

POSITIVE FAMILY BUILDING LANGUAGE

SPERM DONOR

genetic contributor
sperm donor
helper
the man who helped
us
his name

EGG DONOR

genetic contributor
egg donor
helper
the lady who helped
us
her name

EMBRYO DONORS

genetic contributors
embryo donors
helpers
the people who helped
us
their names
the people who made
you before you became
ours

BIRTHPARENTS

birthparents
birth mother and birth father
birth lady (some people like this term)
the people who made you (for very young
children)
their names

your first parents
the lady who grew you in her body

FATHER

daddy
dad
father
papa
real father/dad

MOTHER

mommy
mom
mother
mama
real mother/mom

PARENTS

mommy and daddy
mom and dad
mother and father
mama and papa
real mom and dad

PARENTS

mommy and daddy
mom and dad
mother and father
mama and papa
real parents

Children will choose different terms at different times and whatever terms they are using should always be respected and reflected back to them.

The terms will be chosen to try to understand the relationships. At times that may mean the CHILD might say "REAL MOTHER" to refer to an ovum donor. But just a week later, the child may refer to her by her name or simply as "the donor", which is the term most commonly used.

Terms for parents who are parenting ought not to have qualifiers. If parents are not "REAL", then the children are not "real," which is a terrifying thought to a child. Even though the child may sometimes think of a donor or birth parent as "real" for periods of time, it is helpful for adults to refer to parenting as a verb and not a function of the contribution of genetics. While genetics are an extremely important contribution, genes do not make a parent.

This document was created by Carole LieberWilkins, MFT and Marna Gatlin, Executive Director of Parents via Egg Donation on behalf of PVED.

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