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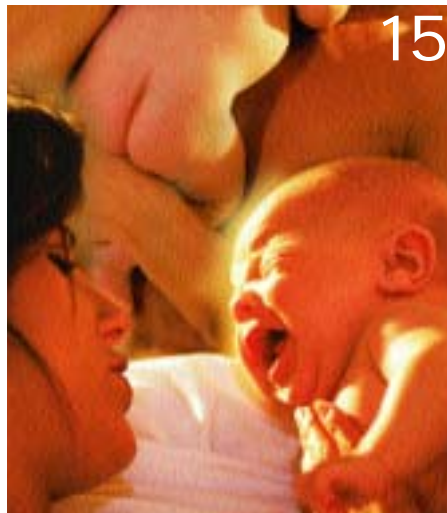
ON THE COVER

Anna and Ethan Elliot, 3 years old, of Littleton, Colo., are best friends. Their mom Joy reports that they often look at each other and say, "I love you." Their favorite activities are playing in the water, swinging on the swings at the park, fingerpainting and playing with their dad Wayne.

Cover Photography: Murray Elliott

Clothes: Fresh Produce has 13 stores in the U.S.; clothes also available at Nordstrom's, Galyan's and Walt Disney stores.

Location: The Hudson Gardens & Event Center, Littleton, Colo.



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A couple of weeks ago, The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies issued a report stating that its examination of scientific studies worldwide did not produce any convincing evidence that vaccines or mercury-containing thimerosal cause autism. (In 1999 and 2000 thimerosal was removed from childhood vaccines in the developed world.) The report was intended to allay the fears of parents and put to rest the controversy over vaccinations. Immediately critics called the conclusions premature and incomplete, despite the fact that this is the most in-depth report ever in discrediting claims that vaccines cause autism. Others dismiss the controversy as a political football. The issue is not so simplistic. Sadly, the ones who suffer from the mountains of conflicting information are parents and the children. Parents who ache to do the right thing for their child and are certain that vaccines—specifically mumps, measles, rubella—caused their child's autism need more answers. And that's one thing this report made clear: We need more research into autism. Among other things, we know that since 1990 there has been a real increase in the number of cases and there appears to be a strong genetic component. If one monozygotic twin is autistic, so is the other twin—in 90% of the cases. For more information on autism, visit www.autism-society.org. TWINS Magazine always has supported vaccination for two reasons: It is a public health issue, not an isolated individual choice; and there is a lack of evidence discrediting the safety of vaccines.

If one twin does have autism, cerebral palsy, a chronic illness or delay, family dynamics change dramatically. It also can happen when one twin requires surgeries. How do you meet the needs of both twins without neglecting one? In our story "When One Twin Lags Behind" by Barbara Klein, one mother of monozygotic girls talks about the shocking results of a case of pneumococcal meningitis. The vaccination Prevnar, which came on the market one month after the 16-month-old came down with the disease, could have prevented the debilitating illness and the subsequent paralysis, speech impairment and other delays. Today, this mother works through the Meningitis Foundation of America (www.musa.org) to tell her story and educate other parents. Read the story beginning on page 28.

If you notice a different look to our magazine, it's because we have a new art director. Carolyn Klass is a grandmother of 3-year-old twin girls, Carmen and Mariah, and their siblings, Jordan, age 5 and Kelli, age 2. Their grandfather, on their father's side, is a twin.

Carolyn's experience in designing and producing publications covers 25 years. She has been the art director for *Bravo Magazine*, published for the Denver Center for the Performing Arts venues; the *Denver Center Cinema Program Guide*; *Denver Magazine*; *Vail Scene*; *Denver BusinessWorld* and for the company Living the Good News, among others.

One of Carolyn's first assignments was to organize our cover photo shoot. We had made arrangements with Fresh Produce clothing company in Boulder, Colo., to provide the clothes. The co-founder of the fun and upbeat Fresh Produce is Mary Ellen Vernon. She is a twin, and her co-twin, Jennifer Howe Haney, is a head designer. They sell great coordinating cottons for twins. Carolyn chose Hudson Gardens as our site. Our cover kids were really good sports, traipsing from one spot to another, taking one shot after another. And Carolyn, with her "twin experience" was right at home with the children. Welcome, Carolyn.

Suzanne Withers
Managing Editor

TWINS tip:

Set your thermostat at 72 degrees for newborn preemies; they can't afford to burn precious calories trying to stay warm.

Do you know...



...that monozygotic twins have similar but unique fingerprints and footprints?



Maddie Carey (l.) underwent two heart surgeries in her first six months but had caught up with her brother Jack by the time they were 14 months old. Read about them in "When One Twin Lags Behind."



Carolyn, Carmen and Mariah

Correction: Jacqueline Manning who lives in Marion, Conn., and wrote "The Twin Stigma" (page 37, May/June) today lives near her sister, and they very good friends.



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Apart or together?

I am the mother of 3½ year old twin boys Seth and Grant. I read the article “School Placement: Apart or Together?” in the May/June issue. This article could not have come at a better time for my husband and me.

Our boys attend a pre-school with three classrooms of 20 children each. They started this preschool last November and were put in separate classrooms,



at the suggestion of the owner of the pre-school and the teachers at their toddler school. (Both are Montessori schools and owned by the same person.) They told us they wanted to separate the boys to encourage social skills with others, to help with language development and because they were afraid that if one got wound up, the other one would too. In the toddler school the boys had the same group of friends, so I didn't understand the social skills issue, but they did have a “twin language” that wasn't helping with their English. My husband and I agreed to give separation a try, feeling we could place them together later, if needed.

Before starting preschool both boys had a great time at the toddler school and always looked forward to going back each day. In preschool, however, Seth wasn't having such a good time. Every morning he threw a fit about going to school, he showed aggression, little respect for others and irritation both at home and school. Seth's teacher told us that he didn't listen when she asked him to do something and usually threw a tantrum when asked to do something he didn't want to do.

I sat down about two months ago with the owner and the boys' teachers to figure out something. I felt at that time that the boys should be in the same class since they seem to have such a close bond. The

teachers believed Seth would use Grant as a “crutch” to help him deal with the things that upset him and that it would be better to keep them separated. I felt like I had wasted my time.

I then read this article and knew it would help my case. My husband and I scheduled a meeting with the owner of the school. I asked her to read this article before we met. She loved the article and agreed that maybe all Seth needed was to be put in the same classroom as Grant. The teacher who now has both Seth and Grant read the article too and thinks maybe I was right from the beginning. This is their first week together in the same class, so we'll see how it goes.

Our school district has strict policies against keeping twins in the same class when they start elementary school. I'm not sure what their reasoning is, but my husband and I will research it and keep copies of all articles so that we have something to take with us when the boys start kindergarten—if we need to. Who are they to decide what is best for twins in this situation when we, their parents, know them best? We are just glad that we “won this round.” Who knows how many more rounds are to come. I appreciate TWINS Magazine so much. It has definitely helped me at various times rearing twins.

Jill Young
Liberty, Mo.

Editor's Note. To help parents in your position, TWINS Magazine publishes a special report titled “A Guide for Parents Who Want their Twins to Share a Classroom.” Order from our Bookshelf, page 33.

In the May/June issue of TWINS Magazine you ran the article “School Placement: Apart or Together?” You ran the Web site www.twinsandmultiples.org; however, it is no longer an active site. Is there any other way to get the information offered by Pat Preedy, Ph.D. and David Hay, Ph.D.?

Susan Watson
via e-mail

Editor's Note. Thank you for writing. The site name remains twinsandmultiples.org, but the host site changed recently. The new address is www.curtin.edu.au/corporate/multiplebirths



Love birds

When only 3 weeks old Callie (left) and Erin McLaughlin cuddled up in the family hammock to form one big heart. Since the girls were five weeks early, they still had not arrived at their due date when their mom, Darlene, of Centerport, N.Y., snapped this picture. She reports that the girls co-bedded—and snuggled—for a couple of months before she separated them to establish a sleep routine.

Breast article hits mark

I received the May/June issue of TWINS Magazine in the mail yesterday and my eyes immediately saw on the cover “Feeding twin babies.” Being the jaded person I am, I knew that I didn't even have to read the article: It was going to be all about formula feeding with a drop of breastfeeding for good measure. Was I ever surprised to see an entire article about breastfeeding multiples! I pored over it with amazement. The article is full of wonderful—and correct—information about nursing multiples. I found myself saying “I hope she mentions this or that,” only to read about it in the next paragraph. The author didn't miss a single point. I am so thrilled that you published this article. I am even more pleased that there was not one single mention of supplementing! I also flipped through the whole magazine and there isn't one single formula ad in the entire issue. I know I may seem overly excited, but I am sick and tired of parenting magazines cramming formula ads down our throats and the so-called breastfeeding articles that give the old “but if you don't succeed at breastfeeding...” song-and-dance. I posted on several bulletin boards about the article. We all are so

happy that you published it. Thank you again from a mama who is still very happily breastfeeding her 16-month-old monozygotic twin girls.

Karen Ketterman
Martinsburg, W.V.

I am so pleased with the article about breastfeeding twins. I breastfed my twin girls for 2½ years. I'm meeting more and more moms who want to nurse their twins because they know the benefits, but many are unsure of themselves. Your article will encourage and inform them so that their babies can enjoy the benefits of breastfeeding. Thank you.

Amanda Borenstadt
via e-mail

Zygoty questions

Thank you so much for printing Ellen Crane Schulman's article (May/June) on her journey to find out whether her twins were monozygotic or dizygotic. I have been questioning the zygoty of my twins as well. Her article helped clear up many questions I had. Like Ellen's twins, my daughters also experienced TTTS. I also was under the impression that this could only happen to "identical" twins. Now I know for certain that my girls are "identical," even though they have different features.

Shelley Knowles
Milan, Ga.

Loss of a multiple

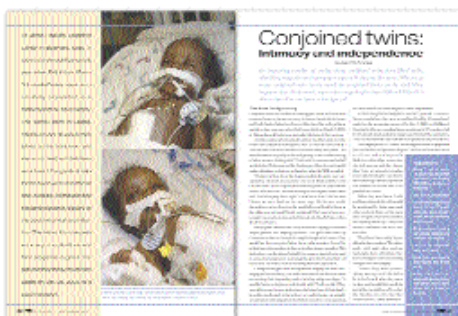
I appreciate your including an article on multiple birth loss in your March/April issue. As an R.N., childbirth educator and mother of two 4½-year-old surviving triplets, I was especially drawn to Diane Grothe's article. Below her article was a "blurb" about her and her family. Her surviving triplets were listed as twins. Please disregard this e-mail if that is how she chooses to label her triplets. But, if I had written an article poring out my heart about my triplet who did not survive, it would be very hurtful to have my survivors labeled as twins—a common occurrence when

people don't know my story.

Although most families expecting a multiple birth may prefer not to read about loss, it is an occurrence. Reading of others' losses may help parents realize support is available after a multiple-birth loss. I have had a number of patients continue subscribing to TWINS Magazine after the loss of one or more of their multiples. For they will always be a "mother of multiples."

Pam Chay, R.N.
Kroch Twin Center
Prentice Women's Hospital
Chicago
www.nmh.org/maternity

Editor's Note: Thank you for expressing your concern. Although you acknowledge that Diane may consider her children twins, we welcome this opportunity to assure you and other readers who may have the same question know that we specifically asked her how she refers to her children and she replied that she and her husband use the term "twins."



Conjoined followup

Thank you for running the article on the Stark twins who were conjoined at birth (May/June issue). My due date for my twin girls was also March 9, 2001, but they were born March 6, and were healthy. I wanted so much to hear of Lexi and Syd's healthy success after the surgery. I saw the documentary of their surgery, but have been waiting and hoping for a followup. I am so happy that they are thriving and happy. I, along with my girls, send congratulations and best wishes to the Starks for a healthy, happy future.

Barb and
daughters Kacy and Emilee
via e-mail

TWINS

Volume Twenty One, Number Three
JULY/AUGUST 2004

Founded in 1984

PUBLISHER

Donald E.L. Johnson

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Susan J. Alt

MANAGING EDITOR

Sharon Withers

ART DIRECTOR

Carolyn Klass

PRODUCT EDITOR

Trina Lambert

WEB MASTER

Todd Reid

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

Susan J. Alt

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Richard Rhinehart

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Sonya Craney
Denise Bridges

DATABASE MANAGER

Richard Rhinehart

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

Thomas Bouchard Jr., Ph.D., Herbert L. Collier, Ph.D., Jessie Reynolds Groothuis, M.D., Donald Keith, M.D., Louis Keith, M.D., Patricia Malmstrom, M.A., Barry E. McNamara, Ed.D., Francine J. McNamara, M.S.W., C.S.W., Marion Meyer, Leslie Montgomery, R.N., Eileen Pearlman, Ph.D., Roger L. Rawlings, R.Ph., Nancy L. Segal, Ph.D., Harriet Simons, Ph.D., Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D.

11211 E. Arapahoe Rd., Suite 101
Centennial, Colorado 80112-3851
TEL (303) 290-8500 Fax (303) 290-9025

Managing Editor (303) 967-0111
Art Director (303) 967-0161
Customer Service (888) 55-TWINS
Web site: www.TWINSmagazine.com
E-mail: TWINS.editor@businessword.com

Advertising e-mail:
susan.alt@businessword.com

Owned and published by
The Business Word Inc.,
Centennial, Colorado
Donald E.L. Johnson, Chairman
Susan J. Alt, President
Bob Mutch, Controller



Biting is not funny

A reader writes:

I have healthy 15-month-old twin boys, but one of them bites his brother all the time, whether they're playing nicely or if he gets upset with him. When he bites I pull him away and say "No, no." He thinks it's funny. Please help.

Readers respond:

I have 2-year-old boy/girl twins and my son has been known to occasionally bite his sister. He doesn't do it often and he's never bitten anyone but his sister. I have read (and this is what I do when he bites) that you should first console the child who has been bitten and then say "no bite" to the child who did the biting. I also make my son sit for a moment on the couch and then he has to say "sorry" to his sister and give her a kiss. This seems to diffuse things and he rarely ever bites her after that, at least for several days or weeks. I've also heard that they grow out of this oral stage.

Julie Arza
Crystal Lake, Ill.

My twin boys used to bite all the time during their first year. Instead of saying "no," which just made them laugh and continue to bite, we changed the game and said "give kisses." Instead of biting they gave each other a kiss and laughed. Now they are nearly 2 and it still works!

Teresa Scheri
Sparta, N.J.

My boys did the same thing. One son would bite his brother and leave serious marks. We tried timeouts, talking about it and taking

things away from him. I shifted my focus and turned all my attention to the child who was bitten. I comforted him, held and rocked him. His brother, the biter, then wanted the attention. We would then talk about how his brother (the one he bit) was feeling and why he was sad or hurt. We asked the biter if that was a nice thing to have done to him. I would then ask him, "Would you like it if I bit you?" He, of course, would say "no." We were able to reduce the number of incidences considerably and he did eventually out-grow it.

Sarah Henke
McKinney, Texas

For September/October

We have beautiful 3-year-old twin boys. My husband and I try everything possible to enjoy our twins, especially since we had to try so hard to conceive them. We are at a point now where we can't even hold a conversation without them screaming at us for something all of the time. We have tried timeout, being patient and asking them what they want, and they still continue to do this. By the time we do all of these steps, we usually forget what it was we wanted to talk about. Please help us.

