



**GLOSSARY**

*Family building via*

**Adoption and**

**Foster Care**



**FAMILY  
EQUALITY  
COUNCIL**

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[www.familyequality.org/resources](http://www.familyequality.org/resources)

# A

**Anonymous Donor:** A person who donated sperm or eggs with the intention of never meeting resulting children.

**Artificial Insemination:** An alternative term for donor insemination (see definition below).

**Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART):** Any treatment or procedure that involves surgically removing eggs from ovaries and combining the eggs with sperm to help achieve pregnancy. Intrauterine insemination (IUI) is sometimes also considered an ART procedure, even though it does not involve the manipulation of eggs.

# C

**Co-parenting:** A situation where individuals who are not married or in a romantic relationship raise a child or children together

**Cryopreservation:** A process by which embryos, eggs or sperm are frozen at very low temperatures in a substance such as liquid nitrogen in order to keep them viable for an extended period of time.

# D

**Donor:** A person who donates sperm or egg to help another person become pregnant.

**Donor Insemination:** The process through which donated sperm is placed inside a vagina or uterus with the intention of achieving pregnancy. The term is preferred in the LGBTQ community over “artificial insemination” as it does not imply there is something “artificial” about this method of conception.

**Donor Siblings:** People who are biologically related to one another by having the same sperm or egg donor.

## E

**Embryo Transfer (ET):** A simple medical procedure following in vitro fertilization that involves placing a fertilized egg (embryo) into the uterus using a small catheter inserted through the cervix

## F

**Fertility Preservation:** An effort to help individuals retain their ability to reproduce often involving cryopreservation of egg or sperm. Recommended in the transgender community prior to medical transition.

**Frozen Embryo Transfer (FET):** A simple medical procedure where an embryo that was previously cryogenically frozen is thawed and placed into the uterus using a small catheter inserted through the cervix

## G

**Gestational Carrier or Gestational Surrogate:** A woman who carries a pregnancy for an intended parent or parents and who has no genetic link to the baby or babies born as a result of her pregnancy.

## I

**Implantation:** This occurs when a fertilized egg or eggs attach to the wall of the uterus at the beginning of pregnancy.

**Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI):** A procedure in which a single sperm is injected directly into an egg prior to IVF.

**Intended Parents (IPs):** Prospective parents using surrogacy, ART, or pursuing adoption

**Intrauterine Insemination (IUI):** Sometimes called artificial insemination or donor insemination, IUI is a medical procedure that involves placing sperm via a tube directly into an individual's uterus to facilitate fertilization. The sperm can come from a partner or a donor and is performed in a doctor's office.

**Intravaginal Insemination (IVI):** Another form of artificial insemination or donor insemination, IVI is the non-surgical, minimally invasive process of placing sperm directly into the vagina. This method can often be done at home without medical providers.

**In Vitro Fertilization (IVF):** A procedure that involves removing eggs from an individual's ovaries and fertilizing them outside of the body with sperm in a laboratory dish. The resulting embryos are then transferred into a uterus through the cervix. IVF can also be utilized in conjunction with donor eggs or donor embryos.

## K

**Known Donor:** A sperm or egg donor whose identity is known to the individuals who were created with the donor's genetic material.

## O

**Open Identity Donor (also known as "Identity Release Donor", "Willing-to-be-known Donor"):** A donor who donated sperm or egg with the intention of having his or her identity and contact information released to the children the donation created when the children turn 18.

## P

**Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS):** A hormonal disorder of the ovaries that may affect those attempting to get pregnant. People with PCOS may have infrequent or prolonged menstrual periods or excess androgen levels. The ovaries may develop numerous small collections of fluid (follicles) and fail to regularly release eggs.

# R

**Reciprocal In Vitro Fertilization (R-IVF, Co-maternity):** Couples where both individuals have a uterus and/or eggs may choose to retrieve the eggs from one partner, inseminate those eggs with donor sperm and then have the resulting embryo(s) placed into the other partner.

**Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE):** Physicians specializing in reproductive endocrine disorders and infertility who have undergone additional fellowship training.

# S

**Secondary Infertility:** The inability to conceive after the birth of one or more children.

**Single Embryo Transfer (SET):** The implantation of only one fertilized embryo into the uterus of either an intended parent or a gestational carrier via IVF to reduce the chances of multiples.

**Semen Analysis:** The microscopic examination of semen to determine the number of sperm (sperm count) as well as their shape (morphology) and movement (motility).

**Sperm Washing:** This process uses a centrifuge to separate out good, or viable sperm from dead, abnormally-shaped, and slow-moving sperm, as well as the surrounding seminal fluid. Standard sperm washing is typically done prior to IUI, and IVF procedures. An additional purification process can also be done to remove HIV from semen.

# T

**Traditional Carrier or Traditional Surrogate:** An individual who carries a pregnancy for an intended parent or parents achieved by using the surrogate's egg and a donor or the intended parent's sperm. Traditional surrogates have a genetic link to the baby or babies born as a result of the pregnancy.

**Testicular Sperm Extraction (TESE):** Surgical removal of testicular tissue that may serve as a source of living sperm to be utilized in an ART procedure.

# U

**Unexplained Infertility:** Also called idiopathic infertility, a cause or combination of causes resulting in an inability to conceive which cannot be explained or diagnosed. Unexplained infertility often responds to treatments such as IVF.

**Unknown Donor:** Similar to "anonymous donor," this describes a person who donated sperm or eggs with the intention of never meeting resulting children. The word "unknown" as recently replaced "anonymous," as genetic testing is now so commonplace that no donor can be guaranteed true anonymity.