



My Home

The Diversity of Families Today

Leanne Currie-McGhee





© 2025 ReferencePoint Press, Inc.
Printed in the United States

For more information, contact:

ReferencePoint Press, Inc.
PO Box 27779
San Diego, CA 92198
www.ReferencePointPress.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, web distribution, or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Currie-McGhee, L. K. (Leanne K.), author.

Title: My home : the diversity of families today / Leanne Currie-McGhee.

Description: San Diego, CA : ReferencePoint Press, [2025] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023053819 (print) | LCCN 2023053820 (ebook) | ISBN 9781678208103 (library binding) | ISBN 9781678208110 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Families--United States--Juvenile literature. | Immigrant families--United States--Juvenile literature. | Racially mixed families--United States--Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC HQ536 .C97 2025 (print) | LCC HQ536 (ebook) | DDC 306.8/5/0973--dc23/eng/20231120

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023053819>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023053820>

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Changing Families	
Chapter One	8
Immigrant Families	
Chapter Two	18
Multiracial Families	
Chapter Three	27
Adoptive Families	
Chapter Four	37
LGBTQ Families	
Chapter Five	46
Single and Multigeneration Families	
Source Notes	56
For Further Research	59
Index	61
Picture Credits	64
About the Author	64

CHAPTER THREE

Adoptive Families

Adding to the diversity of families in the United States is adoption. Adoptive families are the result of an individual or a couple becoming a parent, or parents, by legally adopting a child. Life for adopted children entails both favorable experiences and challenges as they navigate their unique life journeys.

Entering Foster Care

The most prevalent means of adoption in the United States is through foster care. Foster care adoption involves adopting children who have found themselves within the foster care system, which is a government-administered program set up to care for children unable to live with their parents. Circumstances such as parental neglect, substance abuse, incarceration, or child abuse may result in children entering foster care. The main objective of foster care is to eventually reunite these children with their biological parents. However, due to the termination of parental legal rights or parental deaths, over a quarter of foster care children need a loving adoptive family. According to 2021 data from the US Department of Health and Human Services, there were 391,098 children in the US foster care system, and out of these, 113,589 were available for adoption. In that year 54,240 of those children were adopted.

Many foster children who become part of a family through adoption, are older at the time. Bella entered foster care, along with her two younger brothers, at age eight. Prior to entering foster care, Bella's parents were caught conducting



A prospective foster couple is interviewed by a social worker. Foster care is the most prevalent path to adoption in the United States.

drug deals, and they physically and mentally abused her. She and her brothers went to her grandmother for a few years, but it was a toxic situation; the grandmother was an alcoholic and married an abusive man. Eventually, Bella and her brothers ended up in foster care. There, in 2021, they were adopted by a family with several other adopted youth. Two years later she and her brothers had adjusted to a new family, where they are thriving. “I love my family. I love my family so much. I am so grateful for them,”¹⁷ Bella says. At age sixteen, she finally feels she has a family she can depend on.

Private and International Adoptions

Another adoption method is domestic private adoption. This data is not tracked by the government, but it is estimated that ten thousand to eighteen thousand private adoptions occur in the United States each year. In these families, a parent or parents

are chosen by the birth mother, and a private agency sets up the adoption. These adoptions may be open adoptions, in which the birth parent or parents get updates and may even visit their child; or they may be closed, meaning there is no contact between birth parents and their children. Most private adoptions are of infants.

