

## Mainstream National Child Welfare Organizations Do Not Support Restrictions That Ban Unmarried Couples From Adoption

Every mainstream health and child welfare organization—including the Child Welfare League of America, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Psychological Association—has issued policies (excerpts below) opposing restrictions on parenting by unmarried couples, including gay and lesbian parents. These groups are not driven by political beliefs but by scientific evidence and widely accepted standards that guide how to assess and deliver what children need.

### Child Welfare League of America:

- Oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization

“Based on more than three decades of social science research and our 85 years of service to millions of families, CWLA believes that families with LGBTQ members deserve the same levels of support afforded other families. Any attempt to preclude or prevent gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals or couples from parenting, based solely on their sexual orientation, is not in the best interest of children.”

“All applicants should be assessed on the basis of their abilities to successfully parent a child... their capacity to understand and meet the needs of a particular child at the point of adoption and in the future.... and not on their race, ethnicity or culture, income, age, **marital status**, religion, appearance, differing lifestyle, or sexual orientation.”

### American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Membership organization of approximately 60,000 pediatricians dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, and adolescents

“Children are rated as better adjusted when their parents report greater relationship satisfaction, higher levels of love, and lower interparental conflict regardless of their parents’ sexual orientation. Children apparently are more powerfully influenced by family processes and relationships than by family structure.”

“Adoption should not just be for married couples, but for unmarried couples as well: The AAP “advocate[s] for initiatives that establish permanency through co-parent or second-parent adoption of children.”

### American Medical Association:

- Nation’s largest physician’s group and advocates on national health issues

“[We] support legislative and other efforts to allow the adoption of a child by the same-sex partner, or **opposite sex non-married partner**, who functions as a second parent or co-parent to that child.”

### American Psychiatric Association:

- More than 35,000 member physicians

“Second parent adoptions, which grant full parental rights to a second, unrelated adult (usually an unmarried partner of a legal parent), are often in the best interest of the child(ren).”



\* Information provided by the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee, LGBT Project

#### American Psychological Association:

- Scientific and professional organization that includes over 150,000 members

“The APA supports and protection of parent-child relationships through the legalization of joint adoptions and second-parent adoptions.”

“Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents. Indeed, the evidence to date suggests that home environments provided by lesbian and gay parents are as likely as those provided by heterosexual parents to support and enable children's psychosocial growth.”

#### American Academy on Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:

- National professional medical association dedicated to treating and improving the quality of life for children, adolescents, and families of children

“The basis on which all decisions relating to custody and parental rights should rest in the best interests of the child. . . . The AACAP opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation against individuals in regard to their rights as custodial or adoptive parents as adopted by Council.”

#### National Association of Social Workers:

- Largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world

“Barriers that prevent children from being placed in permanent homes must be removed. . . . Barriers that are unsupported by tested experience—such as the resistance to using single parents, foster parents (for adoption), and nontraditional family patterns. . . . as potential foster care and adoption resources—must be removed.”

#### North American Council on Adoptable Children:

- Committed to meeting the needs of children who are in need of homes

“Children should not be denied a permanent family. . . . All prospective foster and adoptive parents. . . . should be given fair and equal consideration.”

#### American Academy of Family Physicians:

- One of the largest national medical organizations, representing more than 94,000 family physicians, family medicine residents, and medical students nationwide

AAFP established a policy that is “supportive of legislation which promotes a safe and nurturing environment, including psychological and legal security, for all children, including those of adoptive parents, regardless of sexual orientation.”

