

SPRING 2022

TAPP NEWSLETTER



Abbie Goldberg, Ph.D.



Recent Adoption Research

By A. Santona, G. Tognasso, C. L. Miscioscia, D. Russo, & L. Gorla (2022) *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*

TALKING ABOUT THE BIRTH FAMILY SINCE THE BEGINNING: THE COMMUNICATIVE OPENNESS IN THE NEW ADOPTIVE FAMILY

Communicative openness within the adoptive family changes over time and helps the child explore his/her history. We aimed to evaluate whether adoptive families communicate about specific adoption-related themes from the beginning of their lives as a family. We created an instrument to track the communication process during the first year of adoption, involving a sample of 537 internationally adopted children (313 males, 224 females, mean age of adoption: 4.9 years) at two time points: six (T1) and twelve (T2) months after adoption.

Our results suggest that in the first year of placement, children express memories about the past but tend to not speak about their birth families. We discovered a significant difference in communication about the biological family between the two points. The presence of adoptive parents who speak about it impacts the child's questions about the past and whether the child speaks about his/her biological family. Then, in the first year of adoption, the presence of an adoptive parent who communicates openly helps the child to ask questions and share his/her thoughts.

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

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Hot Off the Press: New Research from the TAPP Lab!

By A.E. Goldberg, D. Brodzinsky, J. Singer, & P. Crozier (2021) *Developmental Child Welfare*

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILD WELFARE-INVOLVED FAMILIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENT-CHILD REUNIFICATION AND CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS

Objective: The current study examines the perspectives of 196 child welfare-involved professionals (77 attorneys, 99 caseworkers, and 20 therapists) in the United States about the impact of COVID-19 on parents of origin, children, foster parents, and child welfare professionals. Particular attention was paid to the implications of COVID-19 and associated challenges for parent-child contact and reunification.

Background: COVID-19 has had significant implications for families involved in the child welfare system. In response to COVID-19, US child welfare agencies and courts instituted immediate suspension or significant reduction of face-to-face family time for children in foster care – actions that often failed to account for individual family circumstances and ultimately isolated children from their families.

Results: More than half of participants worried about their own personal safety and health amidst COVID-19, and more than three-quarters expressed concerns about the well-being of child welfare-involved families. Participants, especially attorneys, expressed concerns about parent-child contact and disruptions to reunification. In-person parent-child visits had all but ceased during the early part of the pandemic, and participants identified barriers to effective virtual visits, including lack of foster parent oversight, technology issues, and children's developmental stage and/or lack of engagement. Participants, especially child welfare workers, voiced concerns about children's mental health and educational outcomes amidst the pandemic

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

Other New Publications by Members of the TAPP Team

By K. R. Allen, & A. E. Goldberg (2021) *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*

APART, BUT STILL TOGETHER: SEPARATED PARENTS LIVING IN LIMBO DURING COVID-19

Objective: In this exploratory study of 14 women who completed an online survey of open- and closed ended questions regarding the divorce process and parenting challenges during COVID-19, we were interested in examining how mothers who are in the process of separating describe and navigate the challenges they face during COVID-19 when they are not yet able to separate from and live apart from their ex-spouses.

Background: During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents face unprecedented challenges linked to social isolation, uncertainty about the future, and financial, employment, and school-related stress. Individuals who planned to separate and divorce before the pandemic now find their lives on hold.

Results: Four themes were generated that tell their collective story. First, the women experienced a pile-up of challenges that reflected both anticipated events and transitions associated with seeking a divorce as well as unanticipated challenges as a result of living through COVID-19. Second, they narrated this pile-up of stressors as an endless process of living in limbo, with tremendous uncertainty about the future. Third, they revealed their resilience—the flip side of a stress paradigm—by finding creative strategies and solutions to navigating parenting and relational dissolution, while still living together, during COVID-19. Finally, they reached a breaking point in the sense that they were expected to come up with and execute all possible solutions on their own—and identified that more coordinated, supportive societal level responses were necessary to help families navigate the pandemic and its aftermath.

