

BABIES SWAPPED AT FERTILIZATION

Nov 13, 2021

WARM-UP QUESTIONS • *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. How do you feel when you make a mistake? Are you hard on yourself?
2. Read the headline above. Have you heard this news story? If so, say what you know. If not, can you guess what it's about?

VOCABULARY • *Match the following vocabulary words with a description. Use a dictionary if you need to.*

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| 1. Sue | a) a medical treatment or operation |
| 2. Fertilization | b) a human in the early stages of development |
| 3. Procedure | c) a claim against a person or organization that is made in court |
| 4. Sperm | d) remaining unknown to the public |
| 5. Embryo | e) causing an egg or seed to start to develop by joining it with a male cell |
| 6. Complexion | f) to develop a connection with someone |
| 7. Bond | g) a cell that is produced by the male sexual organs and that joins to a female's egg in reproduction |
| 8. Pregnancy | h) the state of being pregnant |
| 9. Lawsuit | i) the natural color and condition of a person's face |
| 10. Anonymous | j) to take legal action against a person or organization, often to claim money as compensation for harmed caused |

LISTEN • *Listen to the audio track on eslnewsstories.com or to a reader of the text. Try to fill in the missing words. Then check your answers with the full text.*

A Californian (1) _____ is suing the IVF clinic that helped them give birth to a baby because that baby was not their genetic child.

IVF, or *in vitro fertilization*, is a procedure in which a woman's (2) _____ is fertilized by a man's sperm in a laboratory and then placed in the woman so that she can grow the embryo in her body. However, in this case, the embryos of two couples were (3) _____ at the laboratory and placed in the wrong mothers.

When the baby was born, the couple noticed her complexion was (4) _____ than their own.

Although concerned, they did not want to believe a swap could have happened. They continued to raise the baby for three (5) _____ until suspicion caused them to get a DNA test, and the test showed they were not the child's natural parents.

After meeting several times, both couples made the difficult (6) _____ to permanently swap the babies. Each couple intends to remain in contact with the other family and the child they gave birth to.

The couple is suing the clinic because of the (7) _____ experience they have gone through, and because they have lost the chance to bond with their child through pregnancy and early infancy. The other couple is preparing their own (8) _____ lawsuit, but they wish to remain anonymous.

WORD FORMS • Fill in different forms for the vocabulary from the article. Use a dictionary if you need to. Where there is an **x**, the word is uncommon, has a different meaning, or doesn't exist. Sometimes there are multiple possible answers, and sometimes the adjective form is a past or present participle.

VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	NOUN
sue		x	
			fertilization
			procedure
x			embryo
bond		x	
			pregnancy
	anonymous		

A Californian couple is suing the IVF clinic that helped them give birth to a baby because that baby was not their genetic child.

IVF, or *in vitro fertilization*, is a procedure in which a woman's egg is fertilized by a man's sperm in a laboratory and then placed in the woman so that she can grow the embryo in her body. However, in this case, the embryos of two couples were swapped at the laboratory and placed in the wrong mothers.

When the baby was born, the couple noticed her complexion was darker than their own. Although concerned, they did not want to believe a swap could have happened. They continued to raise the baby for three months until suspicion caused them to get a DNA test, and the test showed they were not the child's natural parents.

After meeting several times, both couples made the difficult decision to permanently swap the babies. Each couple intends to remain in contact with the other family and the child they gave birth to.

The couple is suing the clinic because of the painful experience they have gone through, and because they have lost the chance to bond with their child through pregnancy and early infancy. The other couple is preparing their own similar lawsuit, but they wish to remain anonymous.

Sources: [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com), [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)
For source links, see the article on [ESLNewsStories.com](https://www.eslnewsstories.com)

COMPREHENSION • *Decide if the following are true (T) or false (F), and then discuss your answers with your partner(s).*

1. Two couples decided to swap their babies. (T / F)
2. An IVF clinic made a mistake. (T / F)
3. An IVF clinic is suing a couple. (T / F)
4. One couple wants to remain anonymous. (T / F)
5. During in vitro fertilization, babies are grown in a laboratory. (T / F)

COMPLETE • *Re-order the following sentences. You should capitalize certain words and add punctuation.*

1. an / clinic / mistake / made / a / ivf / terrible
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2. lost / opportunity / child / to / they / the / bond / with / their
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DISCUSSION • *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Try to speak in sentences and ask follow-up questions.*

1. Do you (or did you) have a close relationship with your parents?
2. Do you look like your parents? Do you look like one of them in particular? Which of your features can you see in them?
3. How is being swapped at fertilization different from being swapped at birth?
4. The couples in the story chose to swap their babies so that each baby is with their genetic parents. Why do you think they did this? Do you agree with their decision?
5. If you wanted to have a child, would you consider using *in vitro fertilization*? Why or why not?
6. Both sets of parents in this case have had a bad experience. How about the babies? Do you think they know what happened?
7. How important is bonding between parent and child during pregnancy and infancy?
8. Have you had a DNA test? What did you learn? If not, would you like to? What would you like to learn about yourself?
9. The couple in the story are suing the IVF clinic. Do you support this action? If so, how much money do you think they should receive?
10. One set of parents wants to remain anonymous. What do you think are their reasons?

VOCABULARY: 1-j, 2-e, 3-a, 4-g, 5-b, 6-i, 7-f, 8-h, 9-c, 10-d

COMPREHENSION: 1-T, 2-T, 3-F, 4-T, 5-F.

WORD FORMS: sued, suer, fertilize, fertile/fertilized/fertilizable, fertiley, proceed, procedural/proceeded, procedurally, embryonic, embryonically, bonded, bond, impregnate, pregnant, pregnantly, anonymize, anonymously, anonymity

COMPLETE: 1. An IVF clinic made a terrible mistake. 2. They lost the opportunity to bond with their child.