



Discussing Being a Surrogate with Your Children

So you have decided that you want to be a surrogate, but you don't know how to tell your children. It's a big decision and your family may need time to process it all too. You may fear that your children will have feelings of jealousy or abandonment or perhaps you fear the opposite that your children will be excited to have a new brother or sister and having to explain to them the difference. The most important thing to remember is to lead by example. If you are confident and comfortable with your surrogacy decision, your children will feel that too.

Here are a few pointers and examples that may help you talk to your kids:

♥ For toddlers or young children, have a tea party with dolls or stuffed animals or play superheroes where you can be the voice of or talk to another object. For example, as you pour tea for "Brown Bear," ask him "do you know I am going to have a baby." "No, I didn't" says Brown bear. "I am, but it's a little different. I love my children sooo much that I want everyone to be able to have a baby too. There are some people in the world who really want to be mommies and daddies just like me, but they can't. So I am going to help them." It may help to explain that some women, like you, have a special super-power – you can make babies! And like all super heroes, you want to use your super-power to help people who need it.

♥ For kids entering school age, they may see their peers getting new brothers and sisters and so expect your pregnancy means they are too. This is a great chance to explain that families come together in many different ways. Some babies come from their mom's own bellies and some babies come from someone else's bellies.

♥ For pre-teens remember a negative reaction is from fear. In this stage of life, all pre-teens are trying to figure out who they are how they fit in a big world. You want to make sure that they don't feel at all abandoned or that since you're "giving up" this child, could you give them up too? Explain, that you have loved them so much, that you want all families to be able to experience the special connection you have. Tell them as much about the Intended Parent(s) as you can so that your child understands that this family deserves children too and you are helping them. You're their little miracle worker.

♥ For pre-teens, use this as an opportunity to discuss or start introducing the reproductive cycle – "the birds and the bees." Stress that children being born is a biological miracle since there are so many obstacles to overcome for just one egg to be fertilized and make a baby. Remember to explain that not every woman or man can make babies, but that does not change that they still so desperately want to have them. Express how sad you would be if you didn't have your

children – this helps pre-teens realize that the surrogacy process isn't about them at all, but rather about how sad a family can be without children. Kids at this age can more easily understand and empathize with other people's sadness.

♥ Remember to tell your children that this doesn't happen overnight. All great things take time and this is no exception. You're going to need their help and support.

♥ One good-way of looking at it is extreme baby-sitting. That a mommy and daddy needed help, so they are giving you their baby to protect, keep warm, and help grow and when he/she is all grown and healthy, you will give it back to the mommy and daddy so they can be a happy family. All kids need to know from the beginning that the baby is not yours or your families. It is not a sister/brother or even a cousin. It's someone else's baby that you are helping, just like a nurse or a teacher, etc.

♥ Through-out the pregnancy refer to the baby as the intended parent's baby. "Look, Joe and Jane's baby is kicking." Use the Intended parent's names as much as possible to reinforce this. Talk to your kids about the Intended Parents often and remind them that you are excited they will experience the same special relationship you have with your kids.

♥ Keep explanations short. Children of all ages can process short answers much easier. Give them a chance to guide the conversations and ask questions all the time.

♥ If possible it often helps for kids to keep in contact with the Intended Parents throughout the pregnancy too. Maybe the kids can draw pictures for the Intended Parents. Exchange Christmas cards. Skype, write letters, etc.

♥ Some great books to explain surrogacy to children include...

♥ *The Kangaroo Pouch: a story about gestational surrogacy for children* – children's book

♥ *Why I'm so Special: a book about surrogacy* – children's book

♥ *Surrogacy Helps Make Families Grow* – children's book

♥ *Hope and Will Have a Baby: the gift of surrogacy* – children's book

♥ *Sacha, the Little Bright Shooting Star* – children's book

♥ *Someone Else's Child* – Chapter book great for you, your teens, and older family members

♥ *Once Upon a Surrogate: The Stork's Helpers* – Chapter book great for you, your teens, and older family members