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

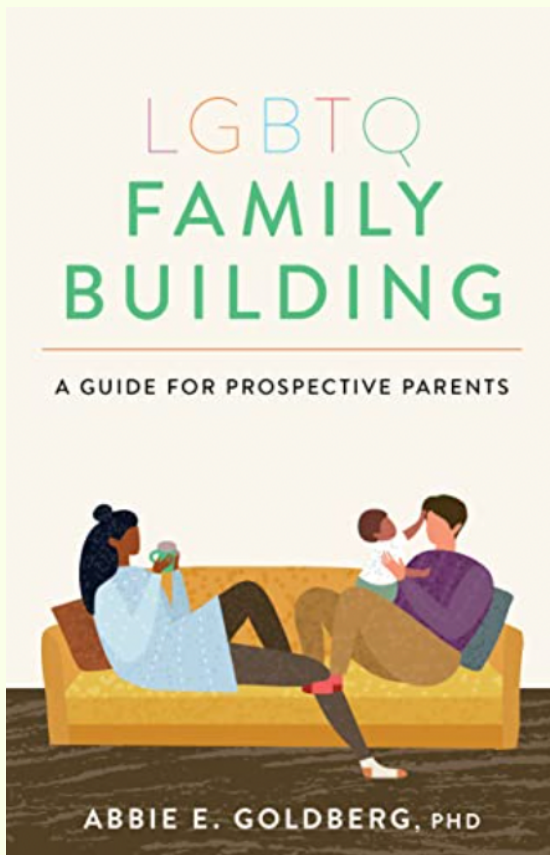
Message From Abbie



Abbie has been busy in a variety of capacities. On February 24, she delivered a talk (via Zoom), “Adoptive families and schools: What can parents and teachers do to strengthen family-school partnerships and promote inclusion?” which was attended by many teachers, adoptive parents, and therapists. She has been busy talking to the media, most recently about the harmful effects of the anti-trans bills and “Don’t Say Gay” bills that are proliferating in so many states. Below are a few recent media appearances. Also, in case you didn’t catch it: Abbie was interviewed by Dawn Davenport for her podcast “Creating a family,” on LGBTQ adoption and foster care, in December!

Abbie has been trying to stay sane through running, making jewelry, and buying concert tickets. Abbie has also been working with teachers around the state and beyond around issues of LGBTQ and adoption inclusion in schools. If you think your school could use some help in this area, please share her new website, www.teachallfamilies.com, with them, and let them know that she is available for consultation and learning circles (i.e., where teachers talk about how they are implementing the tools on the site). See below for information on her new book!

LGBTQ FAMILY BUILDING: A GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE PARENTS



From surrogacy and adoption, to transgender pregnancy and finding child care, parenting as an LGBTQ person is complex. This book is an authoritative, comprehensive, and easy-to-read guide to parenthood and family building for LGBTQ people.

The path to becoming a parent is complicated for LGBTQ people. Some LGBTQ people don't consider parenthood because of stereotypes and barriers, while others are interested in parenthood but unsure about the first steps or overwhelmed by the path to take.

This book provides LGBTQ parents and prospective parents with the detailed, evidence-based knowledge they need to navigate the transition to parenthood, and help their children thrive. Dr. Abbie E. Goldberg, psychologist and researcher, uses the results of her LGBTQ Family Building Project to help challenge traditional beliefs that have often been weaponized against LGBTQ people to prevent or discourage them from becoming parents. She walks readers through the various steps and decision points in becoming a parent, describes key research findings on family building, and offers key questions and reader-friendly checklists to easily enable readers to evaluate the LGBTQ friendliness and overall “fit” of adoption agencies, health care providers, day cares, and other institutions.

Click [HERE](#) to pre-order.

TAPP Team Updates



Some of Dr. Goldberg's Graduate Students at Nora's Wedding!
 Pictured: Maddie, Nora, Alex (Reihonna's partner), Haylie, and Reihonna

Lea (1st year PhD Student) - Lea is a first-year clinical psychology PhD student. Lea has been busy conducting interviews with parents and adoptive adolescents about their lived experiences. She has been working on disseminating Abbie's website (<https://teachallfamilies.com/>) to school administrators and organizations in the Northeast. Outside of her studies, Lea has been enjoying baking yummy treats, going on winter walks, and playing Wordle. She's excited for longer/warmer days and spring blooms!

