

PATHWAY **2** FAMILY

Embryo Adoption
Frees a Flurry
of Snowflakes

Giving Careful
Consideration
to Creating Embryos

Placing Embryos for Adoption:
First Things First

.....
**Dot Your 'i's and
Cross Your 't's**

**FDA Compliance for
Embryo Donation**

SUMMER/FALL 2018

A PUBLICATION BROUGHT TO YOU BY



PATHWAY2 FAMILY

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Have you heard?

Embryo donation and adoption have allowed more than 8,000 babies to be born into loving families. It may be the solution you have been searching for. Learn more in this issue of **Pathway2Family** or at www.EmbryoAdoption.org



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Check out our website for more information, videos, and webinars about embryo donation and adoption at www.EmbryoAdoption.org.

Understanding the Process of Placing Embryos for Adoption

Welcome to our July 2018 edition of Pathway2Family! This edition is focused on helping you understand more of the details of the embryo donation and adoption process. Perhaps you've never heard of this option before. Yes, you can choose a family for your remaining embryos! Yes, you can know if any children were born from your embryo placement—it doesn't have to be anonymous. Yes, you can give your remaining embryos an opportunity to be born into the loving family of your choice.

"What are my options for the embryos I don't plan to use?"

"If I have remaining embryos, how do I choose a family?"

"What protections are in place for me?"

"Is it affordable?"

These may be some of the many questions swirling around in your mind. Embryo adoption may be the newest adoption model, but it has now existed for more than 20 years! It's not complicated, but it is exciting since the end result is the birth of a child who otherwise might have remained in frozen storage—forever. Our team is committed to helping you determine if embryo placement is the right choice for your family.

We hope this edition of Pathway2Family will pique your interest and motivate you to learn more. Do you have more questions? Your answers are just a phone call away at 970.663.6799.



Embryo Adoption

Frees a Flurry of Snowflakes

By Emily Shew

I first learned about embryo adoption after my mother heard about it on a radio broadcast. It was around 1997 or 1998, and the first embryo adoption program in the world, Snowflakes, was in its infancy. At this point, my husband, Jeremy, and I hadn't been married very long. I hadn't even finished my degree. We hadn't yet begun to think about starting our family. Nevertheless, the idea of embryo adoption immediately captured my heart.

I thought,

"It's incredible that there are all these embryos in frozen storage, waiting, needing someone to give them a chance to be born."

Being a parent with my husband, Jeremy, was always part of the plan for our future. Then the "future" arrived. I was 8 months pregnant with our biological son, Micah, when I crossed the stage to accept my doctorate in veterinary medicine. I loved being pregnant! I loved being a mom and was eager to have another baby shortly after Micah's birth. Soon, we were pregnant with our daughter, Faith. She had many health issues during her first three years of life. Some of them were likely genetic. So, when we started thinking about growing our family further, we turned our minds to adoption.

My parents had adopted three of my siblings domestically, and my brother adopted two children internationally. But as much as I wanted to adopt, I loved being pregnant. Embryo adoption allowed me to adopt and be pregnant at the same time. It also fit our strong pro-life ideals that life begins at conception and deserves respect and protection from the moment of fertilization. Jeremy took some time to research and understand this truly unique adoption choice, but once he said yes, he was fully committed.

We officially applied to the program in May 2007. We requested to be matched with a placing family who might have remaining embryos that

would potentially be more difficult to place. A family with nine remaining embryos agreed to donate their embryos to us for adoption! These were multi-ethnic embryos – Hispanic/Japanese/Caucasian – and we were overjoyed because we already lived in an extended family that was ethnically diverse as a result of adoption. Our adoption contracts were completed in February 2008.

In April, those nine lives were shipped from California to our clinic in Pennsylvania. We scheduled our first frozen embryo transfer. The first transfer of two precious embryos was June 26, 2008. The result was bittersweet: one of the embryos, Peace, went to be with the Lord, while the other embryo continued to thrive. We met our adopted daughter, Grace, in March 2009.

