



## Transition to Adoptive Parenthood Project Newsletter

### THE TRANSITION TO ADOPTIVE PARENTHOOD PROJECT

We are so happy you are participating in our research. Please keep us informed of how you are doing – We are always interested in hearing your updates AND non-updates!!

#### Recent Adoption-Related Research



Goldberg, A. E., & Smith, J. Z. (2014). Preschool selection considerations and experiences of school mistreatment among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual adoptive parents. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 64-75.

#### PRESCHOOL SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL MISTREATMENT AMONG LESBIAN, GAY, AND HETEROSEXUAL ADOPTIVE PARENTS

By Abbie E. Goldberg, & JuliAnna Z. Smith

**Lesbian, gay, and bisexual parents of preschoolers may be particularly sensitive to family, racial and sexual diversity issues as they evaluate and select preschools for their children.** Additionally, heterosexual adoptive parent families may be especially sensitive to adoption-related stigma and exclusion. **Early childhood educators should recognize the growing diversity of contemporary families and consider adoption, family structure, and race as important components of curriculum development.** Preschool-age children are beginning to develop an understanding of basic concepts such as race, ethnicity, gender, and families, yet their educators are often uncertain about how to enact more inclusive and affirming approaches to LGB families. **Educators and administrators may require additional professional training to increase their knowledge and awareness of LGB and adoptive-parent families for the benefit of their overall approach to teaching.**

Click [HERE](#) to read an abstract regarding this research.

### Newsletter #32, Spring 2014

#### In this Issue...

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#### Recent Adoption-Related Research

As reported by Donaldson Adoption Institute (Jan./Feb., 2014):

#### ADOPTION COMPETENCY: MEANING, CONSUMER VIEWS AND PRACTICE CHANGES

"Adoption Competent Clinical Practice: Defining Its Meaning and Development," by Anne Atkinson, Patricia Gonet, et al., is in the recent, special double issue of *Adoption Quarterly* (Volume 16, Issues 3-4). The authors report on two studies related to adoption competence and a definition developed by a national task force, with 18 domains of adoption-competent knowledge, skills and values. **Eighty-one percent of 485 survey respondents with an adoption connection reported seeing one or more mental health professionals, and only 25 percent reported that all of these were adoption-competent. Forty-nine percent reported that some were and others were not, while the remaining 26 percent reported the providers were not adoption competent.** The article also evaluates changes in clinical practice of 185 participants in the Center for Adoption Support and Education's Training for Adoption Competency (TAC) courses in sites around the country. The practice aspects most influenced by the training were: assessment information collected (94%) and methods (86%); clinical approaches used (85%); and techniques used with children (82%).

Click [HERE](#) to read an abstract regarding this re-

## Recent Adoption-Related Research



As reported by the Donaldson Adoption Institute (Jan./Feb., 2014):

### EXPLORING BIRTH COUNTRIES: THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS FOR HERITAGE TRAVEL FOR CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS ADOPTED INTERNATIONALLY

A 2013 study by Samantha Wilson and Laura Summerhill-Coleman found that **heritage trips are increasingly recognized as beneficial for children adopted internationally for myriad reasons. For example, a large percentage of adults adopted transracially during childhood report birth country travel to be a critical aspect to their ultimate development of positive racial identity.** Although generally perceived to be a helpful experience for youth and families, heritage travel is not always without psychological distress. This article describes the theoretical basis for heritage travel, reviews the emerging literature on the mental health impact of heritage trips, and provides anecdotal vignettes to highlight mental health considerations and implications for heritage travel.

**The myriad emotional reactions noted prior to travel (e.g., excitement, apathy, anxiety) can extend into post-travel life as the child and family work to integrate their travel experiences.** Thus, not only does travel impact the child, it **has the potential for engendering great change within the family.** With continued research to support best practice guidelines regarding the timing and content of heritage travel, adoption professionals will be in a better position to promote adoption adjustment, racial identity, and family affiliation for those who participate in heritage travel. Also, as the critical components of heritage travel are delineated, families and professionals will be in a better position to create "lived experiences" domestically for those who do not participate in heritage travel.

Click [HERE](#) to read an abstract regarding this research.

