



## iParenting Family News

### Singles Pursuing Parenthood Through Alternative Means

Latin singer Ricky Martin cemented a new parental trend when he became a father of twins via a surrogate mother last month. Spotlighting a rapidly growing trend among modern-day singletons, both male and female – many are becoming a biological or adoptive parent, despite being single.

While single women pioneered this trend using donor sperm in the mid '80s, the numbers have steadily increased, and industry consensus is such that there is now an increasing number of single men – both gay and straight – choosing to become fathers through surrogates and other means.

Ricky Martin isn't the first single parent to go it alone. Tina Fey's character in the recent movie *Baby Mama* also showcased the emerging option of surrogacy and IVF, but other high-profile singles such as Angelina Jolie (pre-Brad Pitt) and Sheryl Crow pursued adoption, paving the way for many other singles to become parents. While third-party reproduction is skyrocketing as an option for singles, adoption agencies also agree that there has been an increase in the number of singles inquiring about adoption – both women and men.

Nancy Block, alternative conception expert and founder of The Center for Egg Options Illinois (CEO), explains that there has been a definite shift in the way people now look at parenthood, particularly as alternative means such as egg and sperm donation, surrogacy and adoption become more common and more widely accepted. "While in the past we worked mostly with couples, we have seen an increasing number of single parents – both men and women – inquiring about their options for having a child," she says.

- Surrogacy agencies, surveys on adoption and father support groups all say that they are seeing more single fathers by choice. (*New York Times*, 2008)
- Single-father households are on the rise – 2 million households were headed by unmarried fathers in 2007, compared with 1.8 million in 2000 and 1.2 million in 1990 (Census).
- 16 percent of fertility clinics in the United States would not treat single women (Center for Disease Control & Prevention, 2007).
- 73,000 never-married men have adopted a child, a group including those that are single fathers by choice (National Center for Health Statistics).
- 33 percent of children adopted from Foster Care are by a single parent (U.S. DHHS, 2000).
- Most surrogacy agencies in the United States provide a "one-stop" service where men (gay and straight) can find an egg donor and a woman to carry the child.
- Percentage of CEO clientele that are homosexual: 5 percent.
- Percentage of inquiries CEO receives from single men: 10 percent.

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