Maddie (2nd year PhD Student) - Maddie is finishing up her second year as a doctoral student in Clinical Psychology. She is really enjoying the opportunity to interview TAPP kiddos, as she hopes to focus her career on the mental health needs of children and adolescents! She continues to make steady progress on her master's thesis about the gendered parenting practices of LGBTQ+ parents, and recently accepted an internship at UMass Medical School's student counseling program, where she will continue her clinical training in the Fall.

Haylie (3rd year PhD student) - Haylie is in the midst of her third year, and recently submitted a paper with Dr. Goldberg using TAPP data surrounding how lesbian, gay, and heterosexual adoptive parents communicate about puberty. She is enjoying her clinical work this year at UMass Medical School, and has recently accepted an internship at McLean Hospital, where she is excited to provide DBT to high-risk youth and their families.

Nora (4th year PhD student) - Nora is midway through her 4th year at Clark. She recently coordinated a submission on behalf of the lab to the National Council of Family Relations' conference on our work on family building among queer families and on adopted families' experiences of the pandemic! She is looking forward to proposing a dissertation topic on effective ways to counsel potential same-sex couples on choosing between known versus unknown donors! Finally, she is continuing her clinical work with the VA in Bedford, MA with an emphasis on substance abuse and trauma.

Melissa (7th year PhD student) - Melissa received her PhD in Clinical Psychology in December. She is now practicing as a therapist in Chicago and working toward becoming a licensed psychologist, as well as preparing to publish papers from her dissertation research on consensually non-monogamous parents. Melissa will miss being part of the TAPP lab, but has so appreciated being part of this research and getting to know the TAPP families over the past six and a half years!

Reihonna (7th year PhD student) - Reihonna is a seventh year Clinical Psychology student. She is currently at a full-time clinical internship at Yale University's Young Adult Services where she provides clinical services to children and young adults including many current and former foster youth. She has been invited to stay at Yale for her postdoctoral training. She is also finishing her dissertation on the adult sibling relationships of former foster youth.

Adoption in the News

By A. Liptak (2022) *The New York Times*

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR CHALLENGE TO LAW ON ADOPTING NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN

The Supreme Court agreed on Monday to hear a challenge to the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, which makes it hard to remove Native American children from their parents, their tribes and their heritage.

The law, which calls for special procedures in adoptions, was rooted in the sovereignty of Indian nations and a history of abusive child welfare practices involving Native American children. Before the law was enacted, hundreds of thousands of Native children were taken from their homes, sometimes by force, and placed in institutions or with families with no ties to their tribes.

Family courts ordinarily base their decisions on the best interests of the child before them. The 1978 law said that where Native American children are concerned, those interests include protecting their relationships with their tribes.

"The tribe has an interest in the child which is distinct from but on a parity with the interest of the parents," Justice William J. Brennan Jr. wrote in a 1989 decision, *Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians v. Holyfield*. This was, Justice Brennan added, "a relationship that many non-Indians find difficult to understand."

Legal scholars say that if the rationale for striking down the law survives, it could also threaten laws that guard tribal casinos and water and land rights.

Three states — Texas, Louisiana and Indiana — and seven people sued the federal government to challenge the law.

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

International Adoption News

By L. de Leon (2022) *9 News*

CASTLE ROCK FAMILY'S PLAN TO ADOPT CHILDREN FROM UKRAINE ON PAUSE DUE TO INVASION

Initially, Amy Martin said, she and her husband were not at a point where they were thinking about adoption, and were just going to foster.

"But then as time went by, we realized the time was right, and she and her sisters — we met them and hosted them over Christmas and fell in love with them, just like her, and realized that we needed to go ahead and adopt them," Martin recalled.

She's referring to the three sisters that she has been working to adopt recently through Centennial-based CCAI Adoption Services and Project 143.

For safety reasons, she wishes to not reveal their identities right now. The Martins hosted one of the sisters over the summer, then all three together over the holidays, forming a bond that makes the war in Ukraine that much harder to take in.

