

Designer children? Will movement for 3-parent babies change how we view parenthood?

Last week members of the British House of Commons passed a bill legalizing mitochondrial DNA transfers—a process that combines three different sets of DNA to create an embryo. It needs approval from the House of Lords before it can be enacted.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales view the procedure as [destructive to the embryos](#). “It’s hard to argue against religious beliefs,” Lisa Campo-Engelstein, a professor of bioethics and obstetrics & gynecology at the Albany Medical College. That’s because the definition of life differs from person to person, and the concept of when a person begins to have a soul enters a less scientific discussion.

Some British interest groups have expressed concern about the potential for in vitro fertilized eggs that are genetically engineered to have, for example, blonde hair, more intelligence, mor increased athleticism. The [Human Genetics Alert](#) took an ethical [stance against mitochondrial transfers](#), because they say it will “[inevitably lead to a future of ‘designer babies’](#).”

Experts we spoke to, however, aren’t convinced the leap from mitochondrial transfer to genetic trait modification is so direct. “The intention here is purely therapeutic,” says David DeGrazia, a philosophy professor at George Washington University who specializes in bioethics. “It’s to avoid certain diseases an embryo and then a baby can have as a result of mitochondria. Mitochondria don’t have anything to do with the characteristics that might be sought in a designer babies.”

Read full, original article: [What 3-parent babies mean for the future of reproductive medicine](#)