When we originally considered adoption, we thought one or two more children would be the perfect addition to our family. But, after the birth of our daughter, Grace, we knew our hearts belonged to all seven of the remaining embryos we adopted, and we wanted to keep all of the siblings together. We decided to schedule a frozen embryo transfer of two embryos every 2.5 years until all the embryos were given the opportunity to become all that God created them to be.


Our second transfer in March 2011, resulted in the birth of our twin boys, Isaac and Isaiah. In December 2013, we had our third transfer, and in August 2014, we had our second set of twin boys, Jeremiah and Josiah—who are doppelgängers of the first set of twins! In August 2016, our hearts were broken when we lost our two babies, Charity and Trinity, during our fourth transfer. Our one remaining embryo had been waiting for 13 years to have his birthday. In May 2017, we welcomed Ezekiel into our family. His name means "God strengthens," and we chose this because God gave him the strength to be here after the many years of waiting.

Our family is abundantly blessed. Although not in our original plan to be such a large family, we are delighted and filled with joy as we parent each of our children. We appreciate each unique person who is a part of our clan, and we work together to accomplish life as a family. The fact that we have two sets of twins often starts conversations about embryo adoption wherever we go, and my six Snowflakes are evidence that each embryo is a unique, genetic individual worthy of dignity and every chance at a real life.




Placing Your Embryos for Adoption

First Things First




Do you have remaining embryos in frozen storage? Are you concerned about the annual cost of storing those embryos, knowing you have no plan to use them yourself? Deciding what to do with remaining embryos is a difficult decision that more people are faced with each day. There are now over 1,000,000 embryos in frozen storage in the U.S.




At Snowflakes, we know you have questions, and we have answers. We will help you understand the first steps in placing your embryos for adoption through the Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program by answering some frequently asked questions (FAQs).


Couldn't I just do this on my own without going through an agency or clinic?



Honestly, you can do it alone, but you may find it a bit more complicated than you think. You will need to understand and follow the FDA rules and regulations for donating human embryos. This includes blood testing of both people who used their egg and sperm to create the embryos. Then, you must find a qualified recipient family. How can you be sure they will meet your ideals for an adopting family? You will need a good family attorney who is familiar with embryo adoption laws. Shipping embryos from one clinic to another introduces difficulties you may not be familiar with and will have to learn. **Why invest the time and expense when you can donate your embryos free of charge through Snowflakes?**

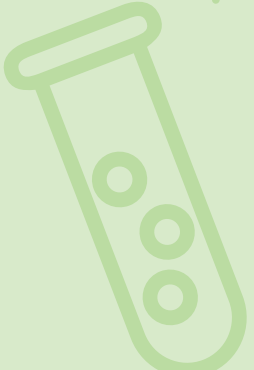


Will I have an opportunity to develop a relationship with the family I am matched with? Conversely, do I have to have a relationship with family I am matched with?



Since the 1980s, adoption agencies have been advocating for open adoptions rather than closed adoptions. Why? Because research has found this is in the best interests of all the people involved: you, the adopting family, and most importantly, the children. **Because we are a child-centric agency, we established the Snowflakes Program to follow the best practices of adoption.** This includes encouraging some level of open communication between our matched families.

Does this mean you have to vacation together? Absolutely not. Perhaps you simply email each other at various times of the year. The methods and frequency of communication are mutually agreed upon by you and your adopting family.



If you are interested in an anonymous placement, we will have more in-depth discussions with you regarding the benefits of open communications and the wide variety of ways this can be accomplished without complete anonymity. Snowflakes strongly advocates for open adoption relationships. Fertility clinics provide completely anonymous donation programs if you feel strongly about your anonymity.

What are the benefits of embryo adoption through the Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program?

The biggest benefit is that you'll be working with experts who understand the complexities involved from the moment you decide to place your embryos for adoption to the time they are transferred to the adopting family. **Snowflakes was established more than 20 years ago in order to empower families with remaining embryos with the ability to have a say in who receives their embryo donation.**

At the same time we help you prepare to place your embryos for adoption, we recruit families to adopt them. These families must complete a rigorous adoption home study process, so you can be confident in the family you choose.

Snowflakes also provides the legal contract necessary to transfer the ownership of your embryos to the adopting family, with no legal fees charged to you.

What does the application process entail?