E-mail your replies to twins.editor@businessword.com; please type "Family Talk" in the subject line. Mail replies to Family Talk, TWINS Magazine, 11211 E. Arapahoe Rd., Suite 101, Centennial, CO 80112-3851. Or, post your replies on the TWINS Message Board at www.TwinsMagazine.com.

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After struggling to conceive for about a year, Abby and Georg Hartman of Los Angeles learned that Abby's tubes were blocked and that she was not ovulating.

Using Abby's eggs and Georg's sperm, Dr. Mark Surrey of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles transferred two embryos via in vitro fertilization.

"I thought if everything went well, I might have twins," Abby said. The doctor gave Abby a 30% chance of success but because the embryos looked so good, he put her chances of getting pregnant at 85%. "I never thought the egg or eggs would split," Abby said.

Her blood hormone levels tested very high so the doctor assumed she conceived twins. Then the ultrasound detective work began, first one sac with two heartbeats and possibly another sac with one. "I could handle twins but triplets was scaring me," Abby said. Then came the news of two heartbeats in each sac. Yes, quadruplets—two sets of identical twins. Both embryos implanted and then split, resulting in four babies.

According to fertility experts and geneticists, the odds of naturally occurring double-sets of identical twins is about 1 in 25 million. (A few experts estimate the odds to be 1 in 8 million; no one really knows.) In assisted pregnancies, the odds decrease to a little less than 1 in 3000.

The babies were delivered by Caesarean section at 28½ weeks, on Jan. 16, 2004, in about 30 seconds. Sidney, 2 pounds, 11 ounces, was born at 2:47 p.m.; and Max, 2

pounds, 7 ounces; Emmy, 1 pound, 15 ounces; and Lucy, 1 pound, 14 ounces; were born at 2:48 p.m. All four went home on April 7, four days after their original due date. At discharge all weighed more than 6 pounds.

These babies escaped most of the serious medical complications quadruplets usually face—except for one. Because of their premature birth, a chamber in their lungs had not yet closed. Dr. Alfredo Trento, director of cardiothoracic surgery at Cedars-Sinai performed "identical" cardiothoracic surgeries to close the chambers of all four babies.

Such a remarkable pregnancy and birth will never be forgotten. In fact, the parents, who are documentary filmmakers, are planning to make sure it is remembered. They are making a documentary about their experience. Abby said they started filming at the beginning of the IVF process and will go through their babies' first birthday. The working title? The somewhat ironic "In Vitro We Trust."



The Hartmans prepare to go home. (L. to r.): Charles F. Simmons, M.D., Chairman, Department of Pediatrics, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center; M. Jill Jordan, R.N.; Tamy Edmonston, R.N., Abby and Georg Hartmann; and Thais Aliabadi, M.D.



The 7-week-old Webb quadruplets (l. to r.): Emily Morgan, Marly Alaina, Lindsay Reagan and Sydney Michaela. On May 24, Emily was the first to go home.

Photo: Steve Wood, UAB Creative and Marketing

More double sets of twins

As rare as two sets of identical twins are, two other sets were born March 17 at University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital.

Kevin and Christine Webb became the parents of four baby girls—Emily Morgan, Marley Alaina, Lindsey Reagan and Sydney Michaela. Born at 30 weeks' gestation, the naturally conceived quadruplets were born within three minutes by Caesarean section and ranged in weight from 2 pounds, 3¼ ounces to 2 pounds, 4½ ounces.

Apart from the odds against conceiving two sets of identical twins, maternal-fetal medicine specialist John Hauth, M.D., who delivered the babies said: "This is an amazingly rare event, with only about one in a million births occurring as naturally-conceived quadruplets. Only about 10 percent of those women get to this point—carrying all four to 30 weeks and delivering with virtually no medical complications."

Photo: Courtesy Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

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My zygosity lesson

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Zygotes—a single cell formed by the joining of a sperm and an egg

Monozygotic twins—formed by the dividing of one (mono-) zygote; MZ; “identical” twins. About 28% of all twin pregnancies in U.S.

Dizygotic twins—formed by the fertilization of two (di-) zygotes; two eggs fertilized by two sperm; DZ; “fraternal” twins. About 72% of all twin pregnancies in U.S. About 30% are boy/girl; 70% are same-sex.

Chorion—placenta and membrane

Monochorionic—one (mono) placenta

Dichorionic—two (di) placentas; about 33% of MZ pairs have truly separate chorionic placentas, like all DZ pairs

Amnion—sac in which fetus develops

Monoamniotic—one (mono) amniotic sac (about 2% of monochorionic, MC, placentas are monoamniotic, MA)

Diamniotic—two (di) amniotic sacs

I am a neonatal nurse practitioner who works in a NICU. I have the education and experience to read a placental pathology report. My friends include a pathologist, an ultrasonographer, an obstetrician and my NICU colleagues. You would think I would know if my twins were monozygotic or dizygotic. But I didn't.

My twins were DiDi—dichorionic, diamniotic; two placentas and two sacs. Because I work in a hospital NICU and see many sets of dizygotic twins, and because I am not a gambler, I would never have guessed that my twins could be monozygotic. The chances of monozygotic twins being DiDi is only about four births in 10,000. So, of course, I told everyone they were “fraternal.”

Our pediatrician also thought they were dizygotic, even though I did not have any twins in my family. We agreed that once they were 1 year old we would be able to tell them apart.

At their first birthday party, however, they had to wear name tags to help our family members and friends know who was who. At this point, I began to wonder about their zygosity.

At their two-year checkup, the doctor and nurses mixed them up twice in the short time we were there. After this visit I knew I might be wrong. I again discussed the rarity of DiDi monozygotic twins with my pediatrician and he agreed, but acknowledged that monozygotic was a possibility.

I decided to have them tested but the

cost was an obstacle. I asked at work and was quoted prices ranging from \$300 to \$500 for blood DNA testing. That was not an option for us. So I did what all mothers of twins do: I enrolled them in every twin study I possibly could. (Zygosity testing is a part of many of the studies.) We never were accepted into a study; we were either too young, too old or too far away.

Fortunately, this was not the end of the road. At a Longaberger basket party the hostess introduced me to another mother of twins. She, of course, asked me the usual question—“identical” or “fraternal?” After hearing my story, she told me of another mother of twins who had had her twins tested by buccal smear. This is a test in which cells are scraped from the inside of the cheek and compared for DNA.

As the twins' third birthday approached, I e-mailed the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Club. They referred me to Proactive Genetics.

For \$100 I ordered a kit online. It arrived within two days. I did the swabbing as directed and mailed the samples back a couple of days later. Exactly 10 business days later I received the results. Surprise, monozygotic twins.

It was as if we had found out we were pregnant all over again. We were so excited and called our family and friends to let them know that it was official—“identical” twins! Ironically, all of our friends and family said the same thing: They always thought our twins were monozygotic and only my husband and I questioned it.

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1-866-TWIN-DNA

As I mentioned, I never have been a gambler but we have just bought a lottery ticket. I figure, if we beat four in 10,000 odds for monozygotic twins maybe we can win the lottery.

If you have DiDi same sex-twins who look strikingly similar, I encourage you to consider DNA testing. You may have been told that they were dizygotic, but a small percentage can be monozygotic.

Knowing zygosity is very important, especially if one twin develops health problems. Needing a bone marrow donor is one example. Or, if a health issue arises in one twin, knowing that he or she has a monozygotic twin will alert healthcare professionals to follow both twins.

Knowing your twins' zygosity also can bring you peace of mind. It broke my heart to look directly at one of my daughters and not be certain which one she was. I would have to wait for her to speak in order to be certain. Now that I know that they are monozygotic, I can forgive myself and reassure other parents that always being able to tell them apart has nothing to do with how much we love them or how much time we spend with them. Instead, it means that God has given us a special gift and we are so fortunate to have these children in our lives.



Pamela G. Almeida, M.S., R.N.C., N.N.P., lives in Boston, Mass., with her husband, son and monozygotic twin girls.

E-mail your zygosity questions to Dr. Machin

Geoffrey Machin, M.D., Ph.D., a fetal pathologist and the regular contributor to "Zygosity Puzzle," is on vacation. He has been helping twins and their parents with zygosity questions for more than 10 years. In that time, more than 300 twin pairs have had their zygosity determined by DNA studies, and almost all of them were MZ. He is co-author with Louis G. Keith, M.D., of *An Atlas of Multiple Pregnancy—Biology and Pathology*, (Parthenon Publishing, 1999) and authored the chapters on triplet zygosity in *Triplet pregnancies and their consequences*, edited by Louis G. Keith, M.D., and Isaac Blickstein, M.D., (Parthenon, 2003).



Geoffrey Machin, M.D.

You may e-mail your questions to him at geoffmachin@shaw.ca.

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Single mom needs dad's support

She said

My twin boys are 18 months old. Their father and I separated about 10 months ago. We've never been married, but are on pretty good terms. I did NICU duty mostly on my own for two months. He showed up every now and then. He never wanted children but said he would support them and spend time with them. He has not done so. He seems to love them but always uses work as an excuse. He said he had to work during their first birthday party. I don't want to nag but I want my boys to have a father. I don't have the money for a lawyer and I don't want to get one. Besides, I think that would just make him disappear totally. How can I make him recognize that it is important to be involved with the boys?

Mary

He said

I am proud of my boys and Mary has done a great job. I am so tired from work and I don't want to be tied down to a family and a schedule. But I do feel guilty about not being more involved with them. It just seems that I always have something else I have to do. I want to know my boys but Mary always makes me feel so guilty. She doesn't really try to, but it just happens. I didn't want to go to the birthday party because her family and many of our friends would be there. I don't know what to do.

Mike

Dear Mary and Mike,

I'm glad the two of you wrote. It's good that you both want to try to resolve this together because it's a complex issue.

Mary, you said that Mike never wanted to have kids. There are so many scenarios where this happens. A woman becomes pregnant, and she or her partner wants to keep the children due to religious reasons, personal morals or the ticking of the biological time clock. Another common reason that women keep unplanned pregnancies is an irrational belief that the arrival of a baby is going to make the man more invested in being a parent than he currently states. I often work with couples where one person—usually a man doesn't want to have kids—and his wife or girlfriend says, "Oh, he'd be such a great dad, though. I know that if he had kids he'd find out how wonderful it is." Unfortunately, that prediction typically doesn't play out. A study by sociologist Jay Belsky, at Penn State, found that married men who didn't want to be dads but became dads anyway were all divorced within five years.

I highlight this background because the way that a couple decides to keep a pregnancy often follows them through the rearing, or not rearing, of their children.

Mike, if Mary had the children because you led her to believe that you were going to be much more involved than you are, then it's on you to do more for her and the twins. As you now know, caring for twins is an enormous amount of work under the best of circumstances, and almost impossible as a single mother. She would have a right to be mad at you if she had the twins, in part, because you promised to do your share. It will be better for your relationship with Mary if you're very direct about the fact that you are now behaving differently than you led her to believe you would, and apologize to her for not doing more thus far. In addition, there's no better antidote

to feeling guilty than more involvement.

Mary, if Mike clearly stated that he did not want kids, and you continued with the pregnancy despite his objections, it may be more on you to have more responsibility. I agree with you that it's far better for the twins to have a very involved dad. How mad can you be at him for not being a very involved father if he had said he didn't want to be a father? It's also true that if he got you pregnant then he's automatically in it. I don't know the circumstances of your pregnancy, but if he thought you would terminate a pregnancy and you had never told him otherwise, you have some responsibility for that.

Visit Married with Twins on the TWINS Magazine Message Board at www.TwinsMagazine.com Dr. Coleman will answer your questions and you can subscribe to his free marriage e-letter. Check the message board for more information.

Mary, Mike also said that you make him feel guilty. You probably don't intend to, but, I can guarantee that it's working against you. The most common way that people respond to guilt is to shut down, withdraw or go away. It sounds like Mike is doing that. Unfortunately, you probably can't make him be a more involved father than he's currently being. And you're right, a lawyer isn't going to further you in your aims. On the other hand, many men aren't as involved at this age, but become more so as their boys get to an age where they can do activities with them. The fact that the two of you have a



Joshua Coleman, Ph.D.

positive relationship should be preserved by you both, because Mike's relationship and involvement with the twins may well change over time. So, what can you do? You can:

- Acknowledge and appreciate him when he spends time with the children
- Ask him if there's anything you can do to make it easier on him to spend more time with the boys
- Not criticize his lack of involvement or guilt-trip him about it
- Not make him feel like a terrible father or person for not spending more time with the twins.

Mike, it sounds like some part of you wants to be an involved dad and I applaud that. Children who spend time with their fathers do better academically

and socially. It will be better for Mary and for you to commit to some kind of schedule that you can all agree upon. I suspect it will be less than Mary would like. A regular schedule, however, will allow Mary to know when she can count on you to be there, and that will lower her resentment. In addition, as your kids get older, they'll want to know when they get to spend time with you and when they can't. On your end, you should:

- Frequently tell Mary what a great mother she is
- Acknowledge how hard she's working
- Offer her support in other ways
- Work on your guilt so that it doesn't keep you from being more involved than you might like to be.

Again, the fact that the two of you

have a good relationship is a strength that should be preserved. Your twins are young and, it is hoped, you'll both be in their lives for many years to come. Anything either of you can do to show appreciation for the other and move this towards a cooperative resolution will be good for you, and for your children. ♥

Joshua Coleman, Ph.D., is a psychologist in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is the father of twin sons and a daughter and the author of *Imperfect Harmony: How to Stay Married for the Sake of the Children and Still Be Happy* (St. Martin's Press). Visit his Web site at www.joshuaColeman.net, where you can subscribe to his free marriage e-letter.

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Six-month evaluations

My husband Alex and I are journalists, and we've had many different jobs during our careers. We don't know many people in the editorial field who have had the same job for 30 years like so many of our parents did. Something that has gone along with all of these professional transitions is the six-month evaluation. No matter how much experience we have or how comfortable we feel about our job, we have grown accustomed to proving ourselves.

As parents, we're also often proving ourselves—to each other, to our parents and siblings, and to our children—and we usually relish the challenge. Alex, a truly hands-on father, thought of each diaper change as sort of a rodeo event during which he was being graded on style, speed, cleanliness and technique.

One night during the twins' fifth month, Alex and I were mumbling to each other around 1 a.m., after an endless string of feeding, diaper-changing and play sessions. I had just scheduled our six-month checkup with the pediatrician, and Alex said something about how great it would be if the twins could give us a six-month evaluation to let us know how we were doing. Then they could decide whether they wanted to let us go or keep us on staff.

I thought this was a brilliant idea. If only the kids could talk or write or fill out a multiple-choice questionnaire, they could grade us in several different categories such as: diaper-changing speed and thoroughness, meal-preparation creativity, game-playing energy level and nail-clipping skills. They could rate our ability to carry a tune, make bath time fun, catch decisive moments on film and get them to Gymboree class on time.

They also could give us demerits for watching too much television during feeding sessions, letting dirty laundry accumulate for too many days and not reading

enough bedtime stories. If we needed to work on certain areas, the kids could schedule a meeting with us to go over ways to improve. We could compare our scores to other parents to figure out which percentile we were in, and we could brag to our parents about what good parents we were—or ask them for pointers if our scores were unimpressive.