"Very long, very stressful. We have contact with the oldest, but we have no contact with the younger two. They're in separate orphanages, so that's been really hard," Martin said.

Martin explained that normally, it's a 10 to 12 month process to complete the international adoption, but with the conflict escalating, they worked fast.

She said. "We knew this was coming, that things weren't looking great over there, and we didn't want to send them back at all. We had hoped that would work out. But legally, we couldn't. We couldn't get the paperwork done to do that in time. So we just had to just do the adoption paperwork as fast as we could."

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

Foster Care In The News

By P. Palmer (2022) *Eyewitness News, ABC 7*

'BLIND REMOVAL' PROGRAM SEEKS TO REMEDY RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY IN LA COUNTY CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Children in danger are often removed from their homes by governmental agencies. But is the system fair? There's a controversial new remedy being used, the "blind removal" solution.

Racial disproportionality has been a long-standing issue within child welfare services. Black children account for only 7 percent of the general population in Los Angeles County, but account for 24 percent of child welfare services population.

White children account for 20 percent of the general population, but only 11 percent of child welfare services population.

In an effort to address the disparity, child welfare workers in Nassau County, New York conducted a five-year study to test what's called a "blind removal" process. A caseworker does not disclose the race, name, or location to describe a family, beyond information about current and past allegations, and risk factors.

The resulting data from the study is said to be the most significant decrease in racial disproportionality within the Nassau county system ever.

Now, L.A. County plans to test "blind removal," working with Dr. Tyrone Howard, of UCLA's Pritzker Center for Strengthening Children and Families, to pilot the program in at least one regional Department of Children and Family Services office.

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

By H. Jordan (2022) *Saginaw and Bay City News*

NEW AFFORDABLE APARTMENT COMPLEX WILL BE HOME FOR STUDENTS AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Students who are aging out of foster care will soon have a new affordable housing option in Bay City.

Rescue Ministries of Mid-Michigan is developing a new apartment complex, to be called Labadie Lofts, with the assistance of a \$50,000 grant from the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation.

The complex will be located at 400 Madison Ave. in Bay City, which Rescue Ministries of Mid-Michigan owns, and leasing is slated for summer 2022, according to a news release from the organization.

The development is meant to assist young adults who are aging out of foster care and pursuing full-time education or vocational training by providing them with clean, safe, supportive and affordable housing, the release states. The apartments will help supplement Samaritan Youth Shelter. CEO Dan Streeter expressed appreciation for the Strosacker Foundation grant.

"There is currently an unmet need of independent, but supportive, housing for young adults aging out of foster care, as they begin a path of adulthood that includes making many vital, life-altering, decisions," the release states. "The goal of the apartments will be to provide housing that encourages a successful launch to life."

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

Same-Sex Adoption News

By S. Hardach (2022) *BBC*

HOW 'FAMILY' IS BEING REDEFINED FOR THE MODERN WORLD

Families that were once seen as groundbreaking, experimental or taboo are speaking up, and changing how we think about parenting.

Gee Roberts, a 23-year-old medical student in Exeter, England, is planning her wedding. Her mum and dad will be there, of course, and another important guest: Suzanne, her surrogate, the woman who gave birth to her in 1998.

"She's a really important person in my life, and she's a really important part of my family," says Roberts, who was one of the first few hundred babies to be born via modern surrogacy in the UK.

When outsiders are confused about her parentage, she draws them a little family tree. To her, it's simple: "[There's] my mum, and then I've got my surrogate, and they're different people."

Like every new family form that emerged in recent decades, surrogacy has caused much controversy – including over the potential psychological impact on the children born of it. That discomfort around new types of family is partly linked to a sense of uncertainty.

Whether created with the help of new technologies or thanks to social change, these families often face the accusation that they are risking the wellbeing of future generations. After all, if no one has ever conceived or raised a child this way before, then how can we possibly predict the consequences?

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

By C. Yang (2022) *ABC News*

SAME-SEX COUPLES PUSH FOR ADOPTION RIGHTS IN TAIWAN AFTER LANDMARK CASE OFFERS HOPE

It is with a joyful smile that Tsou Tzung-Han recalls the story of how he first met his husband.

