Historically adoption has been the primary alternative for family building.

Impact of medical science on reproductive health.

Medical science now offers Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART)

Today ART tends to be the first alternative pursued by couples facing infertility

Frequently during IVF treatments more embryos are created than are eventually used.

This has caused an ever-increasing number of embryos in frozen storage – now over 600,000
HISTORY OF EMBRYO DONATION AND ADOPTION

1978: First ‘test tube’ baby born in Great Britain
- 2012: Louise Brown will celebrate her 34th birthday

Fertility clinics began offering donated embryos to patients
- Primarily anonymous donations

1997: Nightlight pioneered the process of embryo adoption
- Over 300 babies born to date

P.J. (Snowflake #154)
Hannah (Snowflake #1)
Mary (Snowflake #33)
HOW MANY BABIES HAVE BEEN BORN BY EMBRYO DONATION & ADOPTION?

Since the mid 90’s it is estimated that over 3500 children have been born to families from remaining donated frozen embryos.
EMBRYOS ARE CREATED WITH LOVE for a family who struggled with infertility

MEET THE GENETIC PARENTS
After the fresh IVF cycle, remaining embryos are frozen.

The embryos are generally frozen at one to six days of development.

Using best practices, only one to three embryos are stored in each cane.

Canes are labeled with indelible ink for administrative tracking.

How are the embryos stored?
## EMBRYOS IN STORAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-term storage</th>
<th>Long-term storage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not yet completed with family building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually remain at the clinic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sometimes embryos remain at clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cryobank: Company specializing in long-term storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify long-term storage facility policies <strong>before</strong> transferring embryos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE FAMILY IS COMPLETE
But they still have embryos in storage.
NOW WHAT?

May not have been prepared for this outcome

May feel overwhelmed and unsure of what to do with remaining embryos
FACED WITH A CHOICE

Options for Remaining Embryos

- Keep them frozen indefinitely
- Discard them
- Surrender them for scientific research
- Donate them to another person/couple for family building
THE IMPACT OF THESE CHOICES

Keep them Frozen Indefinitely

- Not deciding is sometimes an easier choice
- Continued annual payment of storage fees
- Embryos may eventually become abandoned
- May leave a difficult decision to others in the event of divorce or death

Discard Them

- Discontinues obligation for storage
- Quick and simple closure to the process
- Some may choose to have a special ceremony
- Destroys the embryo
THE IMPACT OF THESE CHOICES

**Surrender to Scientific Research**
- May provide hope for disease cures [to date, no successful treatments have been developed]
- Couples may have the sense that they’ve made a difference
- Destroys the embryo

**Donate to Another Family for Family Building**
- Life-affirming way to resolve a challenging dilemma
- Source of hope to another person/couple
- Donor’s children are genetically related to any children born from donated embryos
TERMINOLOGY: WHY ‘DONATION’?

‘Donation’ is used in the sense of 'giving a gift'

• Offers an emotional separation
• Donors tend to prefer the term to describe their action

Fertility clinic donation programs receive donated embryos

• Most often given anonymously to whomever the clinic chooses
HOW TO DONATE EMBRYOS

Privately

- Donor and adopter find one another directly either through personal relationships or online services
- Onus for following necessary legal, medical and social procedures are the responsibility of the donor and recipient
- Some agencies will facilitate a match for a reduced fee

Through a fertility clinic’s embryo donation program

- Quick and simple way to donate
- Clinic assumes responsibility for assigning embryos to recipients – may give genetically related embryos to multiple recipients
- No future tracking for sibling relationship control or medical emergencies
HOW TO DONATE EMBRYOS

Through an Embryo Adoption Agency

• Determine the desired level of involvement with the recipient family

• Gives peace of mind regarding your embryo donation by assuring you that the adopting family has been:
  • evaluated for any health issues that may affect their ability to parent
  • screened for any criminal/child abuse issues
  • educated concerning potential issues of parenting a non-genetically related child
THE PROCESS FOR EMBRYO DONATION

Through an Adoption Agency

- Complete testing required to donate embryos
- Complete a family profile
- Complete donor requirements for the adoptive family
- Review profiles for adoptive families provided by agency

Through a Fertility Clinic Donation Program

- Complete testing required to donate embryos
- Note: Most clinics do not provide for designated donations
  Each clinic process for a designated donation would be unique to the clinic
WHO ADOPTS EMBRYOS?

