



Same-Sex Married and Cohabiting Couples Raising Children, 2022

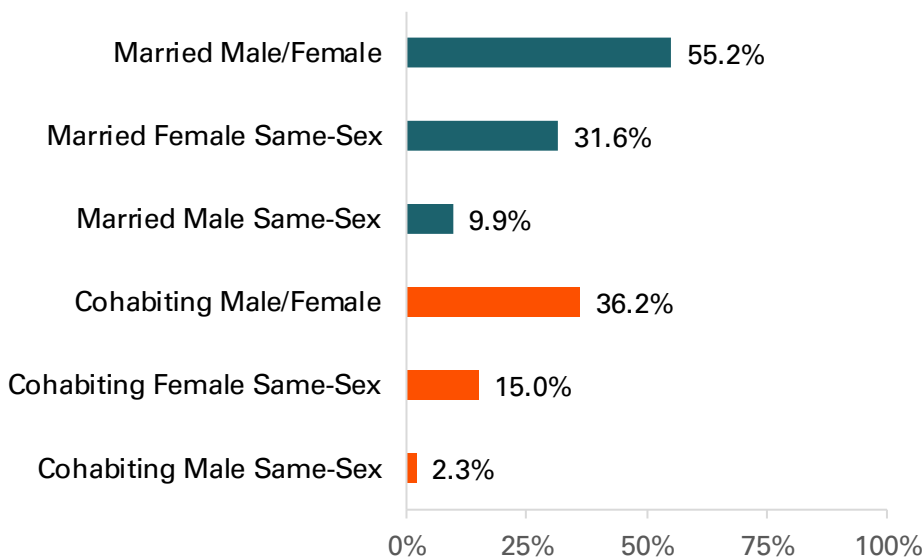
Authors: Krista K. Westrick Payne & Wendy D. Manning

Children are raised in a wide range of families including those with same-sex and different-sex parents. This profile provides the most recent evidence about the share of couples raising children, disaggregating across different-sex and same-sex couples as well as across marriage and cohabitation, and is an update of a previously released Family Profile ([Manning & Payne, 2021](#)). Using American Community Survey data from 2022 we provide the most up-to-date estimates regarding the share of couples raising children, disaggregating across different-sex and same-sex couples relationship type and age. In the ACS only the relationships of household members to the household head are collected, therefore, we present a single year snapshot of the share of couples who are raising an “own child of the householder”¹ and/or a foster child of the householder. In 2022 a total of 286,059 children were living with a same-sex couple across 171,324 households. Given our focus on couples raising minor children, we also restrict our sample to couples in which the younger member is under the age of sixty.

The estimates of the percentage of couples raising children varied according to the couple’s marital status as well as the sex composition of the couple. These patterns highlight the importance of distinguishing between not only female and male same-sex couples, but also their relationship status to understand the family lives of same-sex couples. Figure 1 illustrates the important role of marriage for raising children across all three couples sex composition types. Regardless of relationship status (married or cohabiting), smaller shares of same-sex couples were raising children than different-sex couples.

- Among both cohabiting and married same-sex couples, female couples more often were raising children. About one in three (31.6%) of married female same-sex couples and about one in 10 (9.9%) married male same-sex couples were raising children.
- Across the sex composition of couples, cohabiting couples less often were raising children than married couples. About half (55.2%) of different-sex married couples were raising children in contrast to 36.2% of cohabiting couples.

Figure 1. Presence of Biological, Adopted, Step, or Foster Children of the Householder Under Age 18 among Coupled Households by Couple Type, 2022



Source: NCFMR analyses of the American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2022

Note: Youngest member of the couple is under the age of 60.

