

## **HOMOMATERNITY: FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO COLLECTIVE FIGHT**

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### **Abstract**

The family is a unit of cohabitation based on love solidarity and mutual care promoting the personal development of each one of its members. It is love that creates a family, no more, no less.

This statement that sounds so simple was not applicable 20 years ago, when on deciding who would be my partner, a woman of course, I was aware that I was entering into secrecy and rejection. As doors were closed to me for having a family like anyone else I was aware that doors were also closing on motherhood. Society had taken good care of transmitting that if you are a lesbian you cannot be a mother.

It has taken me 9 years of living together, of shared dreams, love, self affirming our identity as a lesbian couple, to realise that there is no valid reason why we shouldn't seriously plan our motherhood. Our great wish would become our project, and we took the decision, possibly the most important decision in our lives: we wanted to be mothers and we would do everything possible to become mothers. At first it was a solitary project, without knowing that other people existed in the world, as always happens, and later we put our common project for lesbian motherhood in contact with other female couples.

We had one thing very clear: "We have to come out from the wardrobe" as is said nowadays. Until that moment, in those 9 years as a couple, we had not hidden but neither had we explained our relationship openly. We could say that everyone, family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances they knew or they thought it but had never spoken about it. The others did not ask because they didn't want to know and we did not explain anything because we didn't want to embarrass anyone. The result is always the same: what is not explained does not exist, isn't real, doesn't need to be talked about and so does not present a real problem, there are no laws for something that doesn't exist."

Now society is aware of the diversity of family models that exist these days: heterosexual, homo-maternal, homo-paternal, separated, single, common law couple families and it must be accepted that children grow up in any of these situations. We homo-maternal families are not new family models; we are models that have always existed probably hidden in different ways. What there is now is a real visibilisation of these models.

And the children arrived: my wife and I have three children, a girl and two boys. Even now on writing such a simple sentence I stop to re-read it, even reading it out loud to myself. Yes, I have three children.

Until now, many lesbians and gays out of respect for our parents, siblings and neighbours through fear of the reaction from society, for losing our jobs, in fact for omnipresent and powerful homophobia, have avoided making it public. Now, on being mothers and fathers we have to defend our children's rights, and we have to make their way easier: at school, with friends, with relations, the neighbourhood.

contacts of a group of friends who felt the need to meet other families like ours and that our children should know each other. We saw that together we could possibly have more strength as a group. That first group of lesbian and gay couples with children began to grow rapidly. There was a lot of work to do

The objectives we approached at the first moment were:

- To find spaces where our children could meet and share family models like theirs.

- To start a campaign of awareness and vindication of our rights as a family and the rights of our children to have this family model and therefore not to lack protection.

And March 31, 2005 was a very important political and historical moment, not only for the gay and lesbian families but for the whole society that took a grand step towards real equality. The Family Code was modified which permitted coadoption by gay and lesbian couples. We lived that vote in the Catalan Parliament with great emotion and overwhelming happiness. And three months later, on June 30, 2005 the marriage between lesbians and gays was approved in Madrid with the same conditions as any other couple.

From the Association of Lesbian and Gay Families we believe that Catalonia and Spain have written a very important page in the consecution of people's rights and liberties. But a lot of work remains. We must continue to work on it.