MEET THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS
EMBRYOS ESTIMATED TO BE AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION

Over 612,000 embryos are in frozen storage in the United States

Research studies have shown that about 6% belong to people who would consider donating them to another family

Adoption agencies work to match donors with adopters
The end result is a child

Managed by property law

Children are adopted not ‘donated’

Manages social/emotional aspects resulting from a medical procedure
AN EMBRYO ADOPTION...

- Uses best practices of a domestic adoption plan to protect all parties, especially the child.
- Allows the adopting couple to experience pregnancy and childbirth.
- Simply begins the adoption process nine months earlier than ‘normal’.
Choose the adoptive parents

- Know the outcome of the transfer
- Possibility for ongoing communication
- Possibly see pictures or even talk with or meet genetic child
- Safeguard the family by knowing all genetic relatives
- Enables children the opportunity to meet genetic siblings

Matching done for you, with no need for your input

- May never know outcome of their transfer
- No communication with the recipient family
- Uncertain if genetically related children exist outside your family

**OPEN VS. CLOSED**

DESIGNATED VS. ANONYMOUS
OPEN ADOPTION

- Determined by mutual agreement between the families
- Protects families in the event of future contact between (kids) and provides information to children regarding their origins
- Some mechanism of communication is encouraged. Communication may be necessary in the event of future medical needs.
- Direct communication and be established through letters, emails, and phone calls OR the agency can act as an intermediary
- Agency maintains files regarding the two families in case of a medical emergency or future child inquiries.
Couples and singles who are searching for infertility solutions

May not be able to afford IVF or other ART treatments

May not want to use or bear the expense of purchasing ‘donor’ eggs and/or sperm

Many have already attempted their own IVF unsuccessfully

Couples who are pursuing a second+ adoption and want to experience pregnancy
WHERE DO YOU FIND EMBRYOS?

Privately

- Donor and adopter find one another directly.
- May enable a quicker and more personalized match.
- Responsibility for managing the medical, legal and social elements of the process rest with the donor and adopter.

Through a fertility clinic embryo donation program

- Many clinics have few embryos available and a long list of patients waiting to receive them.
- Embryos received were created, frozen and will be thawed within the same clinic.
- Most clinic programs are non-directed.

Through an embryo adoption agency

- Established agencies are likely to have available embryos.
- Processes are in place for all medical, legal and social processes.
- Matching preferences are part of the procedure.
- Mutual agreement regarding future contact is allowed and encouraged.
WHAT QUALIFICATIONS MUST BE MET?

Provide written confirmation from physician stating no contraindications to pregnancy
  • Some agencies allow surrogacy

Meet agency guidelines for participation in their program
  • Unique to the agency

Complete a home study
When comparing costs for embryo adoption, be sure to include:
- Matching Fees
- Counseling for donor and adopting families
- Embryo transportation costs
- Medical testing
- Legal fees
- Travel costs (if necessary)
- Medical procedure (Frozen Embryo Transfer [FET])
HOW DOES THE PROCESS BEGIN?

Provide written confirmation from personal physician regarding ability to carry a pregnancy to term.

Determine interest in anonymous or open adoption

Determine which programs will meet personal criteria

Select an experienced adoption agency or clinic with current/reliable access to donated embryos.
AGENCIES AND CLINICS WITH EMBRYO DONATION & ADOPTION PROGRAMS

www.EmbryoAdoption.org
**PROCESS OF EMBRYO ADOPTION**

**Through an Adoption Agency**

1. Complete the chosen agency’s application
2. Complete a home study through a licensed agency
3. Choose a fertility doctor/clinic
4. Create a family profile and organize thoughts for initial communication with potential donor
5. Wait to be matched!

