

A matter of birth and death

Discussion

1. Do you know any couples who are childless?
2. Do you think that more couples are childless because they don't want children or because they can't have children?
3. Do you know any couples who have had IVF (in vitro fertilisation) treatment? Was it successful?

Reading

Read the article below. Mark these sentences T (true) or F (false):

1. Diane Blood died after a fight.
2. Stephen Blood is Liam's father.
3. Diane Blood was treated in Britain.

SECOND CHILD FOR DIANE

Diane Blood, the widow who spent two years fighting the courts for the right to have a child using her late husband's sperm, is now pregnant with a second child also from his sperm.

Diane's husband, Stephen Blood, became ill with meningitis in March 1995, aged 30. The couple had been trying to start a family. While Stephen lay dying in hospital, Diane persuaded doctors to remove and freeze a sample of his sperm. The Human Fertilisation and Embryo

Authority initially refused to allow Diane Blood to use the sperm because her husband had not given permission in writing. However, the appeal court later decided that she could take the sperm abroad for treatment under EU law. Her son, Liam, was born three and a half years after his father's death.

Diane Blood said: 'I'm an only child but Stephen had two sisters. He would have been delighted that Liam is to be raised with a full brother or sister, and that he is to be a father again.'

Discussion

1. With a partner, try to agree on one alternative from each of the following:

1. a. It was right that Stephen Blood's sperm was removed. He would have agreed.
b. It was wrong that the sperm was removed without Stephen's consent.
 2. a. It was a disgrace that she could not be treated in Britain.
b. Britain is right to have such strict laws about this kind of thing.
 3. a. Diane should not have been allowed to do this a second time.
b. It is crazy that governments should become involved. This is a matter for the individual.
 4. a. It is wrong to bring children into the world with no father present.
b. A single mother can be just as good a parent.
2. How do you think the parents of Stephen Blood felt at the birth of the first child? Do you think they are happy at the idea of another grandchild?
3. What is the situation in your country?
- a. The law is very strict and it is very difficult to do something like this.
 - b. The law is very progressive and Diane Blood would have had no trouble doing what she did.
 - c. My country has no official policy on things like this.
4. Are you aware of any cases like Diane Blood's in your country?