Alex and I recalled all the parenting classes we took before the kids were born. Most of these involved sitting in a classroom and discussing upcoming events without any hands-on instruction. We might have been given a toy baby so we could practice burping, diapering or performing CPR on it, but the majority of time was spent listening to the lecturer, asking questions and perhaps watching a video.

More helpful, Alex and I thought, would have been a parental-endurance test like soldiers are given in boot camp. We should have had our lower backs tested to see if we were prepared to carry a car seat, a knapsack, two pieces of luggage and a toddler through three consecutive airport terminals. We imagined a test to make sure the prospective parent was coordinated enough to first prepare a meal safely while holding a baby with one arm, and then eat the meal one-handed while supporting the child on his or her lap with the other hand.

The obvious test of strength and parental fortitude would be sleep deprivation. Sometime during the pregnancy both parents should be tested to see if they can still change a diaper, bathe a child and administer a bottle after getting only three hours of sleep during a 24-hour period. Then parents-to-be should try washing their hands 35 times per day for one week to see if they can do so without causing any skin ailments such as dermatitis or eczema.

After passing this sort of exam, expecting parents could put a diploma on their wall to show that they graduated from a respectable preparatory school. If they spent quality time with a sibling or in-law who had a newborn, they could earn a residency certificate. Between the boot camp results and the six-month evaluations, we wouldn't have to rely on our own naive sense of how we're doing.

Unfortunately, we'll probably have to wait until our kids are in therapy before we start hearing their assessments of our skills and criticism of our foibles. But that won't prevent Alex and me from giving Adrienne and Julian a few multiple-choice forms to fill out as soon as they can read. ♡

Lauren Kafka reflects on the first year with her twins, now 6, from her home in Bethesda, Md.



Fatherhood 202

by Ted Spiker

In order to help new dads learn the baby game, Ted shares his Fatherhood 202 playbook—"Because," he says, "when you have twins, it's Fatherhood 101 x 2."

From the intense itching of her stretch marks to the breaking of her water in the middle of the mall, I knew this much about the woman who delivered my two beautiful boys. When it comes to having twins, mom is the family's quarterback. She handles the pressure; she makes the plays. She's the MVP. She's Montana, Namath and Unitas cloaked in Caesarean section scrubs.

And the dad? We care as much about the team's success as anyone, but biology (and perhaps instinct) dictates that we're not the star of the team; we're the offensive linemen. Our role: Do whatever it takes to help the quarterback do her job better—block, protect, cook dinner, grow our own milk-producing breasts. Though the offensive linemen don't get the headlines, I quickly learned that my role as a father to twins was as important as it was clear. Double the children not only means double the love, but also double the stress, responsibility and diapers. So you dig in and you play as hard as you can.

Situation #1: **Home alone**

My wife, Liz, spent three days in the hospital, recovering from a Caesarean section and entertaining more guests than Martha Stewart. Our boys spent a week there—just to make sure their lungs were OK. I took about a week-and-a-half off work to help make the transition. During the first 10 days, we saw a lot of people. Grandparents helped. People called. Nurses checked their vitals. Friends brought frozen lasagna. When the boys turned 11 days old, I returned to work—one hour to drive there, nine hours at work, one hour back. That's when the visits slowed. The phone stopped ringing. And Liz was home for 11 hours with two infants who weighed less than a bag of flour. Liz tried to get out and take walks, but the first few weeks after a Caesarean section aren't easy. I made the wrong move with vacation time. Looking back, I should have taken three days off to be in the hospital and then gone back to work—while grandparents and friends helped. I should have taken my vacation time two weeks after their birth. It would have been a politically incorrect move on the surface (“What? He's back to work already?”), but delaying my vacation time would have helped Liz more in the long run—by extending the amount of help she had during the most difficult time of new motherhood.

Situation #2: **The middle of the night**

Liz decided not to nurse Alex and Thad, which meant I could share in bottle-feeding. We took turns during the day, by propping them in car seats on the floor, or we each fed one baby so we could hold them. Night feedings, though, proved more problematic than a calculus final. At first, we tried alternating nights—one night, I got up for every feeding and then slept through the whole next night. Since the boys ate every two hours, one of us would essentially pull all-nighters every other day. No good. So then we tried alternate feedings each night. If Liz got up at 2, I would get up at 4. But the one who was supposed to be sleeping felt guilty that the boys were crying while the other was prepping the bottles. No good. After the boys were about a month old, we changed again. They were going a little longer between feedings, so we decided that for each

feeding, we would both get up. While one of us changed their diapers, the other prepped the bottles. We fed, rocked and were back in bed—all in about 20 minutes. The assembly-line approach seemed the least logical of them all, but it worked the best—for them and for us. And when they turned 12 weeks old, they started sleeping through the night. Touchdown.

Situation #3: **Bath and bedtime**

I think it's easier to wash cheetahs than to wash infants in a plastic tub. They squirm, they slip and it's mathematically impossible to do with twins. You need two adults to bathe one infant—one to hold and one to wash—leaving the other infant lonelier than someone watching a David Spade movie in a theater. Our solution turned out to be some of the most precious time we spent with Alex and Thad. Liz would get in the tub with them, and I'd motor around the bathroom and bedroom. I laid both infants in the center of our king-size bed, where as tiny infants, they could not roll off. While Liz prepped the tub, I undressed Alex. I then delivered Alex to Liz. She held him close so he felt secure in the tub, while I sang to Thad (“Hakuna Matata” works well). When she was done with Alex, I swaddled him and put him back in the center of the bed. After I undressed and delivered Thad, I dried and dressed Alex (“Spish Splash” also tops the Billboard baby bath charts). I repeated the steps with Thad. The process was efficient, safe and gave both boys individual time with us.

Situation #4: **Quiet, please!**

Rocking chairs didn't work to calm our crying kids. Neither did swings. The car did, but who wants to drive around every time your kids squawk? Aquariums and the Wiggles worked well for sedating our criers and there's a reason why—the bright colors and random movements. If you don't have fish and can't listen to Captain Feathersword for the 72nd time, I suggest trying what I discovered, and what worked as well as any vibrating chair: Ice hockey on TV. The equation is simple. Bright jerseys plus random flow of skating equals peace in the house—not to mention important sports-viewing time for you.

Situation #5: **All the small stuff**

When the boys were about a week old, we had some technological problems with the heart monitors that they were to wear for the next three months. So a technician came out to fix them. But she had no idea how to work them, fumbled around for answers and couldn't help. Liz and I went up to the nursery to get something for her, at which point, Liz vented, “What a [bleeping] moron.

She doesn't know [bleep] about this." Normally that wouldn't be a problem—except for the fact the baby monitor was on in the nursery (where we were) and in the living room (where she was). My point: A mother's hormonally clouded head is so concerned with the big stuff that sometimes she forgets about the small stuff. Your job is to make sure the details get taken care of: the bills, some cleaning, some shopping, filling up the gas tank and turning off the baby monitor when relatives and friends stop by.

Situation #6: Saturday morning

No matter what she tells you, the greatest gift you can give your wife is not flowers, cards or jewelry (OK, maybe jewelry is the greatest). The best thing you can do is to give your wife the gift of time. She eats, drinks, thinks, loves and sleeps babies. Everything revolves around them. But she needs time to get out, time to sleep and time to watch *The Bachelor*. No matter how much work I had or how stressed I felt, I always had to remember that my wife's job was more taxing than mine. So even when the boys were small, I took the boys out as much as I could—for hours at a time. My least favorite place, the mall, became my favorite. Parks and walks work, too, but few places the beat the mall—for the wide aisles, butter-soaked soft pretzels and the ego trip. Every single woman will look at you and smile. Once, when I had my 2-month-old boys out, a woman said to me, "Wow, that's great you have them out yourself. My husband won't even take my kids out by himself and they're 8 and 10." The only downside is you'll hear the phrase "double trouble" more than *American Idol* contestants hear Simon say "dreadful."

Situation #7: You want some lovin'

Between the new-found respect you have for your wife and the fact that it's been quite some time since you did the very thing that gave you your twins, it's safe to say that you've got that testosterone-induced loving feeling. But between the after-effects of delivery, the pressure she feels to lose the weight she gained and the sleepless nights, there's only one thing she wants to do in bed—and it ain't you. I wish I could tell you the secret for restoring a rich and fulfilling sex life after your twins have entered the picture. All I really can tell you is that it has nothing to do with seduction, romance or begging. But if you follow the rules of the playbook—and do whatever you can to be a good dad and husband—chances are you'll make her happy. And that means you'll score in more ways than one. ♡

Ted Spiker is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Florida Gainesville and a contributing editor of *Men's Health*. Twins Alex and Thad were born November 1999.

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DOUBLE DUTY DISCIPLINE

Parents weigh in on
rearing twins and
keeping their cool

by Cornelia Becker Seigneur

It only took
10 minutes this
time before I heard
the first squabbling as
my 6-year-old twin boys
played in their room one afternoon.

“Mom, it’s my turn.”

“Wesley had it longer.”

“I did not.”

“Yes, you did.”

In these and similar situations, my husband Christopher and I often separate our identical twins, Wesley and Michael Josef, for a time being, which curbs their arguing.

Other parents use timers when conflicts revolve around play items. “I will say, ‘OK, Colin will have it for a minute and Laura for a minute.’ I have to use a timer because I lose track of it myself,” said Mary Lankester who lives in Boring, Ore., and is the mother of 5-year-old Colin and Laura.

I, as other parents of twins, have read plenty of books on how to train children, specifically twins, but when it comes to real life discipline solutions, parents are experts in their own right, having learned what works through real life. Knowing what to do doesn’t mean that we always do it.

“I remember reading, ‘When children throws temper tantrums, you should smile reassuringly and they’ll feel comforted,’” said Amanda Borenstadt, mom to Daphne and Fiona, almost 3, “but that actually made one of my girls angry; she tried to hit me.”

What works with Amanda’s girls is distraction. “If they have a temper tantrum about not getting into their car seat, I just begin talking to them about where we are going. I’ll say, ‘Oh, we’re going here and there,’ or I hand them a toy or a little Tic Tac and before they know it they are buckled in,” the Concord, Calif. mom said.

Distraction may work for younger twins, but as kids get older, other discipline techniques are necessary.

Some parents remove their twins from the scene.

Before trying a change of setting, however, Michelle Murtha, mom to Joel and Tyler, age 5, tries reasoning with them or using the counting method. If that fails, it’s time for a change. “If we are at the store and one is having a meltdown, we don’t hesitate to take them out of the store and put them in the car,” Michelle said. “Luke, their dad, stays with them for 20 minutes or so.”

Luke and Michelle, of Beaverton, Ore., make it easier on themselves to leave some of their twins’ favorite spots: They invest in zoo and children’s science museum passes so they can leave without feeling that they have wasted their money.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Follow-through and consistency are vital.

“When you say, ‘If you behave like that we are going to leave,’ and he does it again, you have to leave, or they learn very quickly you do not mean it,” Michelle noted. “Sometimes they will say, ‘You are not nice,’ and I will react, ‘I’m not supposed to be nice, I’m your mom.’”

Luke agreed: “What does not work is trying to be the child’s best friend.”

AVOID COMPARISONS

When you have to leave a store, a restaurant or an event, do not use one twin as an example for the other.

Eileen M. Pearlman, Ph.D., director of TwInsight and co-author of *Raising Twins: What Parents Want to Know (and What Twins Want to Tell Them)*, says you have to be careful to not encourage competition. “Avoid saying, ‘Who can be the first one to finish, who can get dressed first?’ Instead make it a teamwork thing. Say ‘Can both of you get in the car before I do?’”

Apply the same principle when separating twins to curb squabbling. “We don’t use the words, ‘You are bad, you can’t play with your brother,’” Luke said. “Instead, we say ‘It might be good to have a few minutes apart.’”

DISCIPLINE TIPS FROM PARENTS OF TWINS

- Make sure your expectations are age-appropriate.
- Choose age-appropriate discipline techniques.
- Give timeouts, from the situation and from each other.
- Send children to their bedrooms or a corner.
- Have children trade their toys, and use a timer.
- Remove an item or toy that twins are quarreling over.
- Distract them when they do not want to listen or when they whine.
- Rule out the possibility that they are tired, hungry or bored.
- If misbehaving, physically remove them from a fun situation, but give a warning first.
- Stick to a routine.
- Ask for something to be done only once. If you ask twice they are tuning you out.
- Get on their level when talking to them, to make sure they are actually listening.
- Stay consistent and follow through.
- Do not pit one twin against another. Do not compare behaviors in front of one another.
- Use a chart with stars, and give rewards.
- Catch children behaving well; praise them when they are doing well.
- Remember you are their parents not their friends.

DISCIPLINE TIPS FROM TWO TWIN SPECIALISTS

From Nancy Segal, Ph.D., author of *Entwined Lives: Twins and What they tell us about Human Behavior*.

- Focus on kids' good points.
- Praise constructive things they do together.
- Avoid holding up one as an example for the other.

From Eileen Pearlman, Ph.D. coauthor (with Jill Alison), *Raising Twins: What Parents Want to Know and What Twins Want to Tell Them*.

- See your child as an individual.
- Reinforce positive behavior if you can, not only in your children but in yourself; say "Gee I did that well."
- Anticipate situations that can happen — Are they tired? Are they bored? Are they hungry?

- Set limits that are age-appropriate. Say: "We don't throw toys at each other," or "We don't say mean things to one another."
- Remain calm, take a step back; you don't have to react right away. In a dangerous situation you do, of course, need to react right away.
- Model positive behavior; saying "please" and "thank you." Some parents will say "don't bite" and then bite their child back.

Moments apart can solidify how much twins actually appreciate one another, according to Nancy Segal, Ph.D., author of *Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior*. "Sometimes, by separating twins, even momentarily, they will miss each other, especially identical twins, and try to behave," Segal said.

RAISING YOUR VOICE

When my twins squabble, it gets to me and I catch myself raising my voice. Other parents of multiples do as well.

"I don't start off yelling, but sometimes I yell when I get frustrated, or when I have had to repeat myself three times," Michelle said.

Phyllis Vincent, of Scotch Plains, N.J., is mom to 4-year-olds Ryan and Ashley. She said, "My New Year's resolution was to not scream. I had a couple of bad days."

Her solution? She walks to her twins' rooms to get them when they have been called once, instead of calling them over and over again, louder and louder. This also helps her twins learn that when they want to talk to someone, it is best to physically go to where that person is, rather than shout down a hallway.

10 WAYS TO COOL OFF

When you feel the pressure building, try some of these techniques for letting off steam:

- Listen to music
- Dig in the garden
- Clean out a closet
- Laugh; think of a joke
- Go for a walk, run or bike ride
- Call a friend
- Sing... loudly
- Knead some bread dough
- Splash cold water on your face
- Take a shower

Make sure your twins are safely occupied first. Call in a sitter if possible, or, if you don't have a sitter, put them in their cribs or take them with you on a walk. Just getting out of the house often helps.

POSITIVE TECHNIQUES

Using a chart system has helped Renee Hald of Poulsbo, Wash., teach her 5-year-olds Karsten and Annika about positive choices.

"They understand that if they choose to disobey daddy or mommy, there will be consequences," Renee said.

