

The Free Market
Approach: Surrogacy
in the United States

The Personal Experience

Erika L. Fuchs, PhD, MPH
University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

 @erikafuchs

June 27, 2019

Conflicts

Intellectual biases

Personal experience biases

Sponsored attendance





Who am I?

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Social/behavioral epidemiologist,
study maternal and child health

FORMER GESTATIONAL CARRIER (GC)

Delivered twins as a GC
in June 2006





THE GOAL IS FOR ALL PARTIES TO BE

*Legally empowered
and protected*



The background is a solid dark teal color. It is decorated with several white, hand-drawn scribbles of varying sizes and densities, located in the corners and along the edges. There is a small scribble in the top-left, a large one in the top-right, a medium one in the middle-right, a small one in the bottom-right, a medium one in the bottom-left, and another small one in the middle-left.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO HAVE

*A healthy outcome for
the GC and
resultant child(ren)*

What are the steps and requirements?

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- 21-45 years
- At least one term, uncomplicated pregnancy
- Ideally done having own children
- Stable environment
 - Financially secure
 - Raising own child

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING

- Interview and testing
 - Qualified mental health professional

MEDICAL SCREENING

- Medical evaluation cleared for pregnancy
- STI and other testing

MATCHING PROCESS, LEGAL

- Agency or independently
- May be over the phone, online, in person, or some combination
- Separate legal representation for each party

My Experience

- Fit the basic age, financial requirements
- Psychological screening with PhD, LMFT
 - Interview
 - MMPI
- Medical screening
 - Records review
 - Lab tests



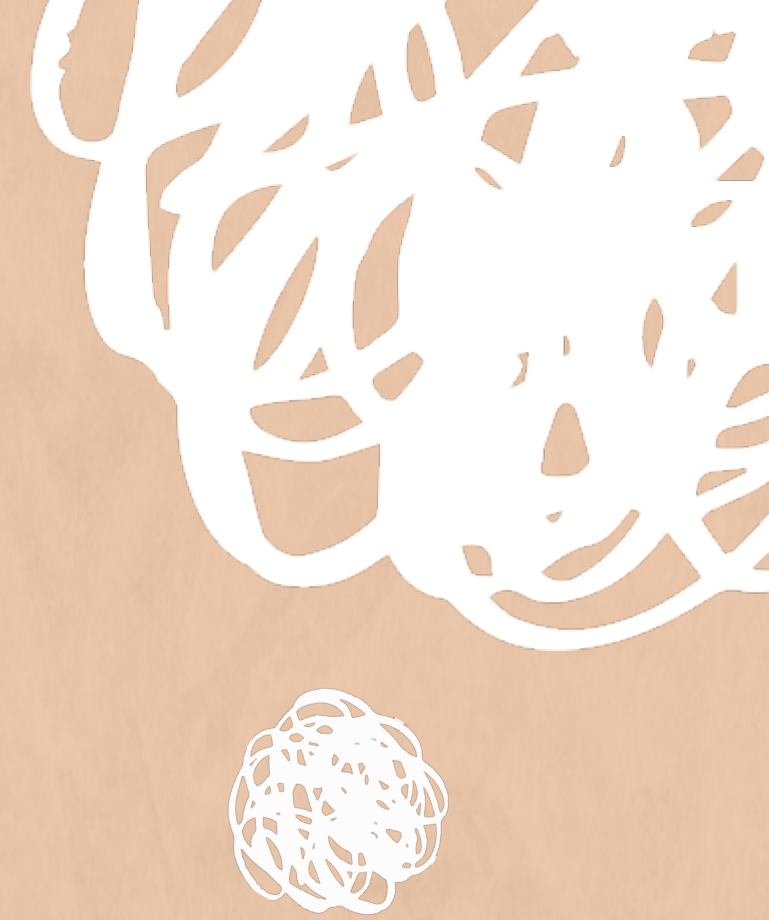
ALL TO ENSURE THE

*Lowest risk of
adverse events*

Agency Benefits

In the US, private businesses can help facilitate the process, including:

- Schedule screening
- Facilitate the matching process
- Assist with legal representation for one party, generally intended parent(s) (IP(s))
- Coordinate travel and reimbursement
- Support GC/IP communication, mediation



In a previous study

71%

OF GESTATIONAL CARRIERS USED AN AGENCY

Fuchs & Berenson, 2016

Agency *EX*perience

It was easy!

Matching process was facilitated via phone meetings.

Screening, travel, hotels, and reimbursements all were handled.



