What is family?

*My definition: Where everyone respects, accepts and loves each other unconditionally.*

A family consists of people who are socially-related to one another.

'The family is a social group characterised by a common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of who maintain a socially-approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults.' GP Murdock, Social Structure, 1949).

**Family structure**

- Nuclear: traditionally regarded as a heterosexual married couple and their biological children. Two generations of family members living in the same household.
- Extended: three or more generations in the same household.
- Horizontally Extended: includes relations such as aunts, cousins, etc…
- Single Parent: one parent with dependent children.
- Reconstituted: step-families.

The 'Cornflake' family: other interpretations of family - [http://medicaldictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Cornflake+family](http://medicaldictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Cornflake+family)

**Views of the family**

Functionalist…

- Family performs functions essential for society
- Reproduction
- Socialisation of the young
- Economic support
- Outlet for sex
- Popular idea in post-war Britain

Feminist: challenges patriarchal view…

- Women should have some rights as men
- Against gender socialisation - often reinforced by family values
- Women are subordinate within the family
- Both women and children marginalised within traditional views of family