

## A Position Paper on Children of Gay and Lesbian Parents – July 2007

Fourteen years ago, the original Briefing Paper on Children of Gay and Lesbian Parents was prepared for the NAEYC Governing Board. Recently, there has been a great deal of political movement in matters of the rights of Gay and Lesbian couples related to domestic partnership, health care dependent rights, marriage and more.

In addition, the groundbreaking NAEYC publication – the Anti-Bias Curriculum as well as companion pieces such as In Our Own Way have become widely read and accepted as visionary pieces. Once marginalized even among the anti-bias aware, “orientation” is today widely acknowledged as a vital and valuable community within this wonderfully diverse society.

The “Mainstream Press” has also begun publishing books on gay and lesbian parenting readily available to the public.

Gender and orientation topics have been well-received at AEYC conferences by the professional community.

With the increasing political empowerment of Lesbian and Gay couples and single parents comes the increasing and active participation and visibility of these families in our school systems and early care and education system.

For all these reasons, we believe that it is time to revisit this issue as an Association and as early care and education professionals.

NAEYC has a reputation as *the* source of leadership in the early care and education community. Society has become better informed and more “accepting” of Gay and Lesbian civil rights demands. A recent Pew survey indicated that more Americans object to single women having children (66 percent) or unmarried couples to having children (59 percent) than object to gay couples raising children (50 percent).

At the same time, the Anti-Bias Curriculum is nearing its 20<sup>th</sup> birthday! When Teachers Reflect is nearly a decade old, and In Our Own Way is eight years old. A World Of Difference, 2003, is the only recent NAEYC publication explicitly addressing diversity issues. While the brochure, *Teaching Children to Resist Bias* is available from NAEYC, there are no brochures directly addressing Lesbian and Gay parents.

More than a matter of political correctness or family values, the reality is that Lesbian and Gay parents are stakeholders in the early care and education delivery system. As such, they clearly deserve the respect and considerations owed to any stakeholder. Towards this end, a well-informed, educated and respectful workforce supported by a responsive and proactive professional association represents the minimal expectations that we should accept.

Clearly, the best practices that encourage us to guarantee that children of difference racial and ethnic backgrounds see themselves and their families represented in the classroom and curriculum certainly apply to children of foster care, kinship care, step, blended, and Gay and Lesbian families as well.

Children's literature is available such as the excellent stories from authors such as Eric Hoffman and Rigoberto Gonzalez.

A Resolution:

Whereas Gay and Lesbian parents are invested stakeholders in the early care and education delivery system,

Whereas, today, between 8 and 10 million children are being raised in Lesbian or Gay households. In California, more than 16,000 adopted children live in Gay or Lesbian households,

Whereas evidence suggests that children raised in Gay or Lesbian households grow up as happy and well adjusted as children raised in heterosexual households,

Whereas evidence suggests that children raised by Lesbian or Gay parents experience no more risk (and perhaps even less) of abuse than those raised by heterosexual parents,

Whereas the well-being of children is an important tenet of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC),

Whereas inclusion of all children is a important tenet of NAEYC,

Whereas appropriate children's literature and curriculum strategies exist that make it possible to responsibly represent Gay and Lesbian households within an early care and education program,

Therefore be it resolved that NAEYC hereby proclaims its commitment to supporting access among its members to information, resources and training that will enhance their abilities to respectfully and responsibly serve children and families of Lesbian and Gay households.

And be it resolved that toward this end, NAEYC shall create a brochure specifically addressing the role of early care and education providers in meeting the needs of all families – and that this brochure shall specifically address Gay and Lesbian households and families.

And be it resolved that NAEYC shall revisit anti-bias curriculum as a topic for publications that shall be revisited regularly.

And be it resolved that NAEYC shall publicly state a commitment to encourage its membership to respectfully serve *all* families.

Whereas children come from many different types of families,  
Whereas respect for diverse families is an integral component of respect for children,  
Whereas “non-traditional” sexual orientation and associated family units are still widely discriminated against,

Be it resolved that CAEYC hereby requests that NAEYC take the following actions:

- direct the GLBTQ Interest Forum to prepare a revised and updated Position Paper on Respecting GLBTQ Families and Children in the ECE Community
- direct those involved in Educational Resources to design for publication by NAEYC a brochure on Respecting GLBTQ Families and Children in the ECE Community
- direct NAEYC to include in its Accreditation Criteria specific recognition of nondiscrimination based upon sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation wherever appropriate (Ethical responsibilities to children, families and colleagues)
- direct NAEYC to make available for programs a sample non-discrimination clause that specifically recognizes a commitment to respect all families and children regardless of sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation

Respectfully adopted by the board of BCAEYC on February 19, 2008 for submission to CAEYC.