## Domestic Adoption Policy News

As reported by the Donaldson Adoption Institute (Jan./Feb., 2014):

### FY14 FEDERAL ADOPTION-RELATED APPROPRIATIONS REMAIN MOSTLY LEVEL

The President signed the FY2014 consolidated appropriations bill (HR3547) on Jan. 17. **While Adoption Assistance funding increases somewhat (likely to cover expanded eligibility for federal funding as a result of the AFDC de-link), other programs are level-funded, or suffer relatively small decreases in funding** (FY13 amounts are in parentheses).

- \* Adoption Assistance: \$2.463 billion (\$2.369 billion)
- \* Promoting Safe and Stable Families, approximately 20 percent of which states spend on adoption promotion and support: \$404.785 million (\$407.938 million, not including sequestration cuts)
- \* Adoption Incentives: \$37.943 million (\$40 million)
- \* Adoption Opportunities: \$40.622 million (\$40 million), with \$4 million in discretionary grants "to test intensive and exhaustive child-focused adoptive parent recruitment strategies for children in foster care"
- \* Kinship Guardianship: \$124 million (\$123 million)
- \* Social Services Block Grant: \$1.7 billion (\$1.7 billion) (SSBG expenditures for adoption services were \$45 million in 2009, the latest figures available)
- \* Child Welfare Services: \$268.735 million (\$282 million) (while this is a flexible child welfare funding source and can be used to "promote the safety, permanence, and well-being of children in foster care and adoptive families," states only planned to spend \$7.678 million on adoption promotion and support and \$11.79 million on foster/adoptive parent recruitment and training in FY12.)

Read the FY2014 consolidated appropriations bill [HERE](#).



## International Adoption Policy News

As reported by News-Medical.net (March, 2014)

### UCLA CREATES NEW PROGRAM THAT HELPS ADOPTIVE PARENTS, CHILDREN NAVIGATE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION PROCESS

With thousands of internationally adopted children arriving in the United States each year, there is a growing demand for a specialized health-care support system that helps adoptive parents and children navigate through the international adoption process.

Now, Dr. Yvonne Bryson and Dr. Nava Yeganeh, pediatric infectious disease specialists at Mattel Children's Hospital UCLA, have created a new program to meet this need.

**The goal of the hospital's new International Adoption and Travel Clinic is to provide parents with a medical-based support system as they embark on their adoption journey.**

**"Children adopted internationally, many from developing countries, may have spent months to years in orphanages and other state-run institutions; their medical histories may be incomplete, and many need specific infectious disease-related attention,"** said Bryson, professor and chief of pediatric infectious diseases at Mattel. We also help families prepare for international travel, with guidance on recommended vaccines and other medical preparations."

Once parents arrive in a foreign country to pick up their child, they are typically required to stay for weeks or months before the process is finalized. During this period, they spend time with their new child and will invariably have questions about the child's health and development. Family members may also experience common travel-related illnesses. Physicians from the UCLA clinic are available throughout this time to communicate by e-mail with the parents to answer questions and offer medical expertise.

"Adoption is an emotional journey, and our goal is to provide the families with medical guidance and support during this life-changing event," said Yeganeh, a clinical instructor of pediatric infectious diseases at UCLA. "We hope to make the process smoother and help ease some of the stress and uncertainty."

Click [HERE](#) to read the rest of the article, and [HERE](#) to view the UCLA Mattel Children's International Adoption and Travel Clinic website.

## LGBT Research News

Goldberg, A. E., & Smith, J. Z. (2013). Work conditions and mental health in lesbian and gay dual-earner parents. *Family Relations*, 62, 727-740.

### WORK CONDITIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH IN LESBIAN AND GAY DUAL-EARNER PARENTS

By Abbie E. Goldberg & JuliAnna Z. Smith

This study was the first to examine the relationship between work conditions (including perceived supervisor support, time urgency/job pressure, and LGBT workplace climate) and mental health in dual-earner lesbian and gay parents ( $N = 86$ ). **The study found that perceived supervisor support was negatively related to mental health problems, such that parents who reported greater support reported fewer depressive and anxious symptoms.** Under certain conditions (namely, working in a very gay-unfriendly workplace), working a very high pressured job was related to higher depressive symptoms. **Likewise, under certain conditions (reporting high levels of internalized homophobia), being very out at work was related to higher anxious symptoms. Gay men reported higher levels of symptoms than lesbians.**

To read the full article, click [HERE](#).



