

# Kids' book explains IVF as told from child's perspective

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GENEVA – When Tess Kossow couldn't find a children's book about in vitro fertilization, the Geneva writer with an MBA decided to take a leap and leave her corporate role to write her family's story as told through the eyes of a child.

Named after her own, nearly 1-year-old son, the colorfully illustrated, rhyming picture book titled "I'm Very Ferris" was released this year in hardcover and paperback by Outskirts Press. It can be found online and at Harvey's Tales bookstore in Geneva. The first letters of each word in the title spell IVF.



Tess Kossow

She will be at two local book signings in March, joined by Ferris, the first at Primrose School of St. Charles West as one of five vendors March 23, and the second on March 25 at Gymboree Play & Music of St. Charles. The latter includes an open gym meet-up for kids age 5 and younger, and costs \$5 to attend for nonmembers.

"I have been working on the book since July of 2018 – I couldn't be happier with the outcome," Kossow told Kane Weekend Editor Renee Tomell. The following is an edited version of the rest of their conversation.

## Renee Tomell: When did you start looking for children's books on IVF?

**Tess Kossow:** [While] planning the nursery. I [had been] going through IVF with my husband [Dan], the long process of it – the ups and downs – when it finally worked. Ferris was our last embryo.

## Tomell: You believe the book will appeal to a broad audience of people who have dealt personally with infertility or who know others who have?

**Kossow:** Infertility affects one in eight couples. To have something positive and uplifting ... to bring children, siblings or cousins or friends [who] want to know what's going on when [parents] have to go in for all these tests or shots or surgeries.

## Tomell: You were motivated to write soon after your son's birth?

**Kossow:** After I had Ferris, it was time to tap into my entrepreneurial spirit and my editorial background. And it was now or never – I need to do



Photo provided

Tess Kossow of Geneva has written "I'm Very Ferris," a book that introduces children to in vitro fertilization and is inspired by her son, Ferris.

## IF YOU GO

- **WHAT:** Book signings for "I'm Very Ferris" by Tess Kossow
- **WHERE:** Primrose School of St. Charles West, 1940 Bricher Road; and Gymboree Play & Music of St. Charles, 1970 W. Main St.
- **WHEN:** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 23, and 1 to 2:30 p.m. March 25, respectively
- **FIND THE BOOK:** Harvey's Tales, 216 James St., Geneva; amazon.com; barnesandnoble.com; tesskossow.com

this. I decided to start my own company and begin work on the "I'm Very Ferris" series and it snowballed from there. I wanted to fill this void for families going through IVF.

## Tomell: With help from your baby muse, how did you approach the story itself?

**Kossow:** It's told from a little baby's perspective – Ferris' perspective ... and he walks you through the story of him and how he's like other babies, but has special stories about his birth. It rhymes and is very gender friendly.

## Tomell: Have you received feedback?

**Kossow:** Telling the story is my passion. I'm already seeing the feedback

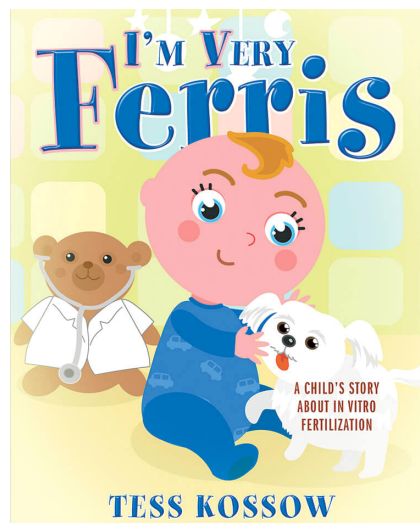


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ris and his adventures.

## Tomell: What is your target age for the series?

**Kossow:** I'm an advocate for storytelling and reading for infants. I designed this book with that intent. Three- and 4-year-olds and up can understand [it].

## Tomell: You delve further into IVF on your blog.

**Kossow:** The blog is open to people going through infertility or looking for someone to bounce ideas with. I don't give specific advice. I'm not a medical professional. [It's] to let people in on my personal experiences and the different topics [and] conversations.

## Tomell: You have added a new goal – training for your first New York City Marathon this fall.

**Kossow:** I've officially been invited. I'm running for Team for Kids, a children's charity. All the money I raise will be for that. I was [running] for exercise. It became something I truly enjoy. It's my first and probably my last. New York City is one of my favorite places. [The marathon] runs through all five boroughs. My husband [and] Ferris will be there. I want to finish.

from people who have read it. The momentum is building; the need is there. It's the most incredible feeling. To see an idea and thought come to life and affect people's lives in a positive way.

## Tomell: Talk about the second book in the series, which you're titling "I'm Very Ferris Takes a Bubble Bath."

**Kossow:** I expect the second book to be out by the end of 2019. This next book will refer back to IVF, but [opens into other] children's topics to invite all families into the series ... about Fer-