Her children earn stars on the chart if, for example, they make their beds in the morning, do chores and don't talk back or whine. When they get a set number of stars on the chart, they get a reward. On the other hand, if they misbehave, they lose a star. "Earn enough stars, get a reward," Renee explained.

Making it easy for children to behave well is another antidote to discipline struggles.

First things, first: Make sure your twins are not tired or hungry. Most parents of twins say that keeping children on a schedule, or at least sticking to a routine, is ideal.

Phyllis wonders about some parenting choices. "When I see people out late at night with their kids at the store, I think 'What is their bedtime?'"

It's easy to catch parents—or twins—doing the wrong thing, but you need to notice when your twins are doing the right thing.

"When I catch my kids behaving really well, I try to tell them. I try to reinforce good behavior. If I see Ashley sharing nicely with Ryan, I will say to Ashley, 'Good job sharing, Ashley,'" Phyllis explained.

Michelle tries to build on the natural empathy between her twins. "We'll ask, 'Do you think that was nice of you to hit him?' or 'What else could you have done?'"

Role modeling positive behavior is always the best teacher. Children model parents' behavior, for better or worse. They seem to absorb parenting styles by osmosis. Keep that in mind the next time one of your twins echoes something you say over and over.

"Being able to say 'I'm sorry' is important. There have been times that Luke's and my behavior has gotten heated in front of the kids and we will say 'Sorry. It's OK for mommies and daddies to get frustrated, but it is not OK to yell,'" Michelle said.

"I try to keep a sense of humor about things and relax my neatness and quietness standards," Amanda added. "I know that this too shall pass, and I also know I'll miss it." ♡

Cornelia Becker Seigneur is a freelance writer and mother of 6-year-old twin boys. She lives in West Linn, Ore.

Capturing summer's bounty: making your own baby food

by Shelly Whitman Colony

Early on summer mornings, growing up, my brother and I would loop buckets through big leather belts and help my mother pick the fruits and vegetables that would become our winter proven-der—strawberries and rasp-berries, peas, beans, carrots, beets, corn. Everything we needed was at Buck's Gardens, a truck farm on the Flathead River. Later in the afternoon my brother and I sat on the lawn, the hose running between us as we scrubbed tub after tub of carrots and beets while my mother readied the canning jars. At the end of the day, I would stand on the old kitchen chair and count the brightly colored jars cooling on a faded towel and feel a great satisfaction at my role in providing for our family. I continue that tradition by making my own baby food.

Babies may indicate a readiness for solids by showing an interest in your food, but don't jump the gun. "Unless there's a medical reason for starting sooner, we recommend not starting solids until 4 to 6 months of age," said Dr. Douglas Hamill, physician with Kaiser Permanente's Department of Pediatrics in Beaverton, Ore. "Start with rice cereal, then progress to fruits, then the yellow vegetables. Hold off on citrus, green vegetables and legumes such as peas until baby is a little older," Dr. Hamill added.

My 5-month-old twins eat the equivalent of 45 4-ounce jars of commercial baby food in a month. I can make that same amount of food using local organic produce for less than \$10. Here's how.

Wash, peel and core the fruit or vegetable. Steam or cook food in a little water.



Sweet potatoes and squash are good candidates for baking. Do not add sugar, salt or seasonings. When tender, remove from heat and puree the food in a blender or food processor. Add the liquid from cooking to achieve the desired consistency. The younger your child is, the smoother the food should be.

Pureed food can be stored in the refrigerator for three days, or in the freezer for one to two months. I place tablespoon-size servings on a cookie sheet lined with waxed paper and freeze, then transfer the individual servings to a Ziploc freezer bag.

Making my own baby food is a memorable way of providing for my little boys.

Squashed Squash

2 small organic butternut squashes (Butternuts are sweeter than other squashes and babies like the bright orange color).

1 cup water

Cut squash lengthwise. Seed and place, cut side down, in a baking dish with water. Bake at 350 degrees until squash releases its earthy aroma and is easily pierced with a fork, about 30 minutes. Scoop out flesh and blend or puree with the cooking liquid. Add water to achieve the desired consistency. Yield: 3 cups. ♡

Shelly Whitman Colony, a freelance writer and the mother of twin boys, lives in Beaverton, Ore. She is a contributor to the anthology, *Woven on the Wind: Women Write About Friendship in the Sagebrush West*.

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23-week twins set Georgia state record

During the four months that Clay and Laura Owens experienced the ups and downs of NICU life, Clay sent family members and friends regular e-mail updates on their daughters' struggles to survive. The e-mails spread around the world as friends forwarded Clay's touching messages to their friends whom they knew would support the Owens family with love and prayer. The result was a detailed journal of Audrey and Abby's setbacks and triumphs, and a story that created a community of people who have never met.

In one of his e-mails, Clay wrote: "It is such a joy to share our lives with each of you through these e-mails. Until we found ourselves in these circumstances, we never would have dreamed there would be so many people who would be so genuinely concerned with our family's well-being... I think that as humans we are often so afraid to share our struggles, our needs, our sorrows and joys with others that we never find out how many people there are who really care and want to help... Even though we do not know who many of you are, this e-mail chain has been an extended family to us, a real lifeline when we have needed it most. Although many decry electronic communication as being cold and impersonal, e-mail has allowed us to share our most intensely personal thoughts and experiences with hundreds, even thousands of people."

My daughters are only 18 months old and already have landed a place in the record books. They are Georgia's most premature surviving twins. I would, however, gladly trade their hard-earned record for a healthy debut into this life.

Audrey Faith and Abby Joy Owens were born Sunday, Jan. 19, 2003, at 5:17 a.m. and 6:41 a.m., respectively. Both girls weighed in at 1 pound, 5 ounces. Audrey was 12 inches long; Abby, 13 inches.

The girls were four months early, born about 23½ weeks into my wife Laura's pregnancy. Because of their young age, they faced a number of obstacles. Laura and I never knew if they would live moment to moment.

Their journey into this world began Jan. 11 at the Floyd Medical Center in Rome, Ga., where Laura was admitted fully dilated, effaced and in active labor. A few days later, Laura was transferred to Atlanta's Northside Hospital, where, despite doctors' best efforts to delay the babies' birth, Audrey and Abby were born far too soon—16 weeks before their due date—and far too small.

Those were the most terrifying days of our lives, and they also were the three most incredible days. Probably none of the medical personnel present when we entered Floyd thought we would make it more than a few hours, yet we made it more than a week to delivery and were in the best possible hospital for premature babies. By all accounts, it was a miracle that Laura carried the babies extra days, giving them time to pass some critical developmental milestones. God continued to reveal Himself in mighty ways in the four months ahead.

Our girls faced the same obstacles as many preemies. Both had trouble with blood pressure, partially because a valve in their hearts that normally closes at birth in a term baby had not closed. They had



Clay's wedding ring fit on Abby's hand at birth.

trouble maintaining their body temperatures. Both girls were placed on ventilators and both received IV nourishment and then

tube-feeding. They battled infections, received blood transfusions for more than a month, were on thyroid hormones and suffered from reflux and slow weight gain. Both had surgery for retinopathy of prematurity. Abby also had surgeries to close a heart valve and one to repair a hole in her intestine—which, it turned out, was unnecessary—plus blood clots, pneumonia and fluctuating glucose levels that required insulin.

Despite all the tubes and lines, the isolettes and their struggles to survive, they endeared themselves to us in a way that was even deeper than the attachment we felt before birth. They were born with large, pretty eyes and very blonde hair. But each girl had her own challenges—and her own personality.

Audrey, our firstborn, was, and is, a typical overachiever. She astounded the nurses attending her birth when she tried to cry—most unusual for babies born at 23½ weeks. Her eyes already were open at birth. At one week, she started on her first food, 1 cc of Pedialyte every six hours.

I spoiled Abby from the start, partially in an effort to make up for the attention Audrey got. (Just for the record, I loved both girls equally, but as a firstborn, I know how they can steal the spotlight.)

After Audrey and Abby were born, one of the main things the doctors and nurses told us was that, if our daughters lived, we would come through one set of obstacles only to be confronted with new obstacles. The experts were right.

Audrey and Abby's little bodies worked hard to adapt and deal with their harsh new environment. Just imagine: Two weeks earlier, Laura had been maintaining their blood pressure, breathing for them, giving them nourishment and sheltering their immature bodies from loud sounds, bright lights, germs, air and other people. Mommy's provision was replaced by drugs; machines; and the efforts of their doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists; not to mention their own efforts.



Clay comforts Abby.

It can be scary to think of someone operating on your daughter who weighs less than a pound and a half and has been out of the womb only 16 days. We were thankful to God that our baby Abby's surgeries were successful.

We thought it would get easier as time went on, and perhaps in some ways it did. You adapt to the constant uncertainty, you learn how to live with the fact that things could improve or get drastically worse without notice. These little ones had to live through every moment of this trauma with little or no idea of what was happening or why. We prayed that God would allow both Audrey and Abby to grow up healthy, strong and whole.

We were able to experience a lot of joy along with our concern and anxiety. When Audrey and Abby had their first "bath," a sponge bath, Laura and I took pictures. I was able to catch Abby in a very rare wide-eyed moment.

Laura and I found that how we felt was directly related to how our children felt. Sometimes that meant we went back and forth from low to high several times a day.

Even though Audrey and Abby had a team of very highly trained people caring for their medical needs, Laura and I were the only people who saw them every day. We quickly learned what worked and what didn't in caring for them. When they got upset, the nurses didn't always have time to sit with them and place a hand over their bodies to

comfort them, but we were glad to do it. In fact, besides prayer, providing comforting touch was one of the



Laura holds Aubrey's arm.

most important things we could do for them. We never had held them, hugged or kissed them, so we were glad to just touch them.

For their 1-month birthday, the girls got birthday cakes—one each. That was a good thing since they were at different hospitals. Abby was transferred to Scottish Rite (Children's Healthcare of Atlanta) for the intestinal surgery. We prayed that neither of them got "separation anxiety."

The ups and downs that are almost a given when babies are born prematurely continued.

After the surgery, Abby's blood tested positive for a strong type of staph infection. This meant that Abby had to be placed in an isolation room, and she probably wouldn't get to room with her sister again until they were both released from the hospital. We were very upset. A re-evaluation of the lab work revealed

that the infection was a different type and the girls were reunited in the nursery.

Near the end of February, Laura and I got the go-ahead to hold them. We were thrilled; that was one of the most important things we could do for our daughters.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Troyer, one of the neonatologists, shared with us that she really never thought we would be meeting that day. She considered the fact that both of the girls were still living to be a miracle. She went on to say that what she was most excited about was that neither girl showed any evidence of a brain bleed, also called an intraventricular hemorrhage (IVH). Dr. Troyer said that she would have given the girls a 10% chance each of not having a brain bleed.

Audrey and Abby struggled to gain weight. As a result, the amount of time we held them each day was cut back because holding burned calories. We helped with diaper changes whenever we could. It was hard to close the cover over each one's bed after these brief visits, but we understood that they needed to grow.

One by one, the tubes and needles came out. Audrey and Abby began to breathe and eat on their own. They began to put on weight—and keep it on. Vision, hearing, coordination and thinking skills began developing. A few days after Mother's Day 2003, we brought both girls home—together. True miracles. ♥

Clay Owens, the husband of Laura and father of Audrey and Abby, is a minister of music at his church in Tallapoosa, Ga., and a mortgage broker, when he is not e-mailing his friends the latest photos of his girls. His complete diary is posted online at www.TwinsMagazine.com. You can e-mail him at ClayNOWens@aol.com.

Two against the world, and the sibling

My 4-year-old twins, Ariel and Zorada, have been bonding quite well lately. They have always enjoyed a close relationship, but now they are two against the world. They were my firstborn so we never had that rivalry before the introduction of the singleton. I don't think it is rivalry now but rather a common pest that they try to shoo away.

Ariel whispers with glee, "Come on Zorada, come on," as she starts running down the hall. Her twin Zorada is in hot pursuit. Next is the slamming of the door, the lock clicking shut and finally the all-out giggles of having gotten away with something.

They have successfully gotten away from their little sister, the toddler singleton, and kept her out of their all-important stuff. You know, the Barbies, baby dolls and dress-up clothes. As if there weren't enough to go around and not even know something was missing. This, of course, is not the point. Their special friendship is deepened every time you hear those giggles behind the locked door. This is not to say that they never play with their little sister, but it has evolved into "this is my alone-time with so-and-so," one of them will state. I want to laugh and cry at the same time when they get the best of me. They have taken my line trying to make sure everyone gets some alone-time or activity with mom and turned it into their excuse to rid themselves of their little sister. Sometimes those lines just come back to bite you.

My twins have now decided that it is not enough to play with each other; it is time to make sure their singleton sister does not play with them. Sometimes they take pity on her, especially after some coaxing from me, but mostly they don't want her around. This has become the major battle in our household as the singleton, Chloe, wants



Illustration by Chuck Galley

to get into all their preschooler stuff. All the forbidden things that she sees and is not allowed to touch just make the mischievous mind of the toddler invent new ways to pester her sisters. Besides, she thinks she is a preschooler who can join in on all their play.

There have been times I wasn't sure my twins really had that special bond between them. They always have been close but never answered for one another or exhibited many of the other behaviors associated with twins. They play together, but also separate at play groups or the park. My twins make their own friends while playing. They take turns getting grandma's attention for some activity. As with most people, one twin enjoys an activity more than the other. They are two totally different kids with very individual styles of thinking and interacting with the world.

Of course, I think this is wonderful. I wouldn't want two clones of each other. They are bundles of fun and much more interesting this way. Carbon copies would start to seem surreal after a while, maybe even Stepford, in my opinion. The bond that holds them together has only grown stronger with the birth of their sister. At

first she was just an annoyance because she cried so frequently. Then she could crawl and Ariel and Zorada sought higher ground with their toys. This meant they played with everything on their beds. Now she can run and climb with them. Higher ground is out of the question. My little Chloe finds a way to get into their world. Sometimes they have resorted to squeezing her out of the doorway just so they can shut and lock the door. Of course, they have locked themselves out of their room at times too. All the while, they giggle like they are thwarting some great enemy and retreating to their castle—the princesses win again. In Ariel and Zorada's minds, they are those beautiful princesses starring in a movie of their own making.

We all love our little Chloe and I hold out hope that as my children grow older, they all will bond and take care of each other in this world.

Maybe if I could get the three of them to find a common enemy... maybe the great giant mommy could get them into a giggle frenzy, causing all three to run to a princess castle behind a locked door. ♥

Pamela Porter is a freelance writer who lives in Ashland, Ky.

