



FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF TORONTO

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A United Way Member Agency

Who Says Gay Men Can't Have Children?

The LGBT Parenting Network is co-sponsoring a workshop for gay men who are considering parenthood. A project of the Family Service Association of Toronto's David Kelley Lesbian/Gay Services, the Parenting Network provides resources, information and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgender parents and their families. "There is a huge interest among gay men in how to bring children into their lives," says Rachel Epstein, a lesbian mom and coordinator of the LGBT Parenting Network.

The workshop, to be held on Wednesday, March 20, 2002, 7-9 p.m., is co-sponsored by [the LGBT Parenting Network and the](#) University of Toronto LGBTQ Resources and Programs and the Family Care Office. It will consist of presentations by three gay dads, addressing the options available to gay men when it comes to having children. These options include co-parenting with lesbians or other women, adoption and surrogacy.

"It may seem like the impossible dream, but it's not," says Luke, one of the presenters. "Having children is often not seen as part of the gay experience, but we demonstrate that this is not something you have to sacrifice. You can be gay and have family with the people you love, and that can include children." Luke and his partner are one of the first gay couples in Ontario to jointly adopt through the Children's Aid Society, and, [one of the first, one of few – or confirm it's true\) the first multi-racial couple](#) to do so.

This workshop for gay men grew out of a series of focus groups currently being conducted by the LGBT Parenting Network in order to identify the most-needed resources. Focus groups continue in March and April and the network invites interested LGBT parents to participate. There will be focus groups open to all LGBT parents as well as specific groups for

children, parents of colour, adoptive parents, step-parents, transsexual/transgender parents, bisexual parents, non-biological lesbian mothers and those considering parenthood. Groups will run in Scarborough, York Region, Etobicoke and downtown Toronto.

Of the LGBT Parenting Network Luke says, “It has been an excellent source for networking and exchanging ideas with other [LGBT families](#). I would encourage people to come out to focus groups and to events and to support the LGBT Parenting Network in any way. It is a vital part of the gay community and the children associated with the gay community.”

The LGBT Parenting Network also publishes a newsletter, “Pride and Joy,” the first issue of which came out in December, 2001. The newsletter gives updates on the Parenting Network’s activities, as well as providing a place for LGBT parents to exchange information, announce community activities and events, have discussions and debates, make birth/adoption/fostering announcements and generally be in touch with others who are parenting outside of traditional family structures.

The LGBT Parenting Network is made possible through funding from the Counselling Foundation of Canada. The network is a joint project of Family Service Association of Toronto’s David Kelley Lesbian/Gay Services and the University of Western Ontario’s (UWO) Research Facility for Gay and Lesbian Studies. UWO will be launching “Parenting with Pride,” a national, interactive web-site on LGBT parenting issues this spring. Watch for details.

For more information on the LGBT Parenting Network, please contact Rachel Epstein, Coordinator, at (416) 595-0307, ext. 270, rachelep@fsatoronto.com