## LGBT Research News



Goldberg, A. E., & Smith, J. Z. (2014). Predictors of parenting stress in lesbian, gay, and heterosexual adoptive parents during early parenthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

### PREDICTORS OF PARENTING STRESS IN LESBIAN, GAY, AND HETEROSEXUAL ADOPTIVE PARENTS DURING EARLY PARENTHOOD

By Abbie E. Goldberg & JuliAnna Z. Smith

This longitudinal study examined parent-reported child characteristics (measured postplacement) and parent and family characteristics (measured preplacement) as predictors of postplacement parenting stress and change in parenting stress across three time points during the first 2 years of adoptive parenthood, among 148 couples (50 lesbian, 40 gay, 58 heterosexual) who were first-time parents. Children were, on average, 5.61 months when placed, and 2.49 years at the 2 year postplacement follow-up. **Findings revealed that parents who had been placed with older children and parents who perceived severe emotional/behavioral problems in their children reported more post-placement stress. In addition, parents who reported fewer depressive symptoms, more love for their partners, and more family and friend support during the preplacement period had less postplacement stress.** Parenting stress decreased for parents who perceived severe emotional/behavioral problems in their children, but it increased somewhat for those who reported developmental problems in their children.

To read the full article, click [HERE](#).

## LGBT Policy News

As reported by The Detroit News (March, 2014)

### GAY MARRIAGE BAN STRUCK DOWN

Detroit — **A U.S. district judge has overturned Michigan's bans on gay marriage and same-sex adoption**, aligning the state with a growing number in which prohibitions have been challenged and overturned.

In his 31-page written opinion, [Judge Bernard] Friedman said the constitutional amendment known as the Michigan Marriage Act, passed by 2.7 million state voters in 2004, was unconstitutional because it denied gays and lesbians equal protection under the law.

**The judge said the disapproval of same-sex marriages didn't matter under the eyes of the law.**

"Many Michigan residents have religious convictions whose principles govern the conduct of their daily lives and inform their own viewpoints about marriage," the judge wrote. **"Nonetheless, these views cannot strip other citizens of the guarantees of equal protection under the law."**

The ruling by Friedman stems from a lawsuit filed by Hazel Park nurses April DeBoer, 42, and Jayne Rowse, 49, who are living as a couple, raising three special-needs children they adopted as individuals. **Their lawsuit challenged the constitutionality of the laws banning gay marriage and adoption by same-sex couples.**

**"We are going to get married when we can stay married," said DeBoer. "This is a happy day.** We don't want to speculate. We want to get married when we know our marriage is going to be forever binding. "We did this for the protection of our children," said DeBoer of their efforts to overturn the law banning same-sex couples from adoption. **"We do want to get married, but this is about our children."**

Click [HERE](#) to read the full article, and [HERE](#) to read the judge's ruling.



**LGBT Policy News**

As reported by Andrew Flores of the *Washington Post* via the Williams Institute (March, 2014)

**SUPPORT FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS INCREASING FASTER THAN EVER BEFORE**

In the past months, there have been two pivotal U.S. Supreme Court cases and numerous lawsuits in several states by same-sex couples seeking marriage recognition. **The recognition of marriage for same-sex couples for federal purposes is now in effect.** Thus, it's a good time to take stock of public opinion about same-sex marriage.

The national trend using all surveys asking opinions on same-sex marriage also suggests **that the majority of Americans now supports same-sex marriage. In fact, in the past year, the change in support has increased more rapidly than ever.** (The graph excludes questions that separate out marriage equality, civil unions, or no recognition — but these questions also show that support for same-sex marriage is increasing.)

Click [HERE](#) to read the full article.