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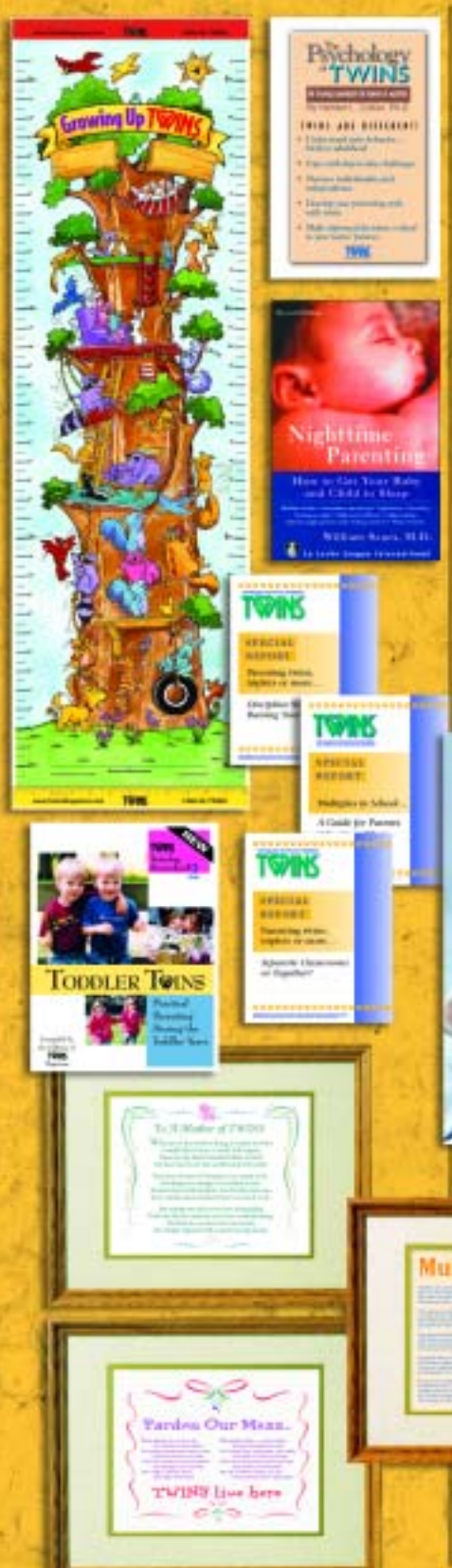
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Genetics and reading difficulties

Dr. Sally Wadsworth, a senior research associate at the Institute for Behavioral Genetics, University of Colorado, Boulder, discusses the program's work.

What is the focus of your research?

We have three large research projects at the Institute for Behavioral Genetics through which we study reading and reading difficulties.

1. The Longitudinal Twin Study of Early Reading Development (Professor Richard K. Olson, director) focuses on assessment of the genetic and environmental influences on development of early reading, language and attention, with emphasis on identification of the specific psychological processes that mediate these influences. Participants range in age from 4 to 7 years.
2. The Colorado Learning Disabilities Research Center, also known as the Colorado Reading Project, (Professor John C. DeFries, director), focuses on assessment of the genetic and environmental bases of reading problems, and ADHD and their co-occurrence. Participants range in age from 8 to 21 years.
3. The Longitudinal Twin Study of Reading Disability, (Sally J. Wadsworth, director), is a 5- to 6-year follow-up of participants in the Colorado Reading Study. We study how a child's reading difficulties stay the same or change as well as the educational, occupational and behavioral outcomes of children with reading difficulties. Participants in this project range in age from 12 to 25 years.

What are your hypotheses?

Our primary hypotheses are that reading development, reading problems, ADHD and any tendency of these traits to occur together, as well as the persistence or stability (for example, the tendency of a good reader at age 12 to still be a good reader at 18) of these traits are due, at least in part, to genetic influences. In addition, we are searching for specific genes that may be involved in the development of reading difficulties and ADHD.

What have you learned?

We are learning much of interest for parents. In brief:

Among preschool twins, there is evidence for significant genetic influences on measures of learning and memory and pre-reading skills, such as phonological awareness, which is the ability to recognize and manipulate letter sounds in a word (For example when asked to say "prot" without the "r" sound, the correct response would be "pot."). In contrast, measures of print knowledge (e.g., letter knowledge, recognition of some common words such as "the" and "cat") and vocabulary show evidence of home environmental influence.

We hope that our work will eventually lead to the identification of specific genes that increase susceptibility to reading problems.

Among school-aged twins, there are significant genetic influences for both reading deficits and reading ability within the normal range. Among identical (MZ) co-twins of children with reading problems, 64% experience difficulty learning to read as compared with 34% of fraternal (DZ) co-twins. However, the fact that the MZ concordance rate is less than 100% suggests substantial environmental influence as well.

Among our twin participants, we have not found an excess of males with reading problems, nor have we found evidence of differences in genetic influences related to gender. These findings contrast with studies of children who have been referred to researchers specifically because they have been identified as having reading problems and may include more boys; possibly because boys with reading problems may be more disruptive in the classroom than girls so that the reading problems of some girls may be overlooked. (Shaywitz et al., 1990).

Reading difficulties and ADHD occur together at a significant rate. This is substantially due to genetic influences common to the



Occupation: Sally Wadsworth, Ph.D.

Position: Senior Research Associate

Contact information: Institute for Behavioral Genetics, University of Colorado, 447 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0447, PH: 303-492-6795, FAX: 303-492-8063

E-mail: sally.wadsworth@colorado.edu



Patricia M. Malmstrom, M.A.

two disorders (i.e., some of the same genes are involved in both). We have uncovered evidence that reading difficulties are associated with a specific region on Chromosome 6. These findings have been independently confirmed by five other studies. In addition, ADHD has been found to be associated with the same region of Chromosome 6. Other chromosomes have been implicated in other studies and we are currently attempting to replicate these findings.

What do these results tell us about twins?

We have found no evidence in either preschool- or school-aged twins to support the anecdotal and clinical findings of verbal deficits among twins as compared with non-twins. Scores on measures of reading and verbal ability do not differ significantly between twins and non-twin siblings participating in our studies. Further, co-twins of our DZ (fraternal) twins with reading problems are no more likely to have reading problems than their non-twin siblings.

What are the implications of your findings?

Although our findings do not have direct implications for rearing twins or multiples, it is important for parents of twins to know that twin participation in research is vital to our understanding of the development of many traits and disorders, helping us to identify not only genetic influences, but environmental contributions, as well. Their participation is greatly appreciated and valued by the research community.

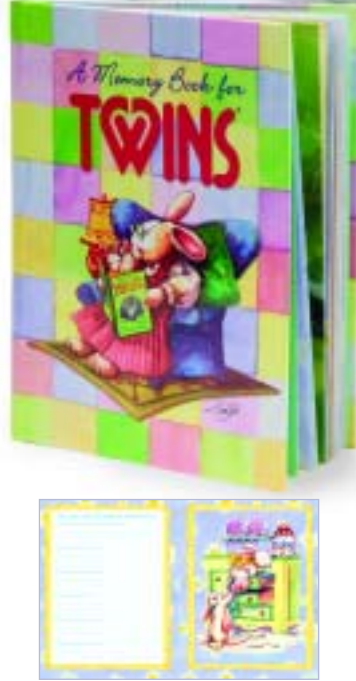
Where do you expect your research to lead?

We hope that our work will eventually lead to the identification of specific genes that increase susceptibility to reading problems. This could tell us something about the biological bases of reading problems and might also facilitate diagnosis or the development of techniques with which to screen at-risk children at a young age to determine who might benefit most from early intervention.

For more information about these and other twin studies at the Institute for Behavioral Genetics go to: <http://ibgwww.colorado.edu/twinsites.html>. See also: Saywitz, S.E., Saywitz, B.A., Fletcher, J.M., & Escobar, M.D. (1990) "Prevalence of reading disability in boys and girls." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 998-1002. ♥

Patricia M. Malmstrom, M.A., is director of Twin Services Consulting, www.twinservices.org, and co-author of *The Art of Parenting Twins*, (Ballantine, NY, 1999). You may e-mail her at twinservices@juno.com.

Brad and Jake, 3 days old



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When One Twin Lags Behind

by Barbara Klein, Ph.D., Ed.D.

Rearing twins is a challenge for parents when both twins are healthy. Parents have to work individually and with the pair while twins progress through normal developmental milestones, developing a sense of themselves. Trying to treat twins equally is not always appropriate as twins naturally need different kinds of attention and nurturing. Yet dealing with differences between your twin pair is tricky. Responding to, rather than creating, differences develops optimal individuality as well as healthy bonding experiences.

When one twin is born with an emotional, physical or medical disability, the challenge of parenting becomes even more difficult, time-consuming and exceedingly stressful. "Doing the right thing" for each of your twins becomes crucial to each individual in the pair as well as to the identity of the pair. Early medical and parental intervention is paramount to the health, well being and self-esteem of each twin and to their future development.

The challenges >

When one twin is diagnosed with an impairment such as autistic spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy or a physical challenge, to name just a few possibilities, parents must pay special attention to this problem. First and foremost, parents must mobilize themselves to get the best treatment, support and appropriate interventions for the challenged twin. Out of necessity, the stronger twin is faced with the burden of always being second in line behind his or her challenged twin. Oftentimes, the stronger and healthier twin is used

as a support for the weaker twin, and, in turn, the family. The healthy twin will get less attention when medical problems with his or her twin are at a serious crossroad. This need for differential treatment creates problems for both twins and their parents.

When unequal treatment is best >

When there is not enough intervention, problems escalate. Let's look at an example in which the co-twin of a twin with autistic spectrum disorder developed emotional problems.

Arnold and Claire are dizygotic twins. Arnold, a very difficult baby, has incredible tantrums, uses his language in a minimal way and avoids making eye contact. The developmental pediatrician diagnoses him with autistic spectrum disorder when he is 1½ years old. Unlike her twin, Claire is talking and connecting well with her parents and gets a clean bill of health from the developmental pediatrician.

Mom, Dad and Claire, however, are overwhelmed by Arnold's physical and emotional needs. For far too many months, even years, Claire watches and listens to her brother's rages and out-of-control behavior, which frightens and traumatizes her.

Although the house is in continual turmoil, Mom and Dad do not realize the negative effect that Arnold's illness is having on Claire until she starts preschool at 3½. Very immature, Claire has not learned how to behave in group situations. She can be aggressive—

bite, hit or scream—when she feels pressured by other children. Sometimes, for no apparent reason, Claire becomes regressed and cries uncontrollably in the corner.

On the other hand, Arnie has improved significantly by 3½. Arnie's treatment team believes that he will outgrow his problematic behavior in elementary school. He is speaking in clear sentences. He attends a special school where he has a behavioral therapist who works with him on socialization.

Although she is better socialized at 5 than she was at 3½, Claire remains a concern for her parents, the preschool and the psychologists who work with the family. High strung and something of a "wild child," she has a hard time making and keeping friends because she has a bad temper. She does not like school and misses her twin brother who is at a different school. School officials phone mom and dad frequently because Claire will not follow the rules. She still bites and screams inappropriately if she gets angry. She cannot explain her feelings except to say that she knows she is "different." Getting her to take responsibility for her actions and feelings is very time-consuming for parents and teachers.

Unfortunately, Arnold and Claire's story has many common themes with other twin stories in which one twin has special challenges. Clearly, both twins are affected in different ways.

In another home, the family worked out the balance of care.

Mary and Monica, 5-year-old dizygotic twins, are safely fastened in their car seats. After a long day at her office, mom has just picked up both children from different schools and is driving them to after-school activities. Mary is partially blind and goes to a school for the visually impaired. Monica is an active, healthy child who goes to the neighborhood school.

The girls are happy to see each other, and they share their after-school snacks with each other. Monica helps Mary open her bag of cookies and explains to her sister that she will be at her eye doctor in five minutes. Monica knows how long it takes on the free-

way to get to her sister's doctor because she is learning to read street signs.

Mary tells Monica about the gymnastics class she is going to attend. Monica explains to her sister that they will be playing on floor mats and acting like animals. Mary laughs; her interest in her sister's activities is apparent.

Pleased that her twins are getting along, mom praises both of them separately and as a pair. She remembers how much talking about feelings and play therapy has gone on in order to get the children to accept their circumstances. Mary has had several surgeries. Because of her visual limitation, she has had special help and a great deal of extra love and attention and concern from her parents, doctors, teachers and her sister.

Monica, who has had to play caregiver and seeing-eye dog for her sister, has been angry and frustrated with her place in the family. Monica realizes that her sister has serious physical limitations, but she is very young to explain her shame and guilt in words. Mom, sensitive to Monica's feelings, looks for ways to help her daughter express herself. And, she helps Mary live a full life in spite of her visual limitations. This mother has helped her twins by treating them fairly and not equally.

Similar questions, different solutions >

Rearing twins when one is challenged and the other is healthy creates special and often unstated, difficult dilemmas, because of the deep bond twins share. When one twin suffers, the other twin may feel the pain as well, because as young children their sense of separateness from one another is not totally developed. They may be overly concerned with one another, and intensely angry at each other as well. At special times, they share a deep sense of compassion for one another which truly goes beyond words. There is something magical or illusive about their closeness that parents and teachers can-

> Limiting destructive differential treatment

- Get the right help for your challenged twin.
- Get special individual services for both of your children. The stronger twin may feel shame and guilt for not being "challenged."
- Take your own emotional needs into consideration because when you are overwhelmed your children will suffer the consequences.
- Your job is an exhausting one. Elicit support from your family, extended family and friends.
- Find professionals who have worked with twins.
- Talk to your twins about their feelings and thoughts as often as is necessary, and explain the challenges they face in developmentally appropriate ways.
- Find schools or enrichment programs that have experience with twins.

- Give each twin praise and rewards for his or her special accomplishments.
- Reward the twin pair if they avoid a fight or conflict.
- Acknowledge and reward the stronger twin for helping his brother or sister.

> Avoiding "parent traps"

- Don't think you can raise these children alone. You can't!!
- Don't forget that both twins will suffer because of their deep bond with each other.
- Protect your twins from strangers who bring attention to the challenged twin's problems.
- Don't rely on the healthier twin to take care of the challenged twin.
- Parents who are responsive are most likely to successfully work through the problems that arise when one twin is seriously challenged.

—Dr. Barbara Klein

not understand. Their closeness intensifies the problems of giving each child the treatment that he or she needs.

While meeting the emotional and physical needs of your twins may present the most demanding and perplexing challenges, the day-to-day practical issues are what can wear out a parent. Working through those challenges and hassles takes some planning. While parents of one delayed and one healthy twin face similar challenges, the situations and solutions often are as unique as the individuals.

How can I clone myself? >

How to be in two places at once to care for two children who are in different stages is a question most parents with a delayed twin ask. Whether the logistical challenge is temporary or permanent, you need help.

Scott and Jennifer Carey, of Denver, Colo., quickly devised a plan when they brought home their newborn son, Jack, but were forced to leave his twin sister, Madalyn, in the hospital to recuperate from her heart surgery. To top things off, it was time for Scott to return to work. Jennifer took Jack with her to the NICU in the morning and took turns with Scott visiting Maddie in the evenings. They called for updates throughout the day.

“Maddie’s first night [at home] was one of my best nights,” Jennifer recalled. “Forgetting all about the heart machine, the feeding tube and all of Maddie’s medicine, our family was complete.”

They were separated again in the fall, when they took Maddie to the emergency room for what they thought was a cold. She was admitted for her second heart surgery.

“We felt like we were back at square one,” said Jennifer, who had returned to work. Maddie developed pneumonia, delaying heart surgery and extending the hospital-home-work shuffle.

“After the surgery and during her recovery, Scott and I took half days off work and took turns being at the hospital during the day. At night we stayed home with Jack so Maddie could rest better,” Jennifer said. “Everybody helped by taking care of Jack and going to the hospital to visit Maddie while Scott and I worked half days. We are very lucky to have such a great family and friends to help.”

