

Children and Family

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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>

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 systems...

- 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