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**Surrogacy – Finding A Surrogate Mother**

**By Ciara McGrath**

Once you have made the difficult decision to turn to a surrogate mother to help you have a family, it can be hard to know what to do next. You will have spent a long time considering the emotional implications on yourself and all the other people involved, but now you may be unsure about the practicalities of surrogacy.

The first thing to decide, with a medical professional, is what type of surragacy you will need. For instance, artificial insemination is an option for couples in which the woman has lost, or never had enough, egg cells.

The surrogate mother is artificially inseminated with sperm from the male partner. The child will therefore be genetically related to the surrogate mother and the male partner. In order for the intended mother to be legally recognised as a parent of the child she will have to adopt the baby once it is born.

It is highly important to sign a legal agreement with the surrogate, saying that she will give the baby to the intended parents. Sometimes, the intended parents agree to give the surrogate visitation rights - but all these details should be arranged before the birth.

Another surrogacy option available, depending on the cause of infertility, is gestational surrogacy. This technique combines the sperm and egg cells from the intended parents in the hope of creating an embryo - in the same way that IVF does. The embryo or embryos are then transferred to the surrogate womb.

Whichever method you use, the choice of surrogate mother will be a difficult, but also exciting, decision. Some couples have a surrogate in mind, such as a close friend or family member.

Such independant arrangements have the benefits of a greater level of understanding between the planned parents and the surrogate, and an oppertunity for the surrogate to stay in touch with the child. It is also considerably cheaper than going through an agency.

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However, remember that you will need to stick to the same legal protocol as you would with a stranger. The contract should still be drawn up by attorneys representing both parties.

The person you choose and their partner will have to undergo medical testing, and you should agree any behavior modifications before hand. You should be prepared for your relationship with the person to change during the pregnancy and after the child is born.

A surrogacy agency is another solution. Whilst it may feel odd involving a stranger in such a personal experience, it is reassuring to know that the women involved have volunteered to help people like you, and have undergone vigorous checks.

A good agency will keep you informed through all the stages of your application. You will have to give detailed information on your medical and psychological history - but so will your potential surrogate. Experienced co-ordinators will find a surrogate whose situation is compatible with your needs.

As your nearest specialist centre may be a long way away, the internet is a good tool for preparing in advance of your application and meetings with potential candidates. Things to check out include: what the centre requires from a surrogate (in terms of health, age, previous births and psychological profile), what legal issues you need to think about and how much the whole experience will cost.

Think long and study hard to find out what is best for you, and you will have prepared yourself for a successful surrogate pregnancy.

Ciara McGrath has four teenage daughters. She travels widely. For more articles visit

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.&nbsp; Find out more at

<http://www.surrogate-pregnancy.info>

and

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### **Little Big Bird**

**By Jean Woods**

A few years ago while sitting on a bench outside my workplace I noticed two birds running around making all kinds of noise. One was much larger than the other was so I assumed that she was the mother trying to feed her young. I couldn't believe that the small bird, a lovely little sparrow, was jumping up and down trying to put food in the mouth of this ungrateful screeching little big bird who did nothing but keep his mouth open and run around as if he wasn't getting enough to eat. The mother was

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exhausted from all this jumping about. I thought I'd give the mother a break and throw some breadcrumbs out there for them to share. Do you think the 'Baby' bird would feed itself – NO! It still waited for Mom to jump up and put the morsels in its mouth. If this were the real mother of this monster bird, then I would hate to see the father! I've heard of birds laying their eggs in 'foreign' nests but the least they could do is pick a surrogate mother their own size!

Since then I've been reading up on 'brood parasites' – that's what they call these deadbeat mothers who leave it up to other birds to raise their babies. The one most popular in the Americas seems to be the Brown-headed Cowbird which is a pretty big bird in comparison to the sparrow. To help out the sparrow I decided to go into real estate – wild bird real estate that is: bird houses and feeders, plus baths and fountains. This way the sparrow can move in a small holed birdhouse and not worry about a bigger bird coming in and laying its eggs for her to raise. She can bring up her own little sparrows the way nature intended.

After working for over 20 years in an office, (the place I witnessed the above) I decided to work at home and sell something I really like. To me there is nothing like the sound of birds chirping in the morning. So after lots of pondering I chose to help them out and provide them with their own home at

<http://www.birdbathplus.com/>



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