



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 curiosity, TSBC offers two programs: the Family Contact List and the Identity-Release® Program. **These programs are rooted in the concept of mutual consent, connecting parties only when each party gives consent to be connected.**

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 each party agrees in advance to share their identity. It is the **opposite** of using the internet, facial recognition software, DNA testing, private investigators, and other means 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 younger children.** We have worked with hundreds of donors since 1982, and like anyone, donors are typically 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 40% of TSBC families participate in the Family Contact List and agree to mutual consent contact with other families who share their donor. This means many families aren't interested in, or ready for, contact. Interest in same-donor families varies across people, and often changes over time.

TSBC's experience indicates that best outcomes result from mutually agreed upon openness and contact. Searching for and/or contacting a donor and/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 that:

- (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 the donor. What can I do?

Many children are curious about where they come from. Support your child by answering their questions and acknowledging their feelings. Keep the conversation going and share information you have like the donor number, profile, and baby photo. Ask your child if they want to connect with families who share the donor. If your child's donor is in the Identity-Release® Program, talk with them about how they can learn the donor's identity when they turn 18. It is important to set clear expectations that the Identity-Release® Program is about getting more information about the donor. It does not guarantee communication with or meeting the donor. Your child will have to see what the donor is open to when the time comes. For 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 and families 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 parents as soon as their child is born and to donor-conceived adults.* The Family Contact List provides an option for 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 the 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 trying to contact him. 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 on our website for more information.)

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

Based on experiences shared with us, consider these if you want to search for and/or contact your child's donor:

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

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, legal advice, and feedback from parents, donors, partners of donors and donor-conceived adults all support maintaining the program as is. However, there are options for donors to make themselves available for earlier **mutual consent** contact. Most notable is the Donor Sibling Registry (donorsiblingregistry.com). ***The DSR is an option for families and donors who wish to have earlier contact. When donors join the DSR, they are making an active choice and no one's privacy is breeched without consent.***