

Gay and Lesbian Adoption Widely Accepted

Ours is a generation of acceptance and tolerance. Certain controversial "issues" of the past, like gay and lesbian adoption, are now understood and encouraged. Today's society realizes that a person's ability to care for a child, and not his or her sexual orientation, should determine parental rights.

Gay and lesbian adoption is certainly not a new concept. Only in recent years has gay and lesbian adoption been a topic of debate. Perhaps the only reason that it is now discussed so openly, is that the very subject of alternative lifestyles has become a common topic of discussion. Gays and lesbians no longer feel compelled or obligated to hide their lifestyles, and are free to hold the same legal considerations as heterosexual adoptive parents.

Historically, gay and lesbian adoption was a subject of attack by government, agencies, and society in general. In those days (and, sadly, even today) some people thought that children would suffer emotional and behavioral harm if they were not raised in the presence of both a man and a woman. Others have tried in vain to argue that exposing a child to homosexuality at a young age could potentially affect the child's development. These archaic beliefs held that the child would experience negative consequences, suffer from delayed sexual maturity, or even "learn to be gay".

Until recently, many homosexual couples were forced to lie about their personal lives in order to be considered as adoptive parents. One partner would petition for adoption and complete the adoption process, while the other partner posed as a friend or roommate. This tactic could prove successful, but the very act of adopting a child requires full disclosure and honesty from all parties. Being forced to lie about their own fundamental lifestyles put these adoptive parents in a very tense situation.

Fortunately, society's general acceptance of gay and lesbian adoption has changed, leading to more accessible legal entitlements. Gay adoption has become commonplace, and potential parents are free to choose from the three basic processes of adopting a child:

Independent Adoption:

This process involves a third party, but not a social worker or a typical adoption agency. Attorneys and doctors often facilitate independent adoptions, with the final decisions resting on the families involved. This type of adoption is illegal in many states and countries, but there are some areas in the world that will accept and recognize it as a legal process.

International Adoption:

Some studies suggest that this is the most complicated and difficult choice for gay and lesbian couples. When a child from another country is adopted, the adoptive parents must work with an agency. The trick is to find an agency that is willing to deal with an international country, and that will be able to find a child to place with a gay couple. The difficulty lies in the fact that many countries still discriminate against gays and lesbians.

Public Agency Adoption:

This is the most common adoption process, in which the adoption agency and the courts are involved in the decision to grant or deny the adoption. Ideally, these groups and delegates will act in the best interest of the child, and put their own personal biases aside. Some experts suggest that this system is still somewhat subjective toward the attitudes of the agency and state.

Gay and lesbian adoption, although more common and openly discussed, does remain a matter of controversy for some conservative groups. Homosexual couples still often feel the need to hide their lifestyle from homophobic eyes; however, modern trends toward acceptance indicate that the tides are shifting for the better.