Lastly, international adoption is a method of adopting children from overseas. These children are generally living in orphanages in their home countries and adopted through agencies in the United States that work with the governments in those countries. According to the US Department of State, in 2021 there were 1,785 intercountry adoptions processed in the United States. Jordan Windle, known for competing in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics as a platform diver at age twenty-two, was adopted from Cambodia at eighteen months old. At the time, he was living in an orphanage after both his parents died. He was adopted by a single gay man, who supported him and his growing passion for diving. Windle recalls his new father taking him to practices, finding coaches, and traveling to tournaments. “It’s everything,” Windle says of his father’s support. “I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for him, his love and support. He’s always there for me, calling me. I’d give him anything, and I’m sure he’d do the same.”¹⁸

“I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for him, his love and support.”¹⁸

—Jordan Windle, Olympic diver and adoptee of a single dad

A New Family

Each adopted youth’s story is different, and how it affects their lives varies. For Akyra Holstein, being adopted at age seventeen meant finally having a place to call home and a parent she knew would always be there for her. She went into foster care at age four, her mother terminated rights when she was seven, and she was adopted by a single woman after living in twenty-four different foster homes. For her, just before she legally became an adult, being adopted meant she finally had someone to rely on. Katie, her adoptive mom, also adopted a young boy and fosters

Finding Birth Parents

Adoptees in closed adoptions often long to know who their birth parents are. Some embark on a journey to connect with their birth parents. While this process can be difficult and does not always result in a positive experience after the connection is made, the search often provides a sense of closure. At age fifteen in England, Callum had a strong urge to find his birth mother. He had been wondering about her for years. His parents were open with him about most of what they knew but wanted him to wait until he was older to meet her. However, without their knowledge, he used her surname and found her on Facebook.

Before contacting her, though, he received the approval of his parents. The result was positive, and since then he and his birth mother have developed a good relationship that has made him feel whole. He advises other adopted youth to involve their parents in the search process. “The temptation to connect with a birth family for adopted kids like me is almost constant, but my advice is that you should always do so with your adopted parents’ knowledge. That way everyone is involved, and things can go as smoothly as they have for me.”

Callum, “I Met My Birth Mum After 11 Years. Her Question Took Me by Surprise,” MSN, October 20, 2023. www.msn.com.

many other youths. As a result, her foster mom gave Holstein an entire family. “It feels good to have this new family. I didn’t grow up with them from birth, but I still see Katie as my mom and my adopted brother and the other foster kids as my siblings,”¹⁹ Holstein writes. When she was adopted, her goal was to graduate high school then find a job. But even though she would be a legal adult, she knew she had a place to live and a mom to help guide her.

Courtney Falk’s adoption experience was different because she was adopted when she was an infant. But like Holstein, adoption provided her with stability and a family life. Falk’s parents openly talked to her about adoption. The adoption was closed, so neither she nor her parents knew her biological parents’ names or personal information. However, her parents did share what information they had from the adoption agency. They let her know that Falk’s biological parents were teenagers when Falk was born, and

SOURCE NOTES

Introduction: Changing Families

1. Valerie Berman, "What It Was Like to Be Raised by My Grandparents," Her Campus, December 8, 2017. www.hercampus.com.
2. Daniel A. Cox, "Emerging Trends and Enduring Patterns in American Family Life," Survey Center on American Life, February 9, 2022. www.americansurveycenter.org.

Chapter One: Immigrant Families

3. Quoted in Leah Schroeder, "Children of Immigrant Parents Share Experiences," Pathfinder, May 6, 2022. <https://pwest.pathfinder.com>.
4. Vandj, "Meet Young Immigrants," Scholastic, 2023. <https://teacher.scholastic.com>.
5. Quoted in Schroeder, "Children of Immigrant Parents Share Experiences."
6. Rose Jean Charles, "Op-Ed: What's It Like Growing Up with Immigrant Parents?," *Blue and Gold*, April 2021. www.maldenblueandgold.com.
7. Maz Do, "My Immigrant Parents Came to the U.S. for a Better Life. Here's Why I May Want to Leave," Huffington Post, July 25, 2020. www.huffpost.com.
8. Quoted in Nicole Clark, "The Hidden Stress of Growing Up the Child of Immigrants," *Vice*, September 12, 2019. www.vice.com.
9. Quoted in Schroeder, "Children of Immigrant Parents Share Experiences."
10. Quoted in Schroeder, "Children of Immigrant Parents Share Experiences."