In many cases managing logistics becomes a way of life, often requiring full-time help. If you do not live near family members who are able to pitch in on a regular basis, hiring a nanny experienced in caring for a disabled child—and if possible also in caring for a twins—can be the difference between struggling to survive and living a somewhat well-balanced family life.

Hannah and
Lindsay Hettasch



Diane Hettasch of Brookfield, Ill., also relied on her family, especially her mother-in-law, to help with her twins, Hannah and Lindsay, now 5. Lindsay has cerebral palsy, seizures, a developmental delay and is non-verbal. “I felt so torn,” Diane recalled. “Which twin needed me more? I couldn’t deny Lindsay the services she needed. I felt like if I had just had Hannah five years later, but then...”

Whenever possible, Diane and her husband Ed called in respite care for Lindsay, allowing them some individual time with Hannah.

What do we say? >

Parents are often at a loss for words when it comes to helping a young child understand why his or her twin is unable to keep up. When twins enter toddlerhood, the differences often become more apparent. One crawls, walks and talks, while the other lags behind. What do parents say?

Charity Alber of Indianapolis, Ind., found talking to be the only way to help her twin girls, others—and herself—understand and accept the differences.

Charity’s twin girls, Mackenzie and Madison, now 5, were growing up together, in parallel, for the first 16 months of their lives, as close as any two could be, from their own language to sleeping side-by-side. Then Mackenzie contracted meningitis. She suffered a stroke and paralysis that took her back to infancy. She could not move her limbs, speak or eat. She could communicate only through her eyes.

Charity and her husband brought Madison to the hospital to visit Mackenzie, confined to a tumble chair and in braces, with tubes and bloated from water weight gain. “I asked Madison, ‘Where’s Mackenzie?’ She look all around the room and said, ‘Mommy, I don’t see her.’ My heart broke,” Charity recalled.

They just kept on talking and talking. From time to time Madison would ask: “Why can’t Mackenzie do this?” “Sissy is very sick” was the reply, over and over.

“We talked about ‘germs you can’t see’ and a sickness that makes you start all over again,” Charity said.

It is important to respond not only to the words, but also to the emotions. “When you are 16 months old, it is hard to articulate your feelings,” Charity said. “We just kept talking.”

Madison, who had the trauma of her sister and mother practically disappearing for one month, became very clingy when Charity and Mackenzie returned home. And she had nightmares and was very upset. “Madison is still very clingy and gets upset when I go on a trip,” Charity added.

What about the twinship? >

The good news for parents of a twin with a delay, long-term illness or disability is that twins often encourage each other to reach milestones and accomplish tasks that a singleton might never tackle. The twin connection can be a powerful healing tool.

Maddie’s desire to catch up with Jack was unmistakable. When Maddie saw Jack crawling she wanted to be right there with

him. If he had a toy, she wanted it. By 14 months of age, Maddie, who had lagged behind Jack, had almost caught up with her brother.

Often it is not a question of actually catching up, but of motivation and role modeling. When Madison first saw Mackenzie in the hospital, Charity feared the twin bond was forever broken. With Mackenzie's disabilities they could no longer play together, or chatter away in their own language. Just last year, four years after she came down with meningitis, Mackenzie walked again. Now Mackenzie and Madison play together and the special bond between them, including their chatter, is again visible.

"Mackenzie wants to be where Madison is. She says, 'I love my sissy.' That connection made a big difference in her recovery. The doctors said she had the peer model at home. There might not be any scientific proof but, if I've learned one thing throughout this, it is 'go with your gut.'"

The relationship should not be forced, however, nor should the co-twin be pressed into the role of caregiver.

Hannah and Lindsay have been aware of differences from birth. "Hannah has never developed a close relationship with Lindsay," Diane said. "I think, even at 1 year of age, she was turned off by Lindsay's drooling." Diane wonders how the relationship will evolve and if they will be close some day.

Take care of myself? >

Committing to do a few things for yourself routinely—such as regular sleep and good diet—sounds much easier than it is. Call on family and respite care workers often—in fact, twice as often for twice as long as you think you need them.

Grieving the loss of your child's normal abilities is one of the things that tracks you down, even if you try to hide from it. Grief can pop up throughout life, especially as your healthier twin reaches new milestones that your other twin may never hit.

"I have a cry and then move on," explained Diane, a special education teacher before her twins were born. "I am just that kind of person." Diane knew at birth Lindsay would be disabled because her head was small for her body. Her work with disabled adults and kids prepared her for what was to come, at least as much as anything could.

Few parents, however, have the advantage of a background in special education. Most parents must learn from their experience day-by-day, as they strive to adapt. It is emotionally demanding, and sometimes parents need help dealing with those emotions.

Guilt is another potentially poisonous area. "It was hard to talk about the guilt at first," Charity said, "but the cure is talking. You have good days and you have bad days. You think, 'If only I had

not done this or that.' On other days, you think, 'How could I have known?'"

Parents of special needs multiples often feel isolated, but have little time to organize and do anything about it. They may not fit in with parents of healthy children in local twins clubs, but neither do they fit in with parents of disabled singletons. Many support organizations were founded by parents who had a need that was not met. Few parents of disabled multiples have the time or emotional reserves to tackle such a project, and many children may suffer lifelong disabilities.

Developmental preschools are the most likely resource for parents of disabled multiples. Charity found another set of twins with similar challenges at a developmental preschool that both Madison and Mackenzie attended. (The classes were comprised of 75% disabled children and 25% typically developed children for the purpose of role modeling.)

Diane also found her best networking opportunities through a school—a conductive education program—although all of the other children were singletons.

Support from other mothers in similar situations can lend perspective to your situation, help you be an advocate for your child, give you a safe outlet for letting off steam. And they can offer a kind word when you're down. When you feel that no one understands, it's just good to know you're not alone. ♥

Barbara Klein, Ph.D., Ed.D., is a private practice-psychologist in Los Angeles and the author of *Not All Twins are Alike* (Praeger, 1999) and *Psychological Profiles of Twinship* (Praeger, 2003). She has a twin sister. Visit her Web site at www.drbarbaraklein.com.



Mackenzie, Charity, Matt and Madison Alber bake cookies.

Photo: Jerry Kelyniuk, courtesy of the Meningitis Foundation of America

Links and resources for special needs families

***I Know This Much Is True* by Wally Lamb**

912 pages; Regan Books (1999); \$16 (paperback)
Heavy (depressing for some) story of a boy who loses his twin to schizophrenia; insight into families who have a twin with a disability
www.TwinsMagazine.com

Online message board forum "Special Needs Families;" merges two sets of special needs—disabilities and multiples

Educators Dr. David Hay and Pat Preedy

www.curtin.edu.au/corporate/multiplebirths/special_needs/index.htm

North Fulton Mothers of Multiples Club

www.nfmomc.org/special-needs.htm

Internet Resources for Special Children (IRSC)

www.irsc.org

Contact a Family

www.cafamily.org.uk/Direct/t51.html

Raising special needs multiples (Dr. Elizabeth Pector)

www.synspectrum.com/specialneeds.htm

Meningitis Foundation of America

www.musa.org

United Cerebral Palsy

www.ucp.org

The Multiples Manual: Preparing and Caring for Twins or Triplets

Lynn Lorenz **\$13.95**
Written by an identical twin who is the mother of triplets, *The Multiples Manual* is a compendium of over 1,000 indispensable tips and ideas for new parents of multiples. Covering topics ranging from crying to feeding to bathing to safety and more. Parents will find they don't need to read from cover to cover but instead can skip and jump to topics of greatest interest. With assistance and information from several parents of multiples organizations, *The Multiples Manual* entertains as well as informs. *Paperback, 270 pages.*



Keys to Parenting Multiples

Karen Kerhoff Gronoda
Mary C. Hurlburt **\$7.95**
Practical help for nurturing multiples from birth through childhood. Covers breastfeeding, individuality, combined energy, toilet learning, school, development. *Paperback, 216 pages.*



Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking

Jerry Wyckoff, Ph.D., Barbara C. Unell **\$8.00**
Every parent of 1- to 5-year-olds knows children often whine, refuse to eat, throw tantrums. Unell, founder of *TWINS Magazine* and a parent of b/g twins, teamed with Wyckoff to help parents discipline children without damaging self-esteem or natural curiosity. Revised and expanded. *Paperback, 160 pages.*



Twins: What They Tell Us About Who We Are

Lawrence Wright **SALE \$15.95**
Recent studies of twins have shaken the field of psychology to the core, revealing revolutionary insights into the importance of genes on personality. Award-winning journalist Wright presents a lively narrative about identical twins who live entirely separate lives but have an incredible number of traits in common, even down to their tastes in food, music, clothes and, amazingly, spouses and careers. Wright uses the latest twins studies to boldly discuss what they reveal about all of us. *Hardcover, 202 pages.*



Imperfect Harmony: How to Stay Married for the Sake of Your Children and Still Be Happy

Joshua Coleman **\$23.95**
In his upbeat manner, Josh Coleman, *TWINS Magazine* columnist and father of twin boys, offers down-to-earth advice that really works for parents who do not want to end their marriage. He will help you tame out-of-control conflict and let go of fairy-tale ideas of marriage popular today. *Hardcover, 224 pages.*



Facing the loss of a multiple

Coming to Term: A Father's Story of Birth, Loss and Survival

William H. Woodwell Jr. **\$25.00**
By sharing the very early birth of twin daughters, Woodwell looks at the heartache and miracles of NICU, the death of a twin, and survival. *Hardcover, 216 pages.*



A Different Kind of Mother Surviving the Loss of My Twins

Christine Howser **\$13.95**
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Popular Choices from Twins Magazine

The Psychology of Twins: A practical handbook for parents of multiples.

Herbert L. Collier, Ph.D. **\$13.95**
Twins differ from singletons and, just as importantly, from each other, whether monozygotic (identical) or dizygotic (fraternal). Dr. Collier, a psychologist and father of twins, draws experience from rearing his twins who are now well-adjusted adults and also from counseling hundreds of families with multiples. Offers compassionate wisdom seasoned with patience. Practical and down-to-earth, a must-have book for parents who want to understand and value each child as an individual. *Paperback, 120 pages.*



The Twinship Sourcebook 2: Toddler Twins

TWINS Magazine **\$14.95**
Everyday questions are addressed in this practical guidebook. Twins and triplets who are moving beyond their babyhood—and, oh boy, can they move!—make every day a challenge and lots of fun! Insights from experts and other parents. Topics include: biting and fighting, eating, potty training, identity, discipline, growing stages, physical development, language development, emotional development, playtime, creativity, and more. A perfect gift. *Paperback, 198 pages.*



Dancing Naked in Front of the Fridge... And Other Lessons from Twins

Nancy J. Sipes, Ph.D.
and Janna S. Sipes, J.D. **\$16.95**
The title of this book refers to twinship being like a dance in front of a mirror—each twin constantly reflects the other. These marvelously accomplished identical twins take a look inside their twinship, and help a reader take a fresh look at their own personal relationships. Gain new and valuable insights into your twins and yourself. *Paperback, 244 pages.*



The Twinship Sourcebook: Your guide to understanding multiples

TWINS Magazine **\$14.95**
The leading source of information for parents of multiples. Handy, one-of-a-kind guidebook helps you understand your multiples from birth through the school years and into adulthood. Topics include temperament and personality, twin-types, and whether to separate in school. If you have only one book on multiples, this is the one to have! *Paperback, 272 pages.*



The Stork Brought Three: Secrets of successful coping for parents of multiples

Jean P. Hall **\$12.00**
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Multiples During the Adolescent Years
Parenting teen twins is confusing and stressful, times two. Straightforward advice on multiples' adolescent development during raging hormone periods, behavior, health and education, and typical parenting woes. *87 pages.*

Discipline Without Raising Your Voice
Dealing with twins is doubly tricky. Report on discipline and behavioral issues will enhance your parental coping skills, ease tensions and help you through difficult times. Your children will benefit enormously. *54 pages.*

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Report helps you persuade school officials to allow your twins to remain in the same classroom. Gives ammunition to parents, also provides educators' perspectives. *25 pages.*

Separate Classrooms or Together?
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Twins in School **NEW!**
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Twins really grow up quickly. Report sheds light on parenting challenges during the twins' elementary school years—competition, discipline, sexuality, safety, self-confidence, identity and more. *85 pages.*



Full House

● By Lauren Kramer ●

Preparing a singleton for the arrival of twins is not always easy, especially given the complications that can arise in a multiples pregnancy. Start early in small ways and your family can be prepared for the “multiples” changes headed your way.

Photo: photobyneisch.com

I was seven weeks pregnant when I discovered I was carrying twins. I was so shocked, I did the only thing that made any sense: I started planning a vacation. I figured that with three kids in the house—my son Jason would be almost 3 when the twins were born—I would need no excuse to kick back and take it easy.

I was right on that front. But the early notice of my dual arrivals also gave me plenty of time to prepare my son for their birth—which is critical, according to the experts, who claim that singletons have the hardest time when twins come home. “I interviewed singletons who had to deal with the precious babies coming home, and they usually said things were very different, and not for the better, either,” said Herb Collier, Ph.D., an author, expert in child and family psychology, and father and grandfather of twins.

Ideally, you want to sit your singleton down and explain that life will be busier and

more complicated after the twins’ birth. “Check out books from the library and prepare them for two babies, not just one,” suggested monozygotic (“identical”) twin Eileen Pearlman, Ph.D., author and specialist in multiple births. “Buy two baby dolls so they can have two babies, too. Buy them gifts so they don’t feel left out when presents arrive for your multiples. And when you talk to them about the new babies, reassure your singleton that you’ll still give him love.”

Tammy Kalvari remembers telling her 3-year-old singleton how lucky he was going to be, before her identical twin boys arrived. “I told him that most people only get one baby, but he was going to be getting two, that’s why he was so lucky,” recalled the Vancouver mom of three.

But depending on their age, your singleton might not understand the gravity of the situation, which is why it’s important to adjust their daily habits, schedules and

routines in anticipation of the birth, in order to minimize the disruption.

“Decide what habits you wish your singleton to have and proceed to establish them ahead of time,” advised Rebecca Moskwinski, M.D., the executive vice-president of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs. “For example, if it’s a habit of watching a video early in the morning, establish that routine before the multiples are born. This will ease stress levels during the first few weeks after the babies’ birth, and the older siblings will not associate changes in the household routine with the birth of the multiples.”

Once your multiples arrive, you’ll find yourself an instant magnet, a center of attention wherever you go. At the grocery store, hairdresser, airport or restaurant, people who in the past would easily have walked by you without a smile, now approach you without qualms. They inquire as to whether

Helping your singleton prepare for multiples

Do your homework beforehand

Preparing your singleton for the arrival of multiples is critical, according to the experts, who claim that singletons have the hardest time when twins come home.

Schedules

Adjust your singleton's daily habits, schedules and routines in anticipation of the birth, so that the disruption is minimized.

Team playing

Let your singleton know he's an important part of the family team.

Multiple mystique

When strangers come up and make a fuss of the twins, say, "Yes, and they have a very special brother/sister who..." and name their special qualities.

One-on-one

Try to spend time with your singleton and only one of the multiples at a time, alternating so that the singleton gets time with each twin.