Support for Same-Sex Marriage: 2013-2014 Polls

Agency	Date	Favor	Oppose
PRRI	01/28/2013	52%	42%
CBS News	02/06/2013	54%	39%
Fox News	02/25/2013	46%	46%
Quinnipiac	02/27/2013	47%	43%
ABC News/Washington Post	03/07/2013	58%	36%
Pew Research Center	03/13/2013	49%	44%
CNN	03/15/2013	53%	44%
Fox News	03/17/2013	49%	46%
CBS News	03/20/2013	53%	39%
Quinnipiac	03/26/2013	50%	41%
NBC News/WSJ	04/05/2013	53%	42%
Quinnipiac	04/25/2013	45%	47%
ABC News/Washington Post	05/01/2013	55%	40%
Pew Research Center	05/01/2013	51%	42%
Gallup	05/02/2013	53%	45%
PRRI	05/15/2013	52%	43%
CBS News	05/31/2013	51%	44%
Bloomberg	05/31/2013	52%	41%
ABC News/Washington Post	06/05/2013	57%	40%
CNN	06/11/2013	55%	44%
USA Today	06/27/2013	55%	40%
<b>Pre-SCOTUS Average</b>		<b>52%</b>	<b>42%</b>
Quinnipiac	06/28/2013	49%	44%
Gallup	07/10/2013	54%	43%
CBS News	07/18/2013	55%	39%
Bloomberg	09/20/2013	55%	36%
PRRI	11/12/2013	53%	41%
CBS News	02/19/2014	56%	39%
ABC News/Washington Post	02/23/2014	59%	32%
<b>Post-SCOTUS Average</b>		<b>54%</b>	<b>41%</b>

**Summer Programs for Diverse Families**



“Family Week is a week-long event where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) parented families come together in Provincetown, MA. For families, this time can foster friendships and strategies to provide support and inspiration for how to address the unique challenges that come up for LGBTQ families.”

Click [HERE](#) for more information about COLAGE.



“The “jewel in the crown” of Pact’s educational programs is Pact Family Camp: a weeklong summer retreat where adopted children of color and their families can share their experiences while learning from experts and each other. Many families have told us that their time at Camp offers them a community they can’t find anywhere else.”

Click [HERE](#) for more information about PACT.

“At Camp Common Ground, we believe that all-inclusive family vacation resorts are missing a few things—like community, nature, creativity, and eco-friendly fun! When you spend your family vacation with Camp Common Ground, you’ll get all those things and more—without having to go any further than Vermont! Nestled in the heart of New England, Camp Common Ground is the ultimate destination!”



Click [HERE](#) for more information about Camp Common Ground.

“Camp Highlight is place just for children of LGBT families! Our one week sleepaway camp allows campers to enjoy a range of fun recreational activities while meeting others from families just like theirs! We offer swimming, archery, arts and crafts, dance, sports, and so much more. All the while, campers between the ages of 8 and 15 are making new friends and developing their independence, confidence, and responsibility. Our 2014 season is August 16 through August 23. The camp is located just outside of Reading, PA.

Please visit our [website](#) for registration information.”

## Quick Ideas for Nurturing and Connection!

From spoonful.com (March, 2014)

### Backyard Bird Feeder

Total time: 1 hr.

Spoon-feed your winged neighbors with this home-made birdseed dispenser.

#### What you'll need:

- \* Clean 1-liter soda bottle
- \* Craft knife
- \* 2 wooden spoons
- \* small eye screw
- \* Length of twine for hanging



#### Instructions:

1. Start by drawing a 1/2-inch asterisk on the side of a clean 1-liter soda bottle, about 4 inches from the bottom. Rotate the bottle 90 degrees and draw another asterisk 2 inches from the bottom. Draw a 1-inch-wide circle opposite each asterisk, as shown.



2. Use a craft knife to slit the asterisk lines and cut out the circles (a parent's job). Insert a wooden spoon handle first through each hole and then through the opposite asterisk, as shown.

3. Remove the bottle cap and twist a small eye screw into the top of it for hanging.

4. Finally, fill your feeder with birdseed, recap it, and use a length of twine to hang it from a tree.

Click [HERE](#) for more craft ideas and other great articles.

## Get Active Outdoors!

From realsimple.com (March, 2014)

The weather is warming up and everything's turning green. Shed your winter coat and get started on this list of fun ways to enjoy the spring season.