"Before I moved into the rental house, my landlord told me a handsome guy is living here, but he's straight," said Mr. Tsou, host of the *My Gay Marriage* podcast.

"I said, 'It's all good, I have to concentrate on writing my thesis anyway.'

"Later I developed a crush on him. Soon we got closer and then we were together."

The couple tied the knot in a mass wedding ceremony in Taipei in November 2016, and their marriage was formally recognized after Taiwan legalized same-sex marriage in 2019.

Keen to expand their family, the happy couple are now trying to have a baby through overseas surrogacy, a logistically difficult, expensive process made even harder by the pandemic. It could ultimately cost them more than \$250,000.

Unfortunately for Mr. Tsou and his husband, it's their only option because, while gay marriage is now legal in Taiwan, adoption by married gay couples is not.

However, there are signs the law could be shifting.

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

LGBT Family Research News

By M. Assink, E. D. Rothblum, B. D. M. Wilson, N. Gartrell & H. M. W. Bos (2022) *Journal of Homosexuality*

MENTAL HEALTH OF LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND OTHER-IDENTIFIED PARENTS AND NON-PARENTS FROM A POPULATION-BASED STUDY

Studies have compared sexual minority mothers (mostly lesbian) to heterosexual mothers on mental health, but little research has compared sexual minority women with and without children.

This was the first study to compare sexual minority women who did or did not have children, using a population based sample with three age cohorts. Unlike prior convenience studies, this study finds parents more likely to be bisexual, in a relationship with a man, and non-urban. Bisexual parents scored higher than lesbian parents on psychological distress and lower on life satisfaction and happiness; they also reported less connection to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

Among lesbians, the oldest non-parents reported more happiness and less psychological distress than the youngest non-parents. Parents with other identities perceived more social support from friends and reported lower levels of internalized homophobia than bisexual parents.

The results will help professionals and policymakers understand how parenthood status affects women across sexual identities.

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

By C. J. Patterson & R. H. Farr (2021) *College of Arts & Sciences*

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, AND FOSTER CARE: WHAT CAN SOCIAL SCIENCE OFFER IN A CASE LIKE FULTON V. THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA?

How does society care for children whose parents cannot provide adequate support and supervision for them? And, as raised in the context of *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* (2021), how can factual information and empirical findings of social science help legal professionals to address these questions? In this article, we first consider ways that child welfare systems function in the United States today, including a brief summary of some issues presented by the *Fulton* case itself, and then consider factual information and empirical research findings that might bear on the case. While empirical research findings can never be the only factor in legal decision making, they may provide information that can assist the court in reaching decisions. In this article, we seek to evaluate the extent to which this may be true in cases like *Fulton*.

Key points for the family court community:

- Empirical data from social science research are often pertinent to court decisions in foster care cases.
- Empirical data from social science research were particularly relevant to *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*.
- If the best interests of children are to prevail, then findings from empirical research suggest that child welfare agencies should search out, welcome, and support LGBTQ+ prospective foster parents, rather than turning them away.

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

Parent Resources:



By New York State.gov (2021)

WHAT DOES A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP LOOK LIKE?

Healthy relationships involve honesty, trust, respect and open communication between partners and they take effort and compromise from both people. There is no imbalance of power. Partners respect each other's independence, can make their own decisions without fear of retribution or retaliation, and share decisions. If or when a relationship ends, there is no stalking or refusal to let the other partner go.

Learn more about boundaries, communication, trust, and consent in the following sections!

Click [HERE](#) to read more.

TEACHING TOOLS/RESOURCES FOR MAKING SCHOOLS INCLUSIVE OF LGBTQ+ FAMILIES: BUILDING & STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

There are over 3 million LGBTQ+ parents raising school-age children in the U.S. That is why I am excited to share a new resource with you, *Teach All Families*, a website dedicated to helping parents make schools more inclusive of families with LGBTQ+ parents and other diverse families, including adoptive families. Dr. Abbie Goldberg developed this resource based on her 20+ years of research on the real life experiences of LGBTQ-headed families across the country. The website offers practical guidance and helpful downloadable materials to parents, teachers, and school administrators.