Regression

Acknowledge that it might be fun for your singleton to do the things he did as a baby, especially given the attention lavished on the babies, which he likely covets.

Sharing

Recognize that it must be hard for him to share, and make sure he has a special place for the toys that he chooses not to share, so that he has a sense of privacy.

Good behavior

Praise positive behavior and encourage your singleton to talk about how he feels.

Shopping

Take your singleton with you when you shop for the twins and let him pick out a toy or gift for each of the babies.

Memories

Get out your singleton's baby pictures and show him what he looked like as an infant and what he did.

Babysitters

If at all possible, make arrangements for your singleton to be cared for at home, preferably by a close relative.

Packing

When you pack your bag for the hospital, pack a bag of activities for your singleton that he can use at the hospital, at grandmother's house or with a sitter at home while he waits. Include crayons, paper, scissors, glue, snacks, a new toy, a disposable camera and a children's book on bringing home multiples, and anything else that might be meaningful for him.

Leaving for the hospital

If at all possible, be sure to say good-bye before you leave for the hospital.

Communication

Be sure to call your singleton from the hospital at least once a day.

Visits to the hospital

Prepare your singleton for a visit to the hospital—if you are sure that he will be able to visit.

Homecoming

When you come home from the hospital, let someone else carry the twins into the house. Focus on greeting your child and spending some time alone with him.

you have twins, if they're identical, their age and their gender, often questioning you and fussing over your multiples for several minutes. While this can become tiring and annoying after a while, watch out for the feelings of your singleton, since the older sibling is usually totally ignored.

And that can hurt, especially when it happens repeatedly, day after day. Your job as a parent is to recognize your singleton and help the strangers to recognize him, said Dr. Collier. "When strangers come up and make a fuss over the twins, say, 'Yes, and they have a very special brother (sister) who...' and name his or her special qualities. It's so important to brag about the singleton in front of other people," he added. "The strangers don't need to hear it, but your singleton definitely does!"

It's hard to be constantly sensitive to the needs of all your children, especially given the demanding regime of caring for multiples. But restrain your vigilance even momentarily and it's easy for your singleton to slip through the cracks. "Be especially aware of your singleton's feelings during the initial months after the babies' births," cautioned Moskwiniski. "Your attention will be diverted to the new arrivals, and your singleton will be mourning the loss of the special relationship with you, a loss that is magnified with the arrival of multiples."

Kalvari remembers how painfully absent was her relationship with her singleton after the twins arrived. "It took me three months before I had a chance to sit down and play with my older son," she recalled. And in the rare moments when I did have time for him, he didn't want to be with me, which hurt even more."

For Jackie Lee, it helped that her 3-year-old son was in day care both before and after her twins arrived 10 months ago. "Because he was in daycare, my son Brayden didn't have to adjust to changes in his daily routine," said the Richmond, British Columbia, mom. "He was able to stay active and happy during a period when I was sitting on the couch most of the day, feeding the twins. If he'd been home with me, he would have been frustrated, so I'd recommend daycare, for the first two months after twins arrive, at least."

In later months, other issues can arise. Take twins clubs meetings, for example. "At the mothers of twins clubs meetings, the singletons I interviewed felt like used hardware," Dr. Collier said. "They were frustrated and angry at their parents and other people at those meetings, who seemed to be totally insensitive to their situation."

Spending lots of quality time with your singleton is one way of preventing that anger and jealousy. Lee postpones her singleton's bedtime by an hour after the twins have gone down for the night, so she'll have time to read to him. During that quality time reinforce the maturity of your singleton, let them know how much they help you and how proud you are of them. Give them age-appropriate tasks so they can feel as if they are helping you with their multiple siblings, such as allowing them to push the stroller.

"Let your singleton know he's an important part of the team," Pearlman said.

Moskewski agreed: "Making comments such as 'Boy, these twins sure are a lot of hard work for us sometimes, aren't they?' can make the other siblings feel more important."

Remember that your singleton was king or queen of the house, prior to the multiples' births. He did not have to share toys or the attention of his parents, particularly if he was an only child. Recognize that it must be hard for him to share and make sure he has a special place for the toys that he chooses not to share, so that he has a sense of privacy.

It's not uncommon for your singleton to regress, reacting to the new stress in their lives by bedwetting, crying or trying to be a baby again. That's a normal and quite OK behavior, according to Dr. Pearlman, who

encourages parents to acknowledge the fun for your singleton in doing the things he did as a baby, especially given the attention lavished on the new babies, which he likely covets.

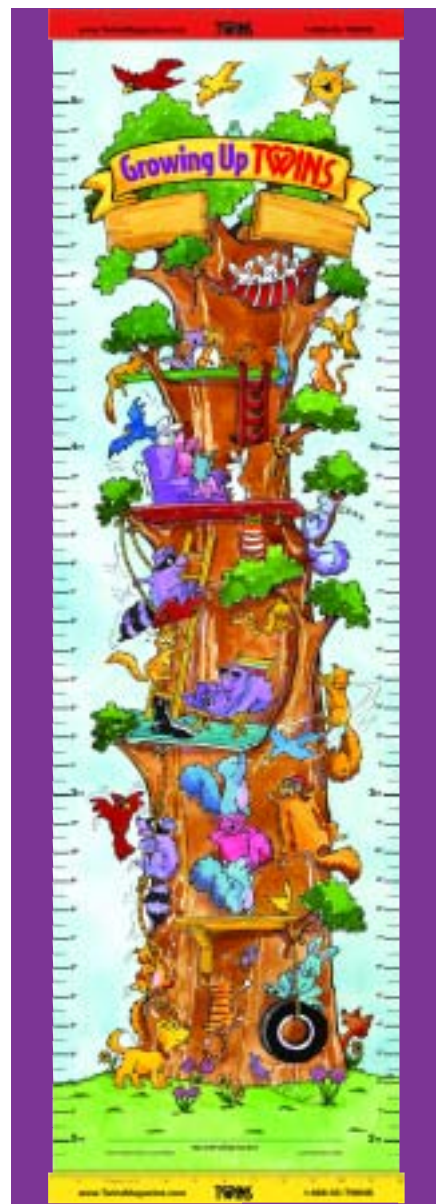
"Let them play baby during the alone time you have with your singleton," she said. "You're acknowledging they can have that time if they want it, but often they find it's quite boring."

Sometimes I cuddle Jason in my arms, and while we pretend he's a small baby again, I offer him a pacifier or bottle, which he inevitably refuses. We laugh about it and talk about how fast he's grown, and what a big boy he is now, capable of dressing himself, wearing 'big boy underwear' and going to school. We discuss how, when his twin sisters are bigger, they, too, will be able to do grown-up activities like he now does. In this way, we reinforce his maturity and instill pride in his many achievements.

"Nighttime is a particularly good time to talk to your singleton, because children tend to be less defensive and more open when they're tired," Dr. Collier said. "Let them know how proud you are of them, and how much they help you. Tell them it's OK for them to be angry or jealous, and that they should let you know if they feel this way."

Finally, try to spend time with your singleton and only one of the multiples at a time, alternating so that the singleton gets time with each twin. "Otherwise, the singleton always feels like it's him against them, and that he's the outsider," Dr. Pearlman advised. "This helps break up that one-against-two." ♥

Lauren Kramer is a freelance writer who lives in Vancouver, Canada, with her husband and three children, including twins born in 2003.



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Avoiding the school of hard knocks

by Trina Lambert



Larissa and Samuel,
10 months

No doubt a parent of twins first uttered the time-worn adage, “Two heads are better than one.” Nowhere is this more evident than when attempting to keep your twins safe, both around home and elsewhere. Whether knocking heads together or into a wall, door or other immovable object, your twins will be graduates of the school of hard knocks by the time they enter kindergarten. With careful planning, you can protect your multiples from most injuries, including those that it seems only twins can come up with.

From the pros

Author Lisa Carter writes about safety and other parenting topics while also running the safety-focused Paranoid Sisters Web site with her sister. She has 7-year-old twin sons and daughters who are 9 and 10. When she first had her twins, she focused on how to keep her older children safe while she was busy with the boys. She didn’t allow certain products, such as tiny Barbie shoes, in the house and went so far as to choose a house based upon safety parameters. “[My husband and I] tried to make decisions that would make life simpler,” Lisa said. “The same rules apply to twins but double because you are more groggy and more likely to make a foolish mistake.”

No matter how often you have heard it before, remember that there really is no substitute for supervision. Even so, Gary A. Smith, M.D., Dr.P.H., says that a parent often changes the level of supervision almost by the moment, based upon factors such as children’s ages, the relative safety of the environment and the activities in which children are engaged—such as a movement from quiet reading time to active climbing. Dr. Smith, a father of two boys ages 6 and 8, is the Director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy located in Columbus, Ohio. “When you’ve got two kids [the same age], it becomes harder as a parent to supervise [both] adequately,” Dr. Smith said. “That makes the other strategies of injury prevention

more important. One needs to anticipate injuries and, as best you can, design the environment the best way possible.”

Educate yourself about common childhood hazards, then think one step beyond and imagine what two kids might be able to do that one child couldn’t do. Twins may egg each other on, especially with risky behaviors, or their combined strength may allow them to move or open objects easier. Together they might be able to exploit any inherent weakness in a product, so think creatively when you buy a new piece of equipment or furniture. Ask yourself: What can my twins do with this that the manufacturer has not covered?

Also, it’s especially important to keep up with product recalls. Sign up for e-mail notification through the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s Web site. Finally, plan early for the next developmental stage because just when you think your baby can’t roll over or can’t stand, he or she will surprise you.

In the trenches

In addition to checking out professional resources for injury prevention, don’t forget to look to other parents of multiples for advice. Joanne Pribnow, a Berlin, Wis., mother of 3-year-old twin sons and a 7-year-old daughter, spoke from experience. “I don’t care what any book says,” she said. “They can’t prepare you for what mine have done or are doing. I would say the ‘school of hard knocks’ helps me. I really wish they would at least tattle on one another so I know what they are doing at all times.”

Most of our twins, however, aren’t going to let us in on their misadventures. By communicating with other parents, we can understand what they’ve experienced and how they were able to keep their twins safe. Although it may seem a little intimidating to hear specifics about what older twins get into, just consider that a little foreknowledge might be what protects you and your children.

Trina Lambert is a freelance writer and the mother of boy/girl twins. She lives in Englewood, Colo.

Twinproofing Checklist

Household Hazards and Products

Dressers, shelves and heavy furniture pieces

- Bolt to wall or remove, if necessary, since twins can climb drawers/shelves or pull the furniture on top of themselves.
- Place heavier items on lower shelves and in lower drawers.
- Do not leave items kids want in plain view on the top of a shelf or a chest.



Savana and Sabrina,
2 years, 7 months

Falls from windows

- Remove furniture and other access to windows since twins can boost one another and also weigh more together.
- Use window guards, when appropriate, per manufacturer's recommendations.

TVs and other equipment

- Secure to lower pieces of furniture or secure to wall.

Water hazards

- Keep hot water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit to avoid scalding.
- If you bathe babies together with bath rings, they can tip over one another; bath rings are not a substitute for supervision.
- Never leave a baby unsupervised in a bathtub, even in order to grab a towel.
- Use lid locks on toilets.
- Install door knob safety covers to keep children out of the bathroom.
- Do not leave standing water in buckets or ponds.
- Enclose pools with fences and self-latching, self-closing gates; never leave a child unobserved in or around a pool.

Window covering cords

- Keep furniture away from window coverings and keep all window cords from the reach of children.
- Replace or repair older window coverings.
- Consider installing cordless window coverings in children's rooms and play area.

Nursery hazards and products

Basic indoor safety products

- Install electrical outlet covers.
- Use door stops or guards to prevent pinched fingers and worse from twins' door games.
- Install safety locks but know that sometimes two can undo them.
- Install locks at the top of doors.

Cribs

- Make sure that sheets are firmly secured on mattress.
- Check nuts and bolts on cribs regularly because twins together can rock a crib across the room and help each other out or climb into one another's cribs.

Gates

- Install hardware-mounted gates; twins can push over or dislodge pressure-release gates.
- Look for tall gates; twins often boost one another over gates.
- Move chairs far away from safety gates; twins can move chairs that a singleton couldn't budge.
- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs.



High Chairs

- Set up far enough apart so that twins cannot reach one another.
- Lock high chairs in position for use, if they are collapsible.
- Lock wheels so one child can't take the other for a ride.
- Always use the restraint system.

Hook-on chairs

- Do not place where children can push off with feet.
- Place so that children cannot reach one another.

Port-a-cribs and playpens

- Do not exceed equipment weight limits, especially if placing both babies in them; they can collapse.
- Remove all soft bedding and use only original mattress.
- Check recall status if using an older version; many have been recalled and are extremely unsafe.

Strollers

- Keep children seated because if one stands up, the stroller can collapse or tip over.
- Always use the restraint system—properly.
- Watch that twins don't unbuckle one another.
- Do not leave sleeping children unattended in strollers; they can become entrapped when the backrest is in the carriage position.



Caroline and Rebeccal,
age 8 months

Used products

- Check for recalls before purchasing.
- Check condition for weaknesses.

Walkers

- Understand why they've been banned in Canada and are not recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).
- Avoid twin problems: one in the walker running over the one not in the walker, both running into each other in walkers, or one pushing the other down the stairs.
- Replace walkers with stationary activity centers.
- Best advice: Don't use walkers.

Miscellaneous hazards and products

Car

- Watch that twins don't unbuckle seat belts in non-LATCH systems.

- Monitor twins closely so that they don't undo each other's car seat harnesses.
- Keep car locked when parked; an unlocked car is an opportunity for trunk entrapment, injury from automatic windows, overheating, or children driving the vehicle (if keys are in ignition, which, of course, they never should be).

Choking

- Provide toys based upon age recommendations.
- Keep older siblings' toys from young twins.
- Monitor closely: Twins sometimes can pull apart objects that singletons can't.

Drawstrings

- Remove or cut off if they come in clothing.
- Twins can pull on each other's drawstrings, making them even more dangerous.

Playground

- Twins may pull or push each other off equipment or walk behind or in front of a twin pumping high in a swing.
- Be aware of daring behaviors, such as standing on top of equipment, or climbing on top of each other to reach support bars or areas not intended for play.

Poisoning

- Place medicines, cleaners and poisons in a high locked cabinet; twins can boost each other to high places and get to cabinets a singleton couldn't come close to reaching.