#### • The Great Outdoors

- Plant something green
- See the cherry blossoms
- Have a picnic at the park
- Take a hike
- Play softball
- Ride a bike
- Visit a farm to see the animals
- Walk on a deserted beach

#### • Nostalgic

- Fly a kite
- Look for four-leaf clovers
- Jump in puddles
- Get dirt under your fingernails
- Blow bubbles
- Climb a tree
- Find a playground and swing on the swings
- Feed the ducks at a pond
- Wade in a creek
- Draw pictures on the sidewalk with chalk
- Skip stones across a pond

#### • Just Because

- Listen to the rain
- Watch bumblebees at work in a garden
- Spot a rainbow
- Notice the trees budding
- Listen to the birds singing
- Feel the sun on your face
- Leave your windows open to catch a spring breeze
- Visit the zoo

## New Poll!

### **What would you like to know about YOU, our participants?**

In the past we've reported in our newsletters interesting tidbits such as how much you all are sleeping after you become parents, pie charts of where you all live, by region, etc. **What would YOU like to know about the adoptive parents in our study as a whole?**

Please email responses to Abbie (agoldberg@clarku.edu). We will report the results in the Summer newsletter. And, if you have ideas for future polls, send them along!

## TAPP Team Updates

We have been busy in the TAPP research lab! Here are some events we are looking forward to:

- \* The New Worlds of Adoption Conference (at UMass Amherst), takes place April 12, 2014. We will present our research at the conference and also learn about the effects of early stressful experiences on children's neurobiological and psychological development.
- Click [HERE](#) to visit the New Worlds of Adoption Conference's webpage.
- \* We'll present research findings on lesbian and gay parents' perceived support in the workplace at the Work and Family Researcher's Network Conference. This conference will be held in Philadelphia, June 19 through June 21st.

Click [HERE](#) to visit the Work and Family Researchers Network Conference's webpage.



Please send us your updates.  
If you have any questionnaires lying around,  
please send them back!  
We are thinking of you all.

-Abbie & the Transition to Adoptive  
Parenthood Project team  
(April, Katie & Alyssa)

PS: We're on **Facebook!** Even if you don't have a page of your own, you can look at the TAPP Facebook page. To check us out, click [here](#).

## Highlights

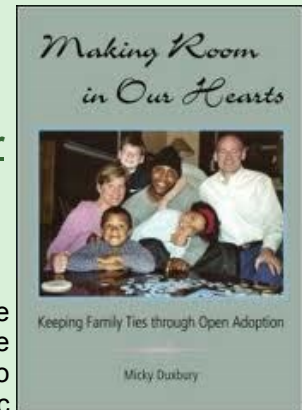
## BOOK IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

[Making Room in Our Hearts: Keeping Family Ties through Open Adoption](#)

"Adopted persons face challenges their entire lives as they struggle to answer the most basic question: Who am I? The

hope of open adoption is that adopted children will develop stronger identities if they have the opportunity to develop healthy ongoing relationships with their families of origin. *Making Room in Our Hearts* offers an intimate look at how these relationships evolve over time, with real-life stories from families who have experienced open adoption first-hand.

This book helps both adoptive and birth parents address their fears and concerns, while offering them the support to put the child's psychological and spiritual needs at the center of adoption. Based on interviews with more than one hundred adopted children, birth and adoptive parents, extended families, professionals and experts, the book is an effective and invaluable resource for those considering open adoption, those experiencing it, and professionals in the field. Openness has altered the landscape of adoption, and *Making Room in Our Hearts* will help us catch up to the reality that is open adoption today."



**The results are in!**

**In our last newsletter we wanted to hear how you commemorated the New Year. Here's what we asked:**

**Did you and your family set goals or resolutions together for the new year? If so, what types of goals or resolutions did you set? In what other ways did your family celebrate the new year?**

**Many families shared with us but we especially loved this response:** "We set some "resolutions" in terms of: 12 dates; 12 family hikes; more FUN!; more camp-outs. January held two "in-town" hikes in beautiful parks & one date - so we are well on our way!"

**Thank you all for participating in our poll!**