Guidelines on Addressing Mail to Parents in a Same-Sex Marriage, Civil Union, and Domestic Partnership

Several people have been wondering how to address this community in a professional manner. Here are some guidelines.

• If unmarried or married with different last names, each person’s name should be on separate lines:
  ◦ Mr. Frank Doe and
  ◦ Mr. John Smith
  ◦ Dear Mr. Doe and Mr. Smith

  ◦ Ms. Anne Black and
  ◦ Ms. Hannah Davis
  ◦ Dear Ms. Black and Ms. Davis

• If married with the same last name both names should be on the same line:
  ◦ Mr. Frank and Mr. John Doe
  ◦ Dear Mr. and Mr. Doe or Dear Mr. Frank and Mr. John Doe

  ◦ Ms. Anne and Ms. Mary Black
  ◦ Dear Ms. and Ms. Black or Ms. Ann and Ms. Mary Black

Also, please arrange the names in alphabetical order. The only exceptions to this rule are—

• if one has an academic title, or
• if you are addressing an invitation in which you are specifically inviting one, and the other is his/her guest.
  ◦ Dr. Mary and Ms. Jane Doe
  ◦ Ms. Alice and Ms. Jane Doe
  ◦ Dr. John and Mr. Frank Doe
  ◦ Mr. John and Mr. Frank Doe (when you are inviting Mr. John Doe)

If possible, it is a good idea to ask the parents how they would like to be addressed.