

**How To… Speech/ Question of Value or Fact**

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**R110 Section No: R110 25514**

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**Title of Speech: The Ethics of Designer Children**

**Thesis Statement: I believe that the advent of designer children should be avoided at all costs because of the many associated negative consequences.**

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| **LEFT COLUMN***label speech functions* | **MIDDLE COLUMN*****content of speech******use complete sentences*** | **RIGHT COLUMN***Label physical behaviors* |

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| Attention-Getter | **INTRODUCTION**1. You may have heard of “designer children”—those who are genetically modified in vitro by their parents to have specific traits.
2. It is very possible that in the future we will be the parents with this power.
3. I have done extensive research into the ethics of these designer children, and am excited to share my findings with you today.
4. I believe that the advent of designer children should be avoided at all costs because of the many associated negative consequences.
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| T.I.A |
| Credibility |
| Thesis |
| Main Point | **BODY**1. According to Sarah Ly, author of “Ethics of Designer Babies”, the first designer child was born in 1996 to Monique and Scott Collins.
	1. The couple had two sons already, and wanted a daughter to round out their family.
		1. They used an embryo screening technology called preimplantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD, to select for a female embryo (Ly).
		2. This technology had previously only been used to screen embryos for genetic disorders, so this event brought about the first of the ethical issues regarding the use of alternative reproductive techniques to create designer children.
	2. People realized that gender selection was only the beginning of what could be done using reproductive technology, and that further traits such as eye color, height, and possibly even intelligence could be selected for.
 | (\*Fill in any actions) |
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| Transition | While it is becoming increasingly easier and more affordable to conceive children through alternative reproductive methods, the ethics of manipulating genes, the very essence of who we are as individuals, are questionable. |  |
| Main Point | 1. A common argument against designer children is one that focuses on the far-reaching impacts they could have.
	1. Many fear that classes of people would be further separated as the technology would only be available to those of higher classes with more money to spend.
2. In this way, economic divisions would become genetic divisions between “enhanced” and “non-enhanced” members of society (Ly).
3. Eventually, middle and possibly lower classes of people would have access to the technology, but it would take decades for the costs to decrease to this level.
	1. Furthermore, the gaps between developed and undeveloped countries would widen. Some argue that these gaps would narrow as people became increasingly better and equal, but as aforementioned, it would take a long time for this to be fully realized (Bess).
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| Transition | Another major issue that arises when speaking about the advent of designer children is that of autonomy. |  |
| Main Point | 1. Autonomy is an individual’s right to make their own decisions.
	1. Obviously, when a person’s genes are being modified, they are still in the embryo stage of life and have no say in the process.
2. Imagine how you would feel if you grew up thinking all your feelings, talents, and hobbies were your own only to later discover they had been preprogrammed into you by your parents (Bess).
3. Surprisingly, some bioethicists see no problem with this and say that “parents have a right to prenatal autonomy, which grants them the right to decide the fate of their children” (Ly).
	1. George Annas, the chair of the Department of Health Law, Bioethics, and Human Rights at Harvard University, takes this even further, and has said that designer babies should be a consumer product open to market regulation (qtd. in Ly).
4. While not everyone would agree with Annas, many people believe that children are already largely affected by their parents’ decisions as they grow up.
5. With this view, signing your kids up to play soccer is virtually the same as genetically selecting for them to have greater athletic ability.
6. I disagree with this stance, because as Michael Bess has said, gene editing “affects the fundamental platform of capabilities, attitudes, preferences, and propensities that make up our identities” (Bess).
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| Transition | The last concern with designer children I will be talking about is the negative consequences that could arise from having an elite group of society whose members have a large advantage over “normal” humans. |  |
| Main Point | 1. As a human race, we have never before had the capability to genetically edit ourselves, and have no idea what the consequences could be for all further generations.
	1. While you may have heard that “any technology with the power to ease human suffering should be fully embraced,” you may not agree after hearing the negative consequences that could result (Nicodemo).
		1. Because gene editing happens on a genetic level, harmful genetic mutations could be inherited by future offspring that could even lead to a disease epidemic, according to John Basl, a philosophy professor at Northeastern University (qtd. in Nicodemo).
		2. We have also never modified an embryo to an extent beyond choosing sex, and don’t know what could happen if the procedure went wrong.
	2. Furthermore, we could see the development of a world where only “modified” humans could succeed in society.
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| Transition | A survey was recently done with 1,000 people to see how many would genetically modify their child. |  |
| Main Point | 1. The results were that most people would, even if they found it to be immoral.
	1. As can be seen in this figure, most people are most concerned with the health and intelligence of their future child.
	2. However, traits such as attractiveness and creativity are also things parents wish to modify, and are definitely not essential to the child’s well-being (Aquilina).
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| Review of Main PointsClincher/tag/exit line or Final Appeal | **CONCLUSION**1. In a future world where everyone is a better version of the humans we now know, “diversity of talents, personalities, and qualities among people will be reduced” and there will be a “reduced tolerance of difference” according to Patricia Illingworth, a professor of philosophy and business at Northeastern University (qtd. in Nicodemo).
2. Because of the scientific advancements being made every day, these changes will come rapidly, not giving anyone enough time to adjust to or fully realize the implications (Bess).
3. For all these reasons, I caution everyone to beware of the consequences of genetically modifying their children.
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Works Cited—MLA Format

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