



After the Surrogacy Process



Some couples, who are not able to have a child themselves, may consider surrogacy as a way to create their family. This means asking somebody else, a surrogate, to carry a child for them. This factsheet provides some information on areas you may wish to consider once your child is born.

Contact with the surrogate (and her partner)

Once your child is born, you should apply for a parental order to transfer the legal status as parents from the surrogate, and in some cases her partner, to yourselves. Once the parental order is made, you and your partner will be the legal guardians of the child and any rights of the surrogate and her partner will be extinguished. For more information about this see our parental order factsheet on our website.

Some families choose to stay in close contact with their surrogate and her family after birth, while others want to part ways and start their new journey with their child on their own. The important thing is to be clear about this from an early stage so as to avoid any confusion that could cause upset or distress to either you or the surrogate.

Explaining surrogacy to your child

Throughout your surrogacy journey, it is important to keep in mind the effect this may have on your child as they grow older. Of course, different children will respond differently to news of their origins and it will be for you and your partner to decide how much they should know at different stages growing up.

Being clear about your intentions from an early stage and making sure you are open and honest with each other, as well as your child, can help to make sure your child is not overwhelmed by the news.

Being prepared for any questions your child may have and answering them confidently, can help to prevent your child from feeling that surrogacy in anyway changes your relationship. Many parents find that celebrating their unique family circumstances can make their child feel special and to be proud of who they are.

There are a number of books aimed at helping parents to explain surrogacy and different families to children. The following is a brief selection:

- * **The Very Kind Koala: A surrogacy story for children** by Kimberly Kluger-Bell
- * **Daddy, Papa and Me** by Leslea Newman
- * **Why I'm so Special: a book about surrogacy** by Carla Lewis-Long
- * **The Kangaroo Pouch** by Sarah Phillips Pellet
- * **The Family Book** by Todd Parr

[The Donor Conception Network](#) has a range of guides and resources that may help you talk to your children. Look at their website or contact them for more information.



When should I tell my child?

Many parents like to be open with their child from as early an age as possible. The benefit of this is that surrogacy never seems unusual or unnatural to the child. It also prevents any risk of them finding out by mistake, or doubting their genetic connections as they grow older. The Donor Conception Network suggests that the goal of early 'telling' is that a child should grow up 'never knowing a time when they didn't know' about their origins.

Other families may choose to wait until their child starts asking questions about where babies come from, or about different types of family.

While it is usually better to tell your children about surrogacy when they are still young, if circumstance or choice means you do not tell your child until later in life, this can still be done well with the right preparation and guidance. Remember that telling your child is not a one-off conversation and children are likely to have more questions as they grow older.

How will my child react?

While all children will react differently, there is no reason to think that your child will be upset by news of their origins, particularly if you are honest with them from an early age. How you act when you tell them can have a big impact on their reaction. If you wait till your child is older, there is more chance that they will be confused or angry that you have not told them sooner. They are also more likely to understand that this means they may not have a genetic connection with one of you.

However your child reacts, it is important that you try and understand how they might be feeling and answer any questions they have. Remember, what matters most to your child is having a loving and secure relationship, not their genetic connections.

Telling other people about your surrogacy

You will need to consider who you wish to tell about your surrogacy journey. If you choose to share your experience with close family or friends, they can often provide valuable support throughout the process. It can also help to prevent surprises or awkward situations that may arise from someone finding out accidentally.

While it is entirely for you to decide who you wish to tell, a good guide can be starting with considering who will be significant in your child's life.

Same-sex parents

While same-sex couples who have a child through surrogacy will face many of the same questions from their child about their origins, your child (and often their friends) may be curious about your particular family situation.

Stonewall provides some general advice about surrogacy on their website and through their Guide for Gay Dads, as well as producing useful research such as Different Families, which helps to explain some of the common reactions you may be met with from your child and their friends.

These can be found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/parenting-rights/surrogacy-1

Family Storybooks

Family storybooks can be a great way of telling your unique family story and making sure your child is secure with their origins and their identity. They can take many forms, such as a scrapbook or a memory box. You might want to consider a digital format, which could include a video diary.

You might want to include information about the treatment, images or mementos from the surrogate and her family or stories of your child's development. Sharing this with your child as they grow older can help to explain their origins and give them a strong sense of identity, as well as bringing you closer together.



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