Matching Preferences - Basics

- Type of IP(s)
 - Couple, single, gay, other
 - Religious preferences
- Location
 - Domestic
 - International
- Compensation, escrow
- Relationship desired
- Termination



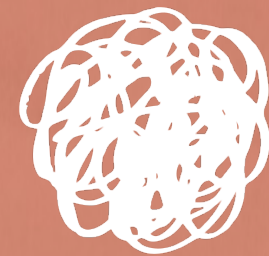
Matching Preferences - Other

- Desired communication frequency
- Diet or exercise preferences
- Birth preferences
- Pumping/breastfeeding
- Single/dual embryo transfer
- Number of attempts



Agree on these?

CONGRATS! You're matched.



Legal EXperiences



Varies widely by state from
prohibition of compensated GC
to pre-birth orders.

My state was in between.

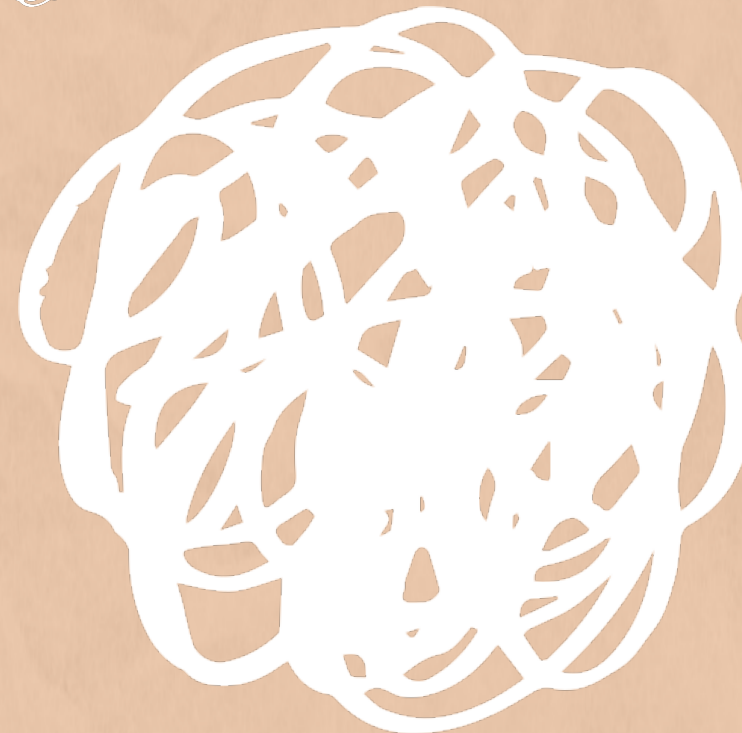
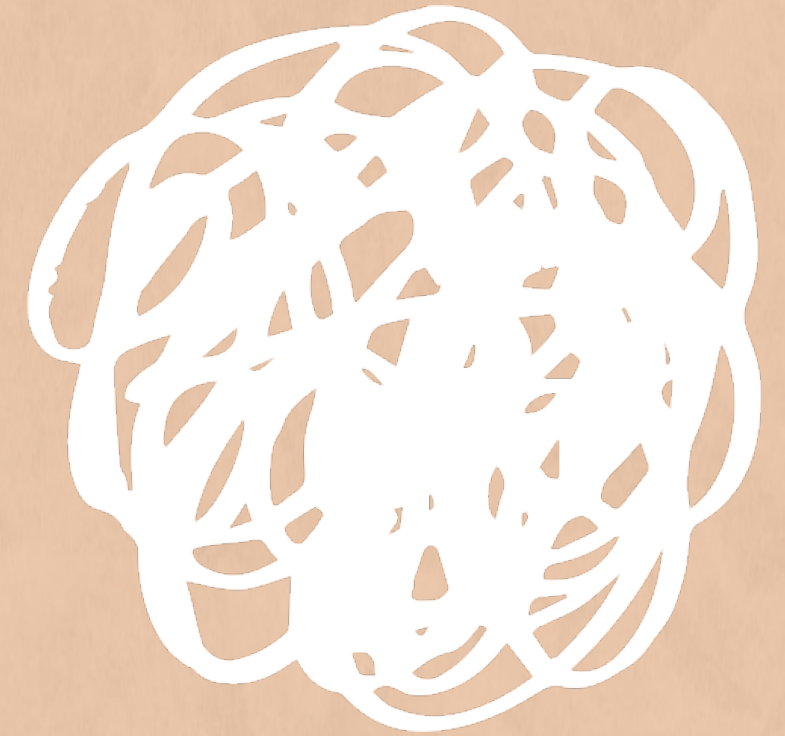
Creative Family Connections has excellent
maps with categorization of laws and
expanded information by state.



