

No developmental differences in children conceived via assisted reproductive technology

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Parents with children conceived via IVF, IUI or using infertility medication can rest assured that treatment has no impact on childhood development.

In a study from Fertility Centers of Illinois in collaboration with Rush University Medical Center, parents of children conceived spontaneously and through assisted reproductive technology (ART) reported developmental milestones from birth to five years old in the Ovia Parenting app. Developmental milestones were created using [CDC guidelines](#).

Both groups achieved developmental milestones in a similar timeline. A [significant difference](#) existed at 12 months where those conceived through ART were more likely to report their child met all milestones than spontaneously conceived children's parents.

Study participants were based in the U.S. and of the 1,881 who completed the survey, 229 (12.2 percent) used ART and 1,652 (87.8 percent) conceived spontaneously. ART methods included infertility medication (91), [intrauterine insemination](#) (89), in vitro fertilization (78), and 28 respondents reported more than one method.

Mixed evidence exists regarding the effect of ART on childhood [developmental milestones](#). ART increases the risk of prematurity and [low birth weight](#), both of which are associated with developmental delays.

Other studies have suggested that ART does not have a negative effect on the physical and mental development of children when compared to naturally conceived children, but this is the first study to analyze [childhood development](#) from the perspective of the parent.

"Parents spend a lot of time with their children and know their behavior better than anyone, which is why it is so important to analyze development from their perspective," explains Dr. Jennifer Hirshfeld-Cytron, study author and reproductive endocrinologist with Fertility Centers of Illinois. "Many patients don't pursue fertility treatment due to a fear their child will not be 'normal' as a result. This study helps to lay this fear to rest."

According to the CDC, one in eight couples will experience difficulty getting pregnant or sustaining a pregnancy.

Using ART to conceive a baby is increasingly common. In the [2016 CDC ART National Summary Report](#), the latest reporting available on ART data, approximately 263,577 ART cycles were completed that year. Last year, the global count of babies created using IVF surpassed eight million.

Study findings were presented at the Pacific Coast Reproductive Society Annual Meeting in April.

Provided by Fertility Centers of Illinois

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