**Through a Fertility Clinic Donation Program**

1. Complete chosen clinic’s paperwork
2. Clinic physician assigns donated embryos (possibly to multiple recipients)
WHY THE HOME STUDY?

80% Education

- Prepares adopter for the needs of a child who is not genetically related
- Helps build important parenting skills
- Helps couples have healthy children, and healthy families
- Prepares parents to share about the children’s genetic origins

20% Evaluation

- Determines preparedness to parent through adoption
- Evaluates for health issues that may affect ability to care for and raise a child
- Screening for any criminal and child abuse issues
THE MATCHING PROCESS

The agency works to match adopter with a potential donor
• Based on both families’ preferences

In many cases, the donor family reviews the adopting family’s profile first

Both parties must agree to the match

Adopter selected by a donor family
• Adopter then receives donor profile and medical health history to review
• May also include information about donor egg or sperm used in creation of embryos
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Embryos are considered property, not people, in the United States</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Embryos are governed by property law in the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ownership is transferred by legal contract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Embryos are owned by the adopting family before the frozen embryo transfer</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The donating family has relinquished their parental rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• By law the adopting mother is legally the child’s mother at birth, and her legal husband is the father</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Embryology reports and infectious disease test results sent to the fertility doctor

Managed by agency

Before contracts are finalized

If requested, additional blood testing from the donor family

The agency will arrange for

To meet the FDA requirements

Approval by reproductive endocrinologist for clinic to receive embryos

Embryos transported from the donor family’s storage facility to the recipient’s fertility clinic

Managed by agency

Some instances where the embryos do not require transportation
A Frozen Embryo Transfer (FET): the procedure used to place the donated embryos into a womb

- Medical cycle
- Natural cycle
HOW ARE FROZEN EMBRYOS THAWED?

Embryos are thawed and brought to room temperature
- Takes 1-2 minutes

Careful dilution of the cryoprotectant fluid
- Critical to successful thawing
Each clinic has a unique survival rate for thawing embryos. Thawing success ranges between 50 – 85%.

Clinics are generally protective of their embryo creation, transfer, storage and thawing methods.

Embryos that do not survive the thaw were likely injured during the process of freezing.
HOW LONG BEFORE A SUCCESSFUL PREGNANCY IS KNOWN?

Usually within two weeks of the Frozen Embryo Transfer!!!
WHAT HAPPENS IF PREGNANCY TEST IS NEGATIVE?

- Each embryo has a 35% chance of implanting after the FET.
- If pregnancy is not achieved from first FET a determination to do a second FET can be made.
- Depending on how many embryos were donated, the recipient may have additional remaining frozen embryos.
- If no embryos remain, the agency may make a match with a second donor family.
WHAT IF THERE ARE REMAINING EMBRYOS AFTER THE BABY IS BORN?

If you have not completed your family building and you wish to use the remaining embryos for future FETs, you may do so when the time is right for your family.

If your family is complete and embryos remain, historically legal rights to the remaining embryos return to the donor family by written agreement.
Embryo Adoption agencies will continue to follow the adoption process with post placement reports.

Often, the first post placement report is completed six weeks after the child’s birth.

Often reports are completed again at 3, 6, and 9 by the adopter and are mailed directly to the agency.

Each agency will be guided by their own post placement procedures.
HOW TO TELL THE CHILDREN THEIR SPECIAL STORY?

Our Wish For A Baby
By Janice Grimes, RN

Training Wheels
How did I get here?
By Chris Barrett & Dr. Sally B. Hunter
AVAILABLE RECORDED WEBINAR TOPICS
AT www.EmbryoAdoption.org

Presenting Embryo Donation and Adoption: How to Educate Patients and Clients

Embryo Storage Solutions: A New Storage Alternative for Donors

Legal Issues of Embryo Donation and Adoption: How to Minimize Liability and Risk

Embryo Donation and Adoption: Dispelling the Myths