

[Back to Article](#)

[Click to Print](#)

TIME

Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2006

Two Mommies Is One Too Many

By James C. Dobson

A number of social conservatives, myself included, have recently been asked to respond to the news that Mary Cheney, the Vice President's daughter, is pregnant with a child she intends to raise with her lesbian partner. Implicit in this issue is an effort to get us to criticize the Bush Administration or the Cheney family. But the concern here has nothing to do with politics. It is about what kind of family environment is best for the health and development of children, and, by extension, the nation at large.

With all due respect to Cheney and her partner, Heather Poe, the majority of more than 30 years of social-science evidence indicates that children do best on every measure of well-being when raised by their married mother and father. That is not to say Cheney and Poe will not love their child. But love alone is not enough to guarantee healthy growth and development. The two most loving women in the world cannot provide a daddy for a little boy--any more than the two most loving men can be complete role models for a little girl.

The voices that argue otherwise tell us more about our politically correct culture than they do about what children really need. The fact remains that gender matters--perhaps nowhere more than in regard to child rearing. The unique value of fathers has been explained by Dr. Kyle Pruett of Yale Medical School in his book *Fatherhood: Why Father Care Is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*. Pruett says dads are critically important simply because "fathers do not mother." *Psychology Today* explained in 1996 that "fatherhood turns out to be a complex and unique phenomenon with huge consequences for the emotional and intellectual growth of children." A father, as a male parent, makes unique contributions to the task of parenting that a mother cannot emulate, and vice versa.

According to educational psychologist Carol Gilligan, mothers tend to stress sympathy, grace and care to their children, while fathers accent justice, fairness and duty. Moms give a child a sense of hopefulness; dads provide a sense of right and wrong and its consequences. Other researchers have determined that boys are not born with an understanding of "maleness." They have to learn it, ideally from their fathers.

But set aside the scientific findings for a minute. Isn't there something in our hearts that tells us, intuitively, that children need a mother and a father? Admittedly, that ideal is not always possible. Divorce, death, abandonment and unwed pregnancy have resulted in an ever growing number of single-parent families in this culture. We admire the millions of men and women who have risen to the challenge of parenting alone and are

meeting their difficult responsibilities with courage and determination. Still, most of them, if asked, would say that raising children is a two-person job best accomplished by a mother and father.

In raising these issues, Focus on the Family does not desire to harm or insult women such as Cheney and Poe. Rather, our conviction is that birth and adoption are the purview of married heterosexual couples. Traditional marriage is God's design for the family and is rooted in biblical truth. When that divine plan is implemented, children have the best opportunity to thrive. That's why public policy as it relates to families must be based not solely on the desires of adults but rather on the needs of children and what is best for society at large.

This is a lesson we should have learned from no-fault divorce. Because adults wanted to dissolve difficult marriages with fewer strings attached, reformers made it easier in the late 1960s to dissolve nuclear families. Though there are exceptions, the legacy of no-fault divorce is countless shattered lives within three generations, adversely affecting children's behavior, academic performance and mental and physical health. No-fault divorce reflected our selfish determination to do what was convenient for adults, and it has been, on balance, a disaster.

We should not enter into yet another untested and far-reaching social experiment, this one driven by the desires of same-sex couples to bear and raise children. The traditional family, supported by more than 5,000 years of human experience, is still the foundation on which the well-being of future generations depends. Dobson is the founder and chairman of Focus on the Family



Find this article at:

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1568485,00.html>

Copyright © 2011 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Add TIME Headlines to your Site](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Customer Service](#)

Rowan has two mommies. He doesn't think it's weird even though some other people do. He just thinks it makes him a little different but different is good because it would be boring if everyone was all the same. So Rowan doesn't care too much when the other kids tease him sometimes because mommy Spencer says that sticks and stones may break his bones but words may never hurt him. He's not exactly sure how a stick would break his bones but mommy Ashley taught him how to throw a mean right hook if he ever needs it. Both his mommies say that family is the most important thing, next to God, so Rowan believes them. That's why he doesn't complain too much when he has to go see his Grandma Paula or Uncle Glen or go to church. Today, Heather of Heather Has Two Mommies has a lot more company in books for young kids about different kinds of families, but hers was out of print and seemed visually dated. That's why creator Leslea Newman decided on a new version, updating the look of her watershed story with fresh illustrations from a new artist and tweaking the text to streamline. There's one big change, but you have to squint to notice: Heather's Mama Kate and Mama Jane wear little matching rings on their marriage fingers. "Every step I was educating people about our family because there was nothing else," recalled Jacobson. "If I hadn't done it somebody else would have found an author. The book needed to happen." Although there is growing awareness of LGBT rights in many parts of the world, this issue remains excluded from class nations, because the topic is still controversial.[2]. Issue summary. Two Mommies One Too Many? The commercial release of the controversial children's book 'Heather Has Two Mommies' in @@NAME@@ has sparked debate over laws concerning the adoption of children by homosexual couples. Issue options. Option. Description. Result[3]. 1. "I cannot understand for the life of me why anyone could possibly be against this," complains Jacob Kantelberg, showing up at

