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American Families, Then and Now

“The Changing American Family” by Natalie Angier talks about how families in America are different than they were long ago and are continuing to change. Families that are talked about during the article are now farther from the traditional family. There are same sex parents, more divorce, less children, cohabitation, immigrant families, and parentless families. All of these families are far from what we all know as the “American Family”. Today’s families are different than they were only a few years ago.

Before the twenty-first century, families stayed together because it was in the better interest of the family, but today more families are breaking apart. Parents would stay with one another for their children no matter how much they fought, their children needed them. Today many parents are marrying young and are divorcing. In “The Changing American Family”, “I was delusional, I was depressed,”... “I still had the attitude that divorce wasn’t something you did.”, said Mike Burns (Natalie, 2016). Mike still had the thought of the generation before him. Divorce wasn’t something you do when your relationship with your partner is getting rough. Mike married his first wife in college and admitted that he was too young at the time. This is the problem of many families today.

A long time ago during the baby boom, many families had more than 3 children, “The nation’s birthrate today is half of what it was in 1960” (Natalie, 2016). This means that families

are smaller than they were before and it is claimed to get smaller before 2050. As the world gets more advanced the price of things start to go up. This is a reason for people having less children. According to the Department of Agriculture, the average middle-class couple will spend \$241,080 to raise a child to age 18”, (Natalie, 2016). This crazy since the cost to raise a child in 1960 was \$25,299 (24/7 Wall St., 2011). This is yet another reason that families have changed so much. Families are changing in different ways, but some families are getting a whole new meaning of parents.

Many years ago, same sex marriage was severely frowned upon, but today same sex couples are legally allowed to marry, as well as have children. The ideal family a long time ago, was to have a mother and a father. Having two parents of the same sex, would derail that image of the “perfect family”. “Both parents know when rules and roles are made for subverting”, states Natalie (Natalie, 2016). Although many would think the children are losing either the mother or father figure in their lives, they do not see how one parent adapts to taking on the role of the father or the mother. In “The Changing American Family”, “Earlier studies, often invoked in the culture wars over same sex marriage, suggested that children who lived with gay parents were prone to lower grades, conduct disorders, and heightened risk of drug and alcohol problems” (Natalie, 2016). Although these problems were thought to be true new research says otherwise. Most of these problems come from other factors of their life. Families are always there for one another and even if they aren’t the same as they were in the past some things will never change.

Families in America are nowhere near where they were fifty or even 5 years ago. Families are rapidly changing and evolving. They are getting new meanings and are coming up

with all kinds of new faces and backgrounds. There are people having less children, same sex couples finally getting their own children, and more parents and marriages ending in divorce. Even though families have changed, everyone has one. Everyone has a place they can go to see their family. Family will always be apart of who we are.

Work Cited

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