To what extent should parents be allowed to use selection technologies (such as preimplantation genetic diagnosis) to determine the characteristics of their children? And is there something morally wrong with parents who wish to do this? Choosing Tomorrow's Children provides answers to these questions. In particular, the book applies the techniques of philosophical bioethics to address issues raised by selective reproduction, the practice of choosing between different possible future persons by selecting or deselecting (for example) embryos, eggs, and sperm. It offers answers to questions including the following. Do children have a ‘right to an open future’ and, if they do, what moral constraints does this place upon selective reproduction? Under what circumstances (if any) should sex selection be allowed? Should we ‘screen out’ as much disease and disability as possible before birth, or would that be an objectionable form of eugenics? Is it acceptable to create or select a future person (a ‘saviour sibling’) in order to provide life-saving tissue for an existing relative? Is there a moral difference between selecting to avoid disease and selecting to produce an ‘enhanced’ child? And should we allow deaf parents to use reproductive technologies to ensure that they have a deaf child? The book does not provide one overarching conclusion but rather assesses each argument-type on its merits. Insofar as it is possible to generalise though, Choosing Tomorrow's Children concludes that most of the arguments usually provided against selective reproduction are flawed in one way or another.
Introduction: The Ethics of Selective Reproduction
Stephen Wilkinson
in Choosing Tomorrow's Children: The Ethics of Selective Reproduction
Published in print: 2010 Published Online: May 2010
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

This introductory chapter starts by briefly describing three real cases of selective reproduction. It then offers a general account of what selective reproduction is: that it involves choosing between different possible future people. It also provides an explanation of the book's methodological and theoretical presuppositions, and offers a particular view of philosophical bioethics. This includes an explanation of why the moral status of the embryo is largely irrelevant to the ethics of selective reproduction. Finally, the structure of the whole book is outlined.

From reason to practice in bioethics
John Coggon, Sarah Chan, Soren Holme, and Thomasine Kushner (eds)
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: January 2016
Publisher: Manchester University Press
Item type: book

From Reason to Practice in Bioethics: An Anthology Dedicated to the Works of John Harris brings together original contributions from some of the world’s leading scholars in the field of bioethics. With a particular focus on, and critical engagement with, the influential work of Professor John Harris, the book provides a detailed exploration of some of the most interesting and challenging philosophical and practical questions raised in bioethics. The book’s broad range of chapters make it a useful resource for students, scholars, and practitioners interested in the field of bioethics, and the relationship between philosophical and practical ethics. The range of contributors and topics afford the book a wide international interest.