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Talking to Your Child About Donor Conception: A Guide for Parents

Becoming a parent through sperm or egg donation is a beautiful and intentional path to building a family. One of the most meaningful gifts you can give your child is the truth about their origin — shared with love, honesty, and age-appropriate care.

This guide supports you through *when*, *why*, and *how* to talk to your child about their donor conception.

Why It Matters

Telling your child about their donor conception early in life helps:

- Build trust between parent and child.
- Foster a secure sense of identity.
- Prevent accidental or distressing discoveries later in life.
- Normalize donor conception as part of their unique and loved story.

When to Begin

Experts recommend **early and open communication**. Ideally, begin when your child is very young — even before they fully understand.

Why start early?

- It allows the story to grow with your child.
- It becomes a normal part of their life narrative.
- It removes the pressure of a “big reveal” later on.

If your child is older, it's **never too late** to begin the conversation. With care and support, older children can still integrate their story in a healthy way.

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How to Talk About It (By Age Group)

Babies and Toddlers (0–3 years)

Use simple words and repetition.

- “We / I wanted you very much and needed a little help from a kind person called a donor.”
- Incorporate into story time or daily routines.

Preschoolers (3–5 years)

They’re curious and start asking questions.

- Keep explanations simple and warm.
- “Some families need a little help to have a baby. We/ I had help from a donor who gave a special part to help make you.”

School Age (6–9 years)

They understand biology and relationships more deeply.

- Answer questions honestly, but not with more detail than they ask for.
- “The donor helped by giving something small – like an egg/sperm – so we could have you. That person is not your parent, but they were very kind.”

Tweens and Teens

They may seek deeper meaning and identity.

- Be ready for complex questions and emotions.
 - Encourage openness and provide reassurance that donor conception doesn’t change your family bond.
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Tips for Positive Conversations

- **Use books** about donor conception to help explain.
- **Celebrate their story** — frame it with love, intention, and joy.
- **Be consistent** in language and truth.
- **Let your child lead** with questions as they grow.
- **Stay calm** and open if emotions come up (from you or your child).
- **Avoid secrecy or shame** — donor conception is nothing to hide.

Recommended Language

Instead of saying:

- “We’ll tell them when they’re older.”
Try:
- “We talk about their story from the start.”

Instead of:

- “You don’t have a real dad/mom.”
Try:
- “You have a donor who helped, and we/ I are your real parents.”

Helpful Storybooks

Here are some excellent books for young children about donor conception:

- “*The Pea That Was Me*” series by Kimberly Kluger-Bell
- “*You Began as a Wish*” by Dr. Kim Bergman
- “*Before You Were Born*” series by Janice Grimes

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Final Thoughts

You are the heart of your child's story — their constant, their parent, their home. Sharing their conception story with honesty and love helps them grow up feeling safe, secure, and deeply wanted.

Remember, it's not a one-time talk — it's a conversation you return to and deepen over time. And you're never alone — many families walk this path, and support is always available.

With care,

Ellie