Dr. Abbie Goldberg created this website for parents and teachers who want to make schools more inclusive of LGBTQ+ parent and other diverse families. See below for a link to the website and for a foster care/adoption fact sheet for K-12 teachers that Dr. Goldberg and colleagues recently created.

Click [HERE](#) to view the website.

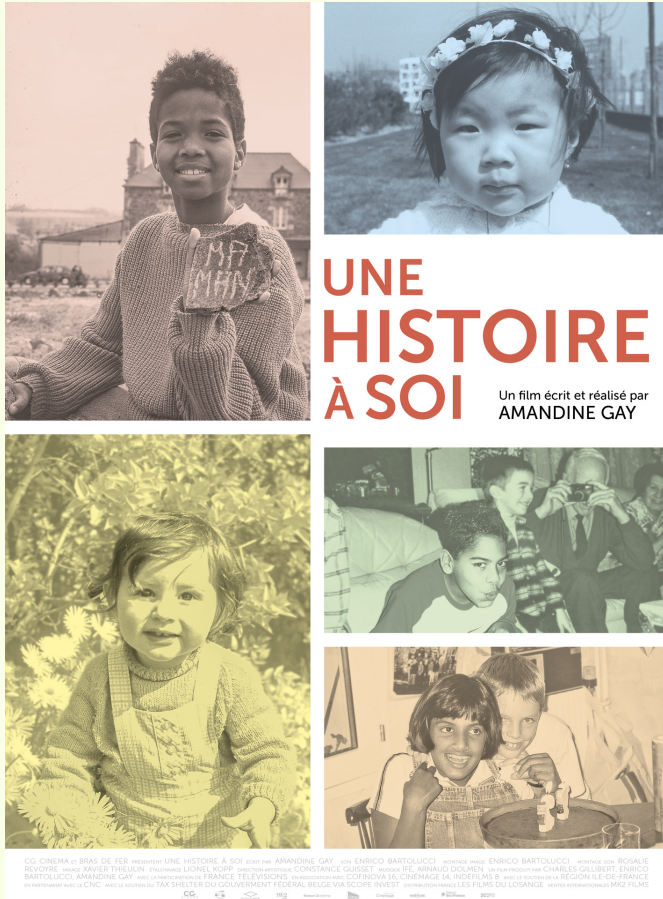
By G. Bass, A. E. Goldberg, H. D., Grotevant, & J. Dolan (2022) *Rudd Adoption Research Program*

ADOPTION/FOSTER CARE FACT SHEET

Educators can have a significant impact on long-term outcomes for adopted/foster children. School engagement is one of the best predictors of lifelong wellbeing, so it is vital that classrooms are environments where students thrive. Adoption researchers contributed to creating this fact sheet aimed at K-12 educators. This fact sheet serves as an introduction to foster care and adoption for educators, for inclusive and trauma-informed classrooms

Click [HERE](#) to read more.

Watch List: Adoption Movies



[A STORY OF ONE'S OWN \(2021\)](#)

A Story of One's Own unmask the controversy surrounding international adoption, as five adoptees raised in France share life-stories that reveal the overlooked impacts of cultural uprooting through adoption.

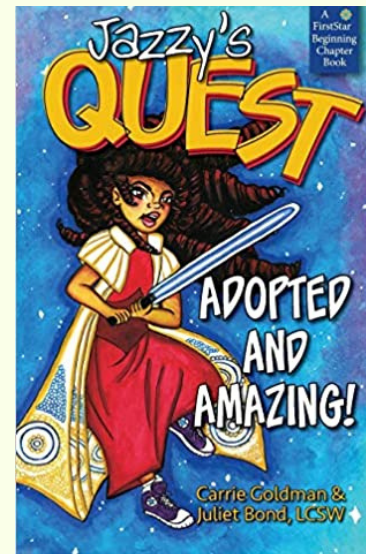
Directed by Amandine Gay, who was herself an international adoptee, this reflective documentary is explored through the voice-over of its subjects. As photos and home-made videos scrawl across the screen, the film offers a penetrative insight into the many existential challenges faced by these individuals assimilating into foreign countries and families.

