefert, Harriet. *Where's Mommy's Truck?* Harper Collins, New York, NY. (1992) ISBN 069400377-8. \$5.95 (a pop-up book showing the different places Mommy drives her truck after dropping her daughter off at child care)

printed on recycled paper  
12/93

Bibliography compiled by Margie Carter, Early Childhood Instructor and Consultant, and member of the Red & Black Books Collective in Seattle, WA. December 1993. Printed on recycled paper.