

# 'Ordinary' and 'diverse' families. A case study of family discourses by Finnish early childhood education and care administrators <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Journal of Family Studies

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 9 Jun 2021

## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Abstract

The increased family diversity is a major global trend. Although family configurations are also diverse in contemporary Finland, it has been argued that Finnish family policies and institutional understanding of family life continues to focus on the heteronormative two-parent family with a native Finnish background. To address this issue, we analysed Finnish family discourses through qualitative interviews with early childhood education and care administrators (n = 47), applying a discourse analytic framework. Our results suggest that families are discussed through two divergent but interwoven discourses, i.e. the discourse of ordinary families and that of diverse families. The former focuses on heteronormative two-parent native-born Finnish families, perceived as 'ordinary' and familiar, and the latter on, especially, LGBTIQ and immigrant families, perceived as 'new', confusing and strange. We demonstrate how diversity is produced discursively by othering families that diverge from the 'ordinary'. These discourses, reflecting wider cultural understandings of family, may have implications for both families and institutional practices. We conclude by arguing that the conventional and heteronormative understanding of family remains entrenched in Finnish family discourses.

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