Important Legal Considerations

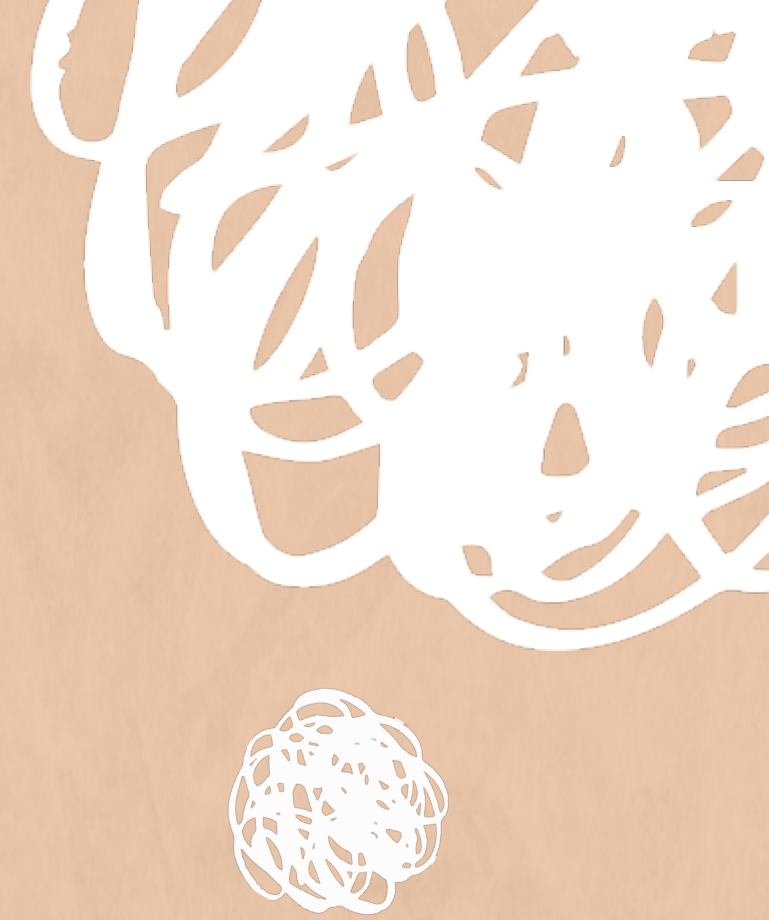
Highlights:

Reimbursement/Compensation
Insurance coverage (health and life)
Establishment of parentage
Multiple embryo transfer, gestation
Termination/Reduction



Risks of Multiple Gestation

- Pre-term birth
- Low birth weight
- Pre-eclampsia
- Gestational diabetes
- Cesarean section



Percentage of carriers with multiple births:

35%

Fuchs & Berenson, 2018

This is **10x higher** than the population overall.

Multiple birth was much higher in GC pregnancies
in the early 2000s.

Termination
agreements cannot be
enforced.



