



NICHOLAS GERDA FOR WSN

Tisch sophomore Ria Hill doesn't feel that she is different because she has two moms.

## Mom, dad not the only way

By **ASHLEY MASON**  
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When Tisch sophomore Ria Hill was growing up, she found it strange that she moved around a lot. When she moved to New Mexico she found it strange that people alienated her family for being Jewish.

But she never thought the thing that really set her apart was having two moms.

"They didn't even know I had two moms until the last minute," she said. "They were just like 'Oh, she's the nanny' or something. Right, we brought a nanny with us."

Despite the uniqueness of her upbringing, a new study from NYU's sociology department says children are more affected by the quality of parenting rather than the gender of the parents.

The study says children of lesbian couples are more similar to children of heterosexual couples than they are different. The research predicts that children of gay male couples will follow a similar pattern.

Judith Stacey, professor of social and cultural analysis, said she began the research to disprove misinformed political claims.

"I knew that didn't square with

what I know about the research," Stacey said.

She found the research politicians had been using to support family values was based on studies comparing children with married mothers and fathers to those born with unwed mothers, divorced parents and step families.

"They were matching oranges to apples," she said. "People are entitled to whatever opinion they want to have, but making the claim that it's been proven by social science is a different matter."

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## Mom, dad not the only way

Jenny DeBower, the director of youth and family services at the LGBT community center, said she has seen proof of the study for years. The community center on West 13th Street has maintained a family program for 20 years, and the youth and family programs are “bursting at the seams.”

“We don’t really need the research to tell us that kids are coming out very ... well, you know, the same level of happiness and adjustment and well-being as children with heterosexual parents,” DeBower said. “It’s good that they did the research. I think it gets the story out there and brings awareness around the issue.”

According to Stacey, the research is being used to overturn same-sex adoption bans in Florida and Arkansas. But she said the study is not immediately

relevant to same-sex marriage.

“There was a big logical gap,” Stacey said. “Whether you have legal same-sex marriage or not, it’s not going to change the number of kids that have heterosexual parents or don’t.”

Jason Fullen, the president of NYU’s Campus Crusade for Christ, said he believes in the study.

“Being able to have two loving parents, regardless of their gender, is better than having none or not having that kind of one-on-one attention that you might lose if your parents were unable to take care of you,” Fullen said. “It’s more about the type of care and attention and love they’re receiving than the gender of that person or persons who it’s coming from.”

*Ashley Mason is university editor.  
E-mail her at [amason@nyunews.com](mailto:amason@nyunews.com).*



COURTESY OF RIA HILL

Ria Hill with her moms Ruth and Karen at her graduation.