Chapter Two: Multiracial Families

11. Adiah Siler, "Here's What It's Like Being a Teen of Mixed Race in America," *Parents*, December 5, 2020. www.parents.com.
12. Quoted in Kang Hyun-kyung, "I Am Korean, Yet Culturally Black," *Korea Times* (Seoul, South Korea), February 5, 2020. www.koreatimes.co.kr.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Books

Sara Easterly et al., *Adoption Unfiltered: Revelations from Adoptees, Birth Parents, Adoptive Parents, and Allies*. Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023.

John Kim Faye, *The Yin and the Yang of It All: Rock'n'Roll Memories from the Cusp as Told by a Mixed-Up, Mixed-Race Kid*. Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023.

Cecilia MenjAvar et al., *Immigrant Families*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2023.

Rin Reczek and Emma Bosley-Smith, *Families We Keep: LGBTQ People and Their Enduring Bonds with Parents*. New York: New York University Press, 2019.

Internet Sources

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, "Multiracial Children," September 2023. www.aacap.org.

Ayana Archie, "1 in 4 Young Adults Live with a Parent, Grandparent or Older Sibling, Research Shows," NPR, July 2022. www.npr.org.

Brianna Mone, "What You'll Never Understand About Being Biracial," *Marie Claire*, February 5, 2018. www.marieclaire.com.

Charlotte Patterson et al., "LGBTQ+ Parents and Their Children," National Council on Family Relations, October 12, 2021. www.ncfr.org.

Psychology Today, "The Single Parent Family," 2023. www.psychologytoday.com.

Kirsten Weir, "Raising Anti-Racist Children," American Psychological Association, May 18, 2023. www.apa.org.

Websites

Adoptive Families

www.adoptivefamilies.com

This organization provides information and resources for adoptive families and those seeking to adopt. There are articles and other resources regarding how to engage youth in discussions about

INDEX

Note: Boldface page numbers indicate illustrations.

- adoptive families
 - birth parents and, 30–31, 35–36
 - closed adoptions, 30–31
 - connections among adoptees, **35**, 36
 - domestic private, 28–29
 - insensitive comments made by others, 34–35
 - international private, 29
 - lack of connection to biological family and identity, 32–33, 35
 - LGBTQ parents in, 37, 41
 - open adoptions, 29, 35–36
 - stability in, 30–32, **32**
 - through foster care, 27–28, 29–30
 - transracial, 19, 33
 - unimportance of biological link in, 31
- Asian Americans, 16, **16**
- Balderacchi, Eva, 5–6
- Berman, Valerie, 4–5
- birth parents, 30–31, 35–36
- BMJ Global Health*, 41
- Boards, Tyler Hunter, 31–32
- Charles, Rose Jean, 12–13
- Chung, Nicole, 34–35
- closed adoptions, 30–31
- communication, importance of, 54–55
- Cox, Daniel A., 6
- Cunningham, Parker, 41–42
- De la Cruz, Ana, 55
- deportation fears, 11
- DeSantis, Ron, 44–45
- discrimination
 - faced by immigrants and children of immigrants, 15–16, **16**
 - insensitive comments about adoption, 34–35
 - against LGBTQ families, 41, 42, 43–44
 - racism
 - help dealing with, 26
 - in multiracial families, 23–24
 - societal, 25
- divorce, 46, 47
- Do, Maz, 13–14
- domestic private adoptions, 28–29
- “Don’t Say Gay” law (Florida, 2022), 44–45
- education
 - English as a Second Language programs, 17
 - immigrant families’ emphasis on, 11–13, **13**
 - Newcomer Tool Kits, 17
 - number of university students from immigrant families, 14
- Elliott, Kyle, 38
- English as a Second Language programs, 17
- Falk, Courtney, 30–31
- Family Equality Council, 45
- finances, 51–52
- Florida, 44–45