

# Biological Parent Encyclopedia Article

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# Biological Parent

*Male or female whose genes provide the genetic makeup of a child.*

The definition of the term *biological parent* has become more complex as medical technology has expanded the parameters of the human reproductive process. Conception of a human **fetus** may be accomplished through sexual intercourse between the male and female parents, through artificial insemination, or through **in vitro fertilization**.

The term *biological parent* is typically used only when a child has more than one set of parents, to distinguish between those who have custody of the child—such as adoptive parents, foster parents, or stepparents—and those who contributed the genetic makeup of the child. The term is legally significant under laws enacted in some states to provide definitions and standards for issues of parentage, especially in those cases involving a paternity suit.