My Experience

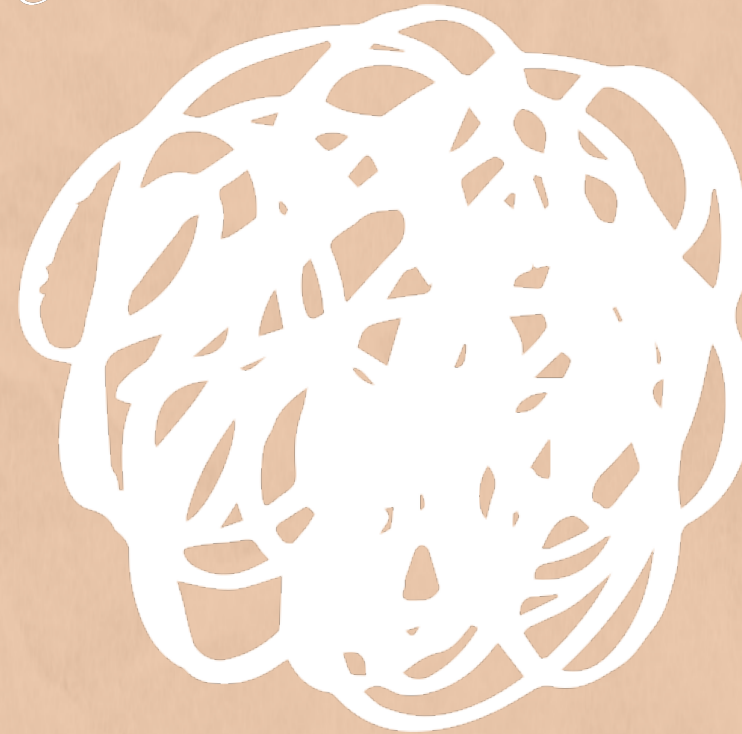
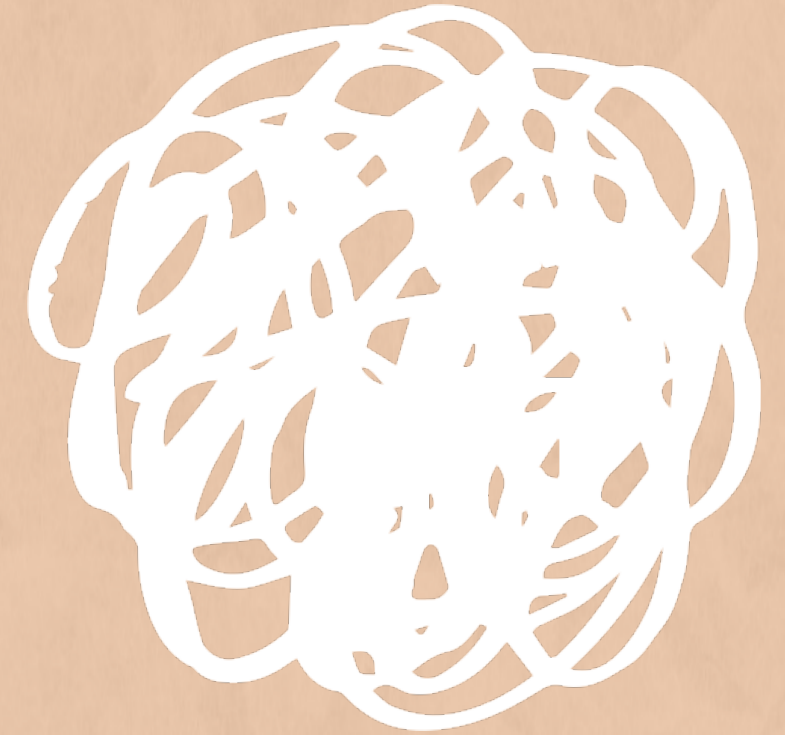
Highlights:

22 years old

GC for a single IP

Frozen dual embryo transfer, failed

Dual fresh embryo transfer, twins!



Delivery Experience

- Twins were born at 34 weeks after PPRM
- Easy delivery
- Babies were healthy at about 5 lbs. (2.3 kg) each
- IP was able to attend their birth
- Large metro area, but at the time this was unusual for the hospital



Three Major Necessities



Supportive Family



Financial Security



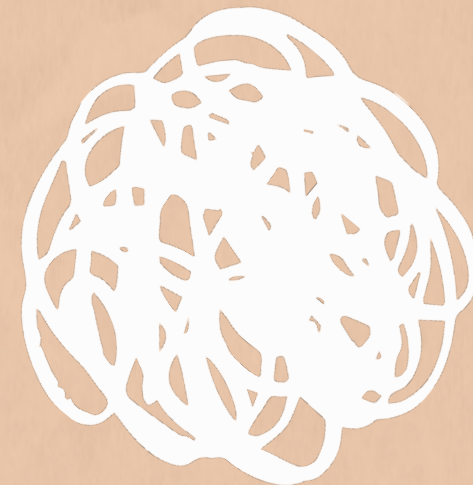
Back-up Child Care

Difficulties



Life keeps happening, so things
come up.

Attending court during
recovery from birth can be
tough.



After Delivery



Photo of me and one of the babies at
18 hours post-partum.

Babies

Spent a few days in the
nursery and went home!

Me

Got back to my usual life,
continued my schooling and
parenting my child.

SCREENING

Important for everyone's basic protection
and well-being.

AGENCY SUPPORT

Makes the process easy.

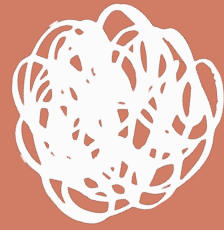
LEGAL CONTRACTS

For when things go right or wrong.

FAMILY, FRIENDS, FINANCIALS

Without interpersonal support and
financial stability, the process may be
stressful.

*13 Years of
Hindsight*



Any questions?



Thank you!