All potential matches are based on your preferences. We begin the application with getting to know you and your hopes and desires for your embryos. This is **Section I** of the application process.

Section II is a health questionnaire. This provides the adopting family relevant information to help ensure the care and well-being of your adopted embryos.

Section III includes authorizations and FDA requirements. You will also submit your Family Profile at this time. Your Family Profile is a simple autobiography of your family with photos to help the adopting family know about you – and you will receive the same from the adopting family.

Throughout the program, you will have a knowledgeable Snowflakes team member assigned to you who will help guide you each step of the way.

Considering Embryo Adoption?



- Couples, once in your shoes, now have embryos remaining from IVF
- Some of those families have chosen to donate those embryos to adopting families like yours

Your bundle of joy is waiting for you!

CONTACT US TODAY TO LEARN MORE.



EMBRYO ADOPTION
AWARENESS CENTER

970-663-6799 • www.EmbryoAdoption.org • info@EmbryoAdoption.org

Dot Your 'i's and Cross Your 't's:

FDA Compliance for Embryo Donation

Once a placing family (the family donating their embryos) completes their application, there are just a few more steps to be completed before they can move into the matching phase. **Documentation must be collected, paperwork must be filled out, and lab work must be completed. The placing family works with a Snowflakes Placing Parent Coordinator to make this process easier.** The Placing Parent Coordinator works on the family's behalf to acquire their embryology documents, which show the number of remaining embryos, how they were frozen, and any previous infectious disease testing that was conducted. If the family used an egg or sperm donor, the Placing Parent Coordinator will also need to receive an egg or sperm donor profile, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) donor lab panel and screening that were completed, and an egg donor consent form to show the placing parents have the legal authority to give the embryos to another family. This process typically takes about two to three weeks, but can vary from clinic to clinic. Some clinics are able to send everything right away, and others may need additional paperwork, such as their own clinic health information release form. If this is the case, the Placing Parent Coordinator will reach out to the family in order to complete any additional clinic releases or paperwork.

Once all necessary paperwork is received from the family's clinic, they can move into the next phase of the process, which is to complete updated lab work. Keep in mind that if an egg or sperm donor was used, then that individual has already completed the donor panel of tests required by the FDA. If a donor was used, then only the non-donor parent will need to complete updated lab work. Therefore, if someone used both a sperm and egg donor, then they would not need to complete this step.

Many embryo donors wonder why they need to complete updated lab work at all; the embryos may have been created many years ago! Let's say that a family did not use an egg or sperm donor; in this case, both people would need to complete the FDA donor panel. When they originally created the embryos, they created them for their own use. Therefore, the FDA did not require any kind of required infectious disease panel. Many clinics do complete some basic testing, such as HIV and Hepatitis B, but this is not sufficient per FDA standards. The full FDA donor panel consists of nearly a dozen tests, including HIV, HTLV, CMV, and West Nile Virus.

In 2016, the Snowflakes program worked to make this process simple and less time consuming for clients. To take the burden off of clients, Snowflakes handles all logistics and financial costs. We order the tests through our health compliance organization, and they send us the family's diagnostics requisitions directly. We send those requisitions over to the placing family. They print them out, take them to their nearby center, and complete all of the blood work. If there is anything of concern in the results, the placing parent will be contacted by our health compliance organization.

Once Snowflakes receives the results, the placing parents are ready to move forward into the matching phase! The Placing Parent Coordinator works with the placing family until they are officially matched with an adoptive family. **Most people that donate their embryos through our program say that the decision to place embryos for adoption was the best choice they could have made, especially when they share in the joy of the birth of a baby to the adopting family.**

If you'd like to learn more about embryo donation through Snowflakes or any other details of the embryo donation and embryo adoption processes, please call us at 970.663.6799 or visit www.Snowflakes.org.

Speaking to Your Doctor about Embryo Donation through Snowflakes

**YOU HAVE REMAINING EMBRYOS,
AND DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.**

Do you want to...

- ✓ Avoid destroying your embryos?
- ✓ Choose the family who will adopt your embryos?
- ✓ Have an interest in the lives of kids born from your embryos?

