



Reproductive Technologies, Inc.
THE SPERM BANK OF CALIFORNIA

2115 Milvia Street, Suite 201 Berkeley 94704-1157 Phone 510.841.1858 Fax 510.841.0332 email: staff@tsbca.org

MUTUAL CONSENT OPENNESS

Curiosity about genetically-related people is common for everyone, including donor-conceived families. To support this reality, TSBC offers two programs: the Family Contact List and the Identity-Release® Program. **Each of these programs is rooted in the concept of mutual consent, connecting parties only when consent has been given by everyone involved.**

TSBC honors this natural curiosity. We also honor and respect the privacy of our donors and of our donor-conceived families by NOT initiating unsolicited contact. We are asking that you do the same.

What is mutual consent openness?

Mutual consent openness happens when people unknown to each other are identified to one another only after everyone involved agrees in advance to share their identity. It is the opposite of using the internet to find and share information about donors or other donor families who have not given their explicit consent.

My donor is in the Identity-Release® Program, does it matter if I search for him now?

Yes. It matters. The Identity-Release® Program is about sharing identifying information with donor-conceived adults. **Donors have not agreed to share their identity with families, parents or with younger children.** We have worked with hundreds of donors since 1982, and like anyone, donors are very uncomfortable with being searched for, contacted, and/or followed online without their knowledge and advance consent.

I'm so curious about my child's biological half-siblings, won't they welcome contact?

About 30% of TSBC families participate in the Family Contact List and agree to mutual consent contact with other families who share their donor. This means the majority of families aren't interested in, or ready for, contact. Interest in donor-linked families varies for everyone and often changes over time.

TSBC's experience indicates that the best outcomes result from mutually agreed upon openness.

Because searching for and/or contacting a donor or other donor-conceived families without their permission has been known to have unintended negative consequences.

Please continue on the next page for additional information.

I/We understand that TSBC requests:

- (1) I/we choose only mutual consent options for identifying and/or contacting my/our child's donor and families who share my/our child's donor, and
- (2) I/we will not search for my/our child's donor or other families who share my/our child's donor without their prior consent.

Recipient: Signature Name (print) Date

Partner (if applicable): Signature Name (print) Date

My child has intense curiosity about their donor. What can I do?

This is great! Encourage them and share whatever information about the donor you have, like the donor number, profile, or baby photo. And keep sharing it. Keep the conversation going. If your child's donor is in the Identity-Release® Program, talk with them about how they can learn their donor's identity when they turn 18. Ask your child about connecting with their donor-linked families. If you want more individualized assistance, the "Getting Support" section of the "Resources" page on our website has a list of experts in donor-assisted family building who can meet with parents in person or by phone.

Can you tell me more about TSBC's mutual consent and information sharing programs?

- **Family Contact List**: *This program is available to all parents as soon as their child is born and to donor-conceived adults.* The Family Contact List provides mutual consent information sharing and contact among families who share the same donor.
- **Identity-Release® Program**: *This program is for donor-conceived adults.* The decision of whether/when to request their donor's identity belongs to the donor-conceived adult. Waiting until the child turns 18 provides an increased level of legal protection for both parents and donors.

What are the experiences of mutual consent contact with donors and other families through the Identity-Release® Program and the Family Contact List?

Feedback on contact done with mutual consent is very positive. Donor-conceived adults and donors have shared that they appreciate the structure of the Identity-Release® Program that supports both parties through the process—before, during, and after the donor's identity is released. Donor-conceived adults particularly appreciate knowing that their donor has agreed to share his identity with them and being able to know his level of openness *prior* to contact. Similarly, parents on the Family Contact List have reported positive experiences of mutually requested contact with other families who share their donor. (See TSBC Research Publications for more information.)

What are the experiences when donors have been identified without their consent?

Based on the experiences shared with us, here are some things to consider if you are thinking about searching for and/or contacting your child's donor:

- Parents often regret searching—after finding him, many parents felt they had violated his privacy. Some parents have shared with TSBC that they realized after identifying him that they weren't comfortable contacting him without his consent.
- Donors who have been contacted by families without their advance consent have told TSBC they were uncomfortable being found in this manner. Some donors have contacted TSBC when they felt pressured to have interactions beyond their comfort level.
- Younger children (or parents) may have expectations that donors are unwilling, unable or unprepared to meet.
- Contact may expose the donor to his family/community in a way he is not prepared to for. While many donors are transparent about having been a donor, it is not uncommon for donors to keep this information private.
- Other families may be impacted if the donor is upset at being found.

I've read all of this and I am still thinking about searching for my child's donor... Are there any options for contact with my child's donor?

TSBC does not share donor identities with parents. Decades of experience, research, and feedback from parents, donors, partners of donors and donor-conceived adults all support maintaining the program as it is. However, there are other options where donors can choose to make themselves available for **mutual consent** contact if they wish to have earlier contact, most notably the online Donor Sibling Registry (DSR). ***The DSR is an option for families who wish to have earlier contact. If the donor joins the DSR, then he is making an active choice and no one's privacy is breeched without their consent.***