Click [HERE](#) to the full review.

At the Library: Adoption Books

[JAZZY'S QUEST: ADOPTED & AMAZING!](#)

By Carrie Goldman & Juliet Bond (2015)



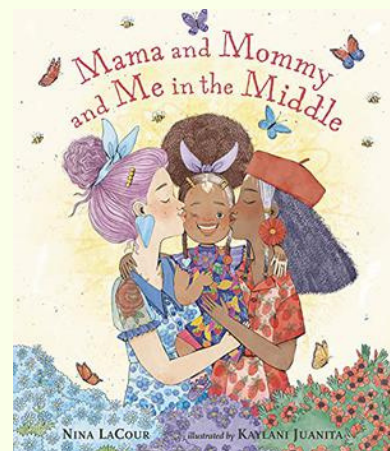
What makes you amazing? That's what adoptee Jazzy Armstrong has to figure out before the big community talent show. Is she musical like her parents and sisters? Can she score goals in soccer like her birth brother? Or is there something unique about Jazzy that is nothing like her families?

Click [HERE](#) to read more!

[MAMA AND MOMMY AND ME IN THE MIDDLE](#)

By Nina LaCour ; Illustrated by Kaylani Juanita

(2022)



Written by award-winning author, Nina LaCour, and illustrated by Kaylani Juanita, this book tells the tender story of a little girl who stays home with Mama while Mommy goes off on a work trip. The little girl misses her parent dearly until they are finally reunited.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.

POLICY BRIEF: LGBTQ+ PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

By C. J. Patterson, R. H. Farr, & A. E. Goldberg (2021) *National Council on Family Relations*

ABSTRACT

Research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ+) parents and their children has found that both parents and children are generally well adjusted and that they do not differ in well-being or in multiple developmental outcomes from parents and children in the general population. In general, LGBTQ+ parent families living in supportive environments, and families with more social, financial, and legal resources, show the most positive adjustment. The legal climate in the United States for LGBTQ+ people and their families has improved in recent years, but significant legal and practical difficulties remain, including greater poverty among, and pervasive stigma and discrimination toward, families headed by LGBTQ+ parents. Federal, state, and local laws are needed that reduce the likelihood of discrimination against these families, including in domains of housing, education, and parenting. In addition, support is needed for research to explore the full range of experiences among diverse LGBTQ+ parents and their children, and to develop ways to help LGBTQ+ parents and their children to thrive.

TALKING POINTS

- LGBTQ+ parent families and their children are a diverse group.
- Overall, LGBTQ+ parents and their children are as well-adjusted as parents and children in the general population.
- Like others, LGBTQ+ parents and their children fare better when they have adequate resources and when they live in supportive environments.
- Even after the advent of marriage equality in the United States, LGBTQ+ parent families are still more likely than others to live in poverty.
- Supportive federal and state laws, such as a federal nondiscrimination bill, can help LGBTQ+ parents and their children to thrive.
- Increased research funding is needed to explore and to enhance the experiences among a full range of diverse LGBTQ+ parents and their children.

Click [HERE](#) to read the policy brief.



Just For Fun: Spring Activities



RAINY DAY THEMED PARTY IDEAS

Sure, bad weather has been known to ruin parties, but here's one rainy day party solution that may actually have you hoping for some rain. This rain party theme brings everything there is to love about rainy days right into your party space.

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



NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT

When children learn to appreciate and enjoy nature, they are more likely to grow into adults who value and protect our environment. Enjoy exploring nature as a family, invite friends along, or bring this activity to your scout's meeting, classroom, or community gathering.

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



DIY PAINTED FLOWER POTS

These DIY painted flower pots are so fun and colorful and would brighten up any patio or outdoor space! Plus who could resist a good plant pun?! These would make a great handmade gift for any occasion.

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

HOMEMADE ICE CREAM

This homemade ice cream recipe can also be called the easiest (and best!) ice cream you will ever make or taste. I've been making this ice cream at least once a month for over 5 years now.

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