**IS THE SNOWFLAKES EMBRYO DONATION
PROGRAM AN OPTION FOR YOU?**

**Embryo donation
allows you to...**

- ✓ Help another couple struggling with infertility.
- ✓ Communicate with the family about genetic siblings born.
- ✓ Choose the recipient family.



Top 4 questions about embryo donation through Snowflakes

How much does it cost?

There are **NO FEES** for donating embryos through Snowflakes.

Does one family receive all of our embryos?

YES, Snowflakes' matching program works to place all embryos in one family.

Will they accept our embryos?

YES, Snowflakes accepts and places all embryo quantities and qualities.

How are adopting families evaluated?

Each family completes an adoption **HOME STUDY**.



snowflakes
embryo adoption program

Ready to get started?

Contact a Snowflakes Inquiry Specialist at:
970.663.6799 or **info@Snowflakes.org**

**Remaining Embryos...
What are my choices?**

Share the Hope!

**Are you considering IVF?
Do you currently have
embryos in frozen storage?**

Perhaps now is the time to decide what to do with your remaining embryos. Your decision will change lives and bring hope to waiting families. No one else can decide for them. It is your decision.

Know your Options...

1 *Donate embryos for attempted pregnancy and childbirth*



Donate your embryos to another infertile couple who would like to build their family. The donation process can be anonymous, or you may choose the family who receives your embryos.

2 *Donate embryos for scientific research*



Frozen embryos are used by scientists for experiments, including embryonic stem cell research.

3 *Keep the remaining embryos frozen*



You will pay storage fees to your clinic or your clinic may move your embryos off-site for long term storage at a cryobank.

4 *Thaw the remaining embryos*



You may choose to discard your remaining embryos. Your clinic can explain the policies and procedures regarding this choice.

Learn more at www.EmbryoAdoption.org

Giving Careful Consideration to Creating Embryos

By Cindy C.

It has always been my opinion that life begins at conception. The same is true for my husband. It wasn't until I was diagnosed with an extreme case of endometriosis that we wondered if we could have the family we felt we were meant to have.

When my husband and I ran into fertility struggles, like many others, we had to think 'outside of the box' regarding how to start a family. And, we were interested in options that didn't violate our morals. We have friends who decided against IVF over 20 years ago because they were against the idea of their embryos (children) being discarded or remaining frozen indefinitely. I had learned about embryo adoption after seeing something in the media, and so I began to research this unique form of adoption.



After my research, we decided to proceed with IVF. We wanted to ensure that each life we created was respected and had a chance to become the precious individual they were created to be. Embryo adoption through Snowflakes made this possible. Another important part of our decision to create embryos was figuring out how to protect them in the event something happened to both my husband and me. Who would care for our unborn children?

Snowflakes helped us develop a plan, even before we had completed our family with the embryos we created. We were able to specify in our final life documents that we wanted our embryos to be placed with an adopting family through the Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program.

With great joy, our twin boys were born in April 2008. My endometriosis precluded me from pursuing a second pregnancy, and we decided to work with Snowflakes to place our embryos for adoption. We felt that our embryos deserved respect and the opportunity to be born. We believed Snowflakes understood and agreed with our desire.

The team helped us choose a family to adopt our remaining embryos. The match was a clear hit-it-out-of-the-park home run for us! We immediately said, "Yes, we want our children to be born to this faith-filled couple." Unfortunately, the family did not achieve a pregnancy and had no embryos remaining.

We have never felt we made the wrong decision. We are so grateful that this agency provided a way for us to honor our remaining embryos by allowing us to choose a recipient family. We hope another family with remaining embryos also chose this wonderful adoptive family and that they eventually had the family they desired.

Embryo adoption is a blessing to both those who have remaining embryos and to those desiring to experience pregnancy, childbirth, and family!





DREAMING ABOUT BUILDING A FAMILY?

Begin to create your
lifetime of memories.

- Embryo adoption is an exciting new source of hope
- Embryo adoption allows you to experience pregnancy and childbirth
- No costly IVF or egg donor expenses
- Our caring, hands-on staff guides you through the process

Embryo adoption may be the
right choice for you.



LEARN MORE TODAY!

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