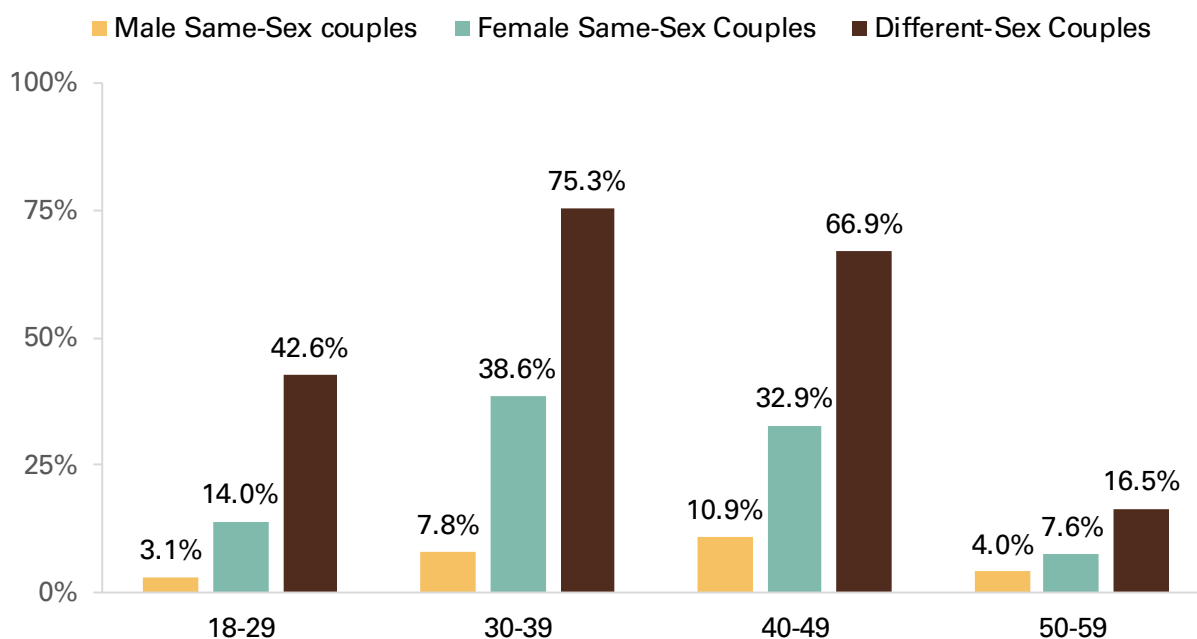
¹The U.S. Census Bureau defines “own children of the householder” as anyone under the age of 18 who is the biological, adopted, or stepchildren of the householder.

Presence of Children by Age

In Figure 2 we present the share of couples with a minor own child in residence by sex composition of the couple and age. The age categories represent the age of the younger member of the couple.²

- Regardless of age, different-sex couples have higher shares living with a child, followed by female same-sex couples.
- Among couples in which the younger member was aged 18-29, more than two-fifths (42.6%) of different-sex couples, 14% of female same-sex couples and 3.1% of male same-sex couples were raising a child.
- The age group with the greatest share of couples raising children was 30-39 for both different-sex and female same-sex couples. Among different sex couples three-fourths were raising a co-residential minor child (75.3%) and among female same-sex couples approaching two-fifths were (38.6%).
- Among male same-sex couples the age group with the largest share raising a minor child was among those aged 40-49 at one-in-10 (10.9%).
- The share of 50-59 year olds raising a minor child dropped off considerably at 16.5% among different-sex couples, 7.6% among female same-sex couples, and 4.0% among male same-sex couples.

Figure 2. Presence of Biological, Adopted, Step or Foster Children of the Householder under Age 18 among Coupled Households by Couple Type & Age, 2022



Source: NCFMR analyses of American Community Survey, 1 year estimates, 2022

Note: Youngest member of the couple is under the age of 60.

²Although we recognize the potential importance of the role of marriage, unweighted sample sizes are not sufficient to produce reliable estimates by coresidential relationship type.

Data Source:

United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample, 2022

References:

Manning, W. D., & Payne, K. K. (2021). Same-sex married and cohabiting couples raising children. *Family Profiles, FP-21-08*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-21-08>

Suggested Citation:

Westrick-Payne, K. K. & Manning W. D. (2024). Same-sex married and cohabiting couples raising children, 2022. *Family Profiles, FP-24-05*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-24-05>

This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the state or federal government.