Shopping carts

- Watch siblings to keep from pulling down the cart while a child is sitting in it.
- Prevent horsing around in the cart.
- Look for low-to-the-ground options, such as the carts attached to trucks.
- Shop with both parents or leave children home with one parent, whenever possible. ♡

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), www.aap.org, (847) 434-4000

Consumer Reports, www.consumerreports.org

Government Recalls (6 different agencies), www.recalls.gov

National Safe Kids Campaign, www.safekids.org, (202) 662-0600

Paranoid Sisters, www.paranoidsisters.com

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), www.cpsc.gov, (800) 638-2772

The Window Covering Safety Council (WCSC), www.windowcoverings.org

International Association for Child Safety, www.iafcs.com

Quiz: Test Your Knowledge of Common Childhood Safety Concerns

- 1** The number of children under age 5 treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for nursery product-related injuries in 2001 was estimated at:
- 69,500
 - 71,400
 - 65,400
 - 67,700
- 2** The use of child restraints in automobiles was at 99% for infants and 94% for toddlers in 2002. The usage rate for children 4 to 7 was:
- 83%
 - 90%
 - 96%
 - 88%
- 3** The CPSC estimates that in recent years there were approximately 12,800 emergency room-treated injuries in children 5 years and under related to shopping carts. The number of head injuries was:
- 2,400
 - 5,700
 - 8,400
 - 4,100
- 4** Automobile trunk entrapment took the lives of how many children aged six and under in 1998, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention?
- 11
 - 2
 - 15
 - 9
- 5** The number of children injured in the U.S. in 2001 while using baby walkers:
- 20
 - 500
 - 2,000
 - 6,000
- 6** Injuries or deaths from infant carriers can be caused by:
- entanglement with retaining straps
 - unrestrained children falling to the floor
 - seats falling over onto soft surfaces
 - all of the above.
- 7** According to the National Program for Playground Safety, the recommended amount of uncompressed loose-fill surfacing below equipment up to 8 feet in height:
- 4 inches
 - 2 inches
 - 12 inches
 - 10 inches
- 8** The CPSC worked with manufacturers to voluntarily eliminate this item from clothing lines beginning in 1995:
- zippers
 - buttons
 - drawstrings
 - snaps
- 9** According to the Window Covering Safety Council, consumers should replace or repair blinds, shades and draperies that use window cords if the coverings were purchased before new standards were implemented in:
- 1997
 - 2001
 - 2004
 - 1995
- 10** Infants and children can drown in as little as:
- 6 inches
 - 4 inches
 - 2 inches
 - 1 inch of water or other liquids
- 11** Most scalding incidents can be avoided by setting the hot water heater temperature to no more than:
- 120 degrees
 - 140 degrees
 - 130 degrees
 - 150 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 12** The estimated number of children 10 and under who die annually from window falls:
- 20
 - 4
 - 8
 - 12
- 13** The household seasoning that is dangerous to toddlers:
- basil
 - pepper
 - oregano
 - salt
- 14** The amount of the seasoning in question #13 that is dangerous:
- half a cup
 - 1 teaspoon
 - 1 Tablespoon
 - any amount
- 15** The amount of toothpaste with fluoride that is dangerous to children under the age of 6:
- 1 Tablespoon
 - any amount is safe
 - a pea-sized amount
 - 1 teaspoon

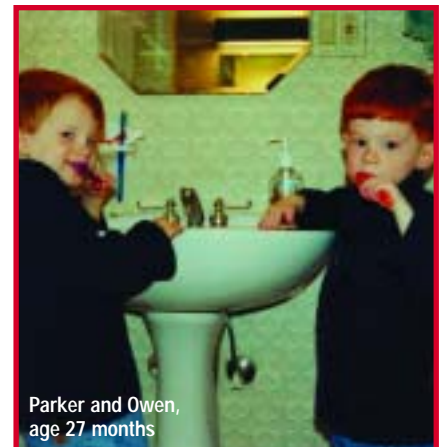
Key to quiz

1. a 2. a 3. b 4. a 5. d 6. d 7. c

8. c 9. b 10. d 11. a 12. d 13. d

14. b & c (One to 2 teaspoons swallowed by a 25-pound child can cause irritability, lethargy and seizures; 1-1½ tablespoons can be lethal.)

15. c



Parker and Owen,
age 27 months

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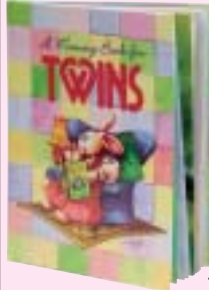
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Precious things

We are going to have a garage sale this weekend. It's all part of my master plan to "dejunk" the house. As we approach the kids' eighth birthday, we find that we have accumulated an astonishing amount of stuff—toy cars, dolls, games, beads, balls, movies, art supplies and much, much more. We have tried a number of times to encourage, persuade, support, insist and demand that our triplets cull the mountain of toys from Mount Everest to something more like a large hill.

Unfortunately, the kids have inherited my sentimentality, which was transmitted to me from my mom. Every toy is the "dearest thing in the world to me." Not just one or two special toys, mind you, but pretty much every toy in the house. If they have trouble convincing me of its value, they invoke the giver card: "Aunt Elisa gave me that fireman's hat for my fourth birthday and that is why it is very precious to me."

Joseph can sit with a mound of cars and individually list who gave a particular one to him, whether it has a wobbly wheel or a bent fender, and give a good approximation of when he received it. I have always been impressed with these mental memory gymnastics.

Anne and Mary have precious collections of beads, art supplies, jewelry, dolls and a few cars that they can, on demand, immediately recall all information pertinent to supporting their claim of indefinite retention. They are convinced they could never part with whatever I am encouraging them to consider as a Goodwill donation.

If they feel backed into a corner, they will also try the hand-me-down theory. Mary is

planning on having six kids, so this gives them latitude to save toys for these future nieces, nephews and offspring.

The negotiations are impressive for their sheer scope, if not for their logic. Their strategies have worked often enough to stuff every room in our home, yard, car and

could come up with half the money for a new bike, we would give them the other half. Next we took them to the bike store and let them select the bike of their dreams. Now they knew what they were saving for and how much they would have to save to obtain it.

Then we put "the plan" into effect. We suggested that we hold a garage sale to help raise the money. It was truly inspired. The pile of for-sale toys is starting to approach a small hill. I provided them with price tags and some realistic advice on how much particular items were worth. They happily went about marking toys that I thought would never find their way out of the house. They even decided among themselves that they would also host a lemonade and cookie stand at the same time, figuring they could add to the proceeds of this monumental event.

Right now, I am very proud of myself for devising the master plan. As I type, Jack is sitting in his office trying to come up with something that he can get for me, (of which I would have to pay half the cost), so that all the things that are "precious" to me can be added to table marked "bike fund/garage sale."

I am going to surprise him, though, because my three little ones have been an inspiration to me. This afternoon I am going to spend my time clearing out all the clutter that I have been holding onto for far too long. I realized, once again, that the most precious things to me give me hugs when they talk about their new bikes and how we are going to trail ride all summer long. ♡



Illustration by Deborah Zemke

garage to the point of bursting.

The kids truly love their bikes, but they have outgrown them. We gave the bikes to them on their fifth birthday and these were the two wheelers they learned to ride on our neighbor's long driveway. About four months ago, those same neighbors had passed down their youngest daughter's bicycle, which is the perfect size for the kids. It has been months of negotiations, discussions, fights and debates over whose turn it is to ride the larger bike. I talked it over with Jack and we arrived at "the plan."

We explained to the kids that if they

Joann M. Amoroso lives in Englewood, Colo., with her husband Jack and triplets who were

Cool shades

Protect-A-Bub sunshades easily attach to carriers, car seats and strollers and provide 98% protection from the sun's rays. The company's products rate excellent, the highest category available in accordance with globally recognized Australian and New Zealand standards for sun protective clothing. The company also makes rain covers for strollers and joggers and children's swimsuits with UPF 50+ protection. The twin stroller sunshade retails for \$55.95 and is available at major children's retail outlets. Protect-A-Bub products also can be ordered online at www.protect-a-bubusa.com.



Look Ma, no hands!

Parents can take their babies and toddlers in water—easily and safely—with the WaterToT infant carrier. It is specifically designed to minimize safety risks while freeing mom's hands. It works just like a carrier but is made of water-friendly buoyant fabric and has special closures. The WaterToT retails for \$59.99 at www.watertot.com.

Twin pricing on traveling light

The Ride On Carry On instantly converts any wheeled carry-on luggage into a travel stroller. Developed by a flight attendant mom, this cleverly designed chair folds flat against the luggage and easily stows in the overhead bin. It also has a padded headrest that becomes a tray table for eating and playing.

For children from 8 months to 5 years of age (or 40 pounds), the travel "chair" is made by R&D Innovative Product Designers, Inc. and sells for \$40 to \$50 each, or two for \$75. Available at specialty retailers, online at www.rideoncarryon.com or by calling (800) 290-6250.



Snug as a bug

Hug Me Joey is a complete ergonomic support unit for baby carriers that conforms to your baby's shape and cradles him in the best position for easy breathing. It works in most carriers and fills in excess seat area to snugly hold the baby in the carrier. The Hug-Me-Joey unit also decreases abdominal pressure, helping to prevent spit-up. Made of hypoallergenic, flame-retardant material, the therapeutic support insert is water-resistant but the cover is removable and washable. Hug Me Rolli, designed by a mom who is a medical professional, can be used in all carriers and conforms around the infant to hold him in an upright, safe and secure position. Hug Me Joey sells for \$39.99; Hug Me Rolli, \$15.99. They are available online at www.hugmejoey.com or by calling (800) 238-8006.



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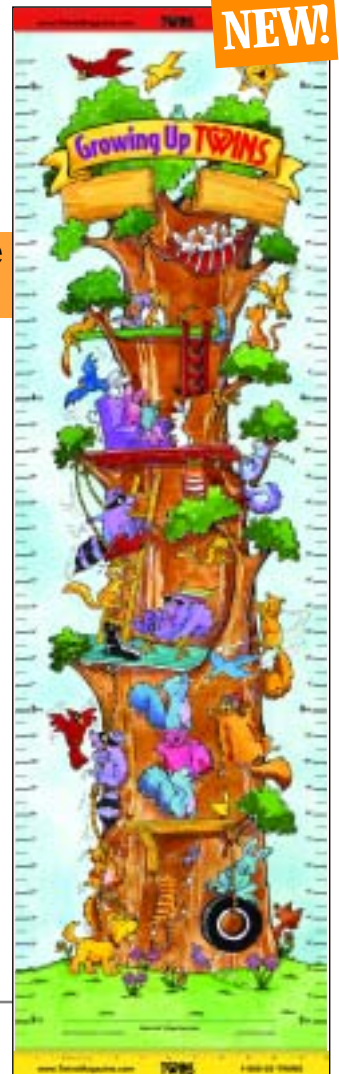
Inspired by three moms, the Timex Accu-Curve oral thermometer makes taking a child's temperature accurate and fast. The ergonomic curved design allows the thermometer's tip to comfortably rest on the 'hot spot' under the tongue, the best place for recording body temperature. It is properly balanced so that it doesn't move around in the mouth. Large easy-to-read display and night-light display allows you to take a temperature without turning on a light.

The thermometer sells \$14.95 at major retailers. Visit www.medportllc.com for more information.

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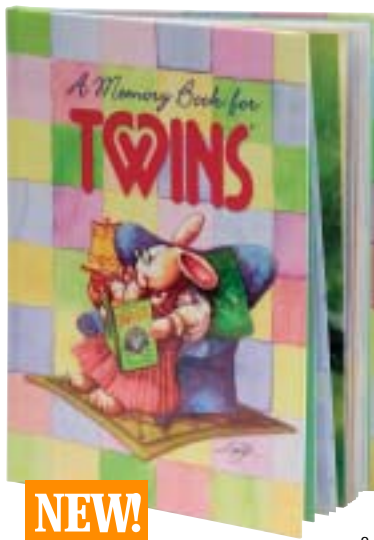


Dozens more products available at www.TwinsMagazine.com

Growing up Twins Growth Chart

TWINS Exclusive! Created especially for families with twins. Vibrant colors and adorable critters adorn this chart designed to hang on the wall. A unique accent piece for your children's room. Celebrate your children's growth milestones during their early years. Your family will enjoy this lifelong keepsake. Printed in full color and laminated for long-lasting durability. Use a permanent marker to write each child's name in the banners at the top, and then note your darlings' heights at important moments in their young lives. Ribbon hanger and adhesive hook-and-loop tabs included. When your children outgrow the chart, each one gets to keep a brightly enameled customized wooden ruler to use with school projects. 40" H x 12" W

SF03001 \$25.95 each



NEW!

TWINS Lifetime Memory Book

TWINS Exclusive! This remarkable new book captures the special moments in your life and the lives of your twins! Every one of the 56 full-color pages is filled with the gorgeous watercolor illustrations of renowned California artist Jerianne Van Dijk. They await your thoughts, family facts, and photos. Special pages for info from when Mom and Dad were growing up, your babies' wonderful "firsts", and your family trees. You'll love the luscious sherbet colors in this volume. Hard cover, 8.5" x 11" on heavy, durable paper stock.

We sell a set of two at a special price so each of your twins will have one. **SS03003 \$34.95 for a set of 2 books**



12" x 15"



10" x 12"

Photo Frames

Exclusive to us! Collect your twins' special pictures in these keepsake frames. Designed especially for families with twins. Choose from a 12"x15" blue-painted frame with 10 openings in the matching mat, or a 10"x12" blue-painted frame with four openings in the matching mat. Both frames are beautifully lettered to say, "Twins are one of life's special blessings." Adorable Noah's Ark two-by-two illustration appears in one opening of each photo frame.

SF90031 12" x 15" \$23.99 each
SF90032 10" x 12" \$19.99 each



18" x 18"

Twin Sisters Hand-in-Hand

Colorful, high-quality print exudes the warmth of twin sisters' special relationship, and the strength and support they gain from their twinship. This picture belongs on the wall of every twin girl's bedroom. Verse surrounding print says, "Little girls are precious gifts, Wrapped in love serene, Their dresses tied with sashes, And futures tied with dreams." Framed print is 18"x18" overall, double-matted in dusty blue and rose, then beautifully surrounded in 1" gold leaf frame. Comes with glass.

SF90033 \$43.99 each

Childhood Memories and Lullabies On Guitar

EXCLUSIVE! You and your twins will truly love this delightful award-winning collection of lullabies and childhood favorites performed by Michael Kolmstetter (a father of twins!). And because these delightful songs are collected on one compact disc, you'll play them as background music while you feed, read to, and prepare your twins for bedtime. The collection includes such classics as Brahms Lullaby, Are you Sleeping?, Mary Had a Little Lamb, All Through the Night, Rock-A-Bye-Baby, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Mozart's Lullaby and Spanish Melody. 19 songs.

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To place an order, call (888) 55-TWINS, go online or use the order form in this issue.

Tiny Fingers and Tiny Toes

Celebrate twins and create a lasting keepsake!

Do-it-yourself kit comes with non-toxic ink pad and an extra verse-and-hand/footprint page in case you goof. Designed exclusively for us. Perfect gift for grandparents. Openings for twin photo alongside each unique "print". Frame is white painted wood. Overall size 12"Hx15"W.

- A. Fingers - SF90035 \$39.99 each
- B. Toes - SF90036 \$39.99 each



A. 12" x 15"



B. 12" x 15"



Multiples of Love

Your love is doubly deep when you have twins, in spite of the challenges they present and the amount of work you do while they are tiny babies. And this plaque expresses the perfect sentiments. You are filled with joy, and your heart overflows with love, but there are times when you are ready to tear your hair out! Hang this on your wall, or on the wall of your darlings' bedroom as a reminder of the wonder of having multiples and the beauty they've brought to your life. The colorful, heartwarming art is a print of a watercolor original by renowned California artist Jerianne Van Dijk created exclusively for TWINS Magazine and TWINS Shoppe. Oak frame, glass included. Creamy parchment mat, pale gold liner; 11" x 14" overall

SS03002 \$31.99 each; two or more \$29.99 each



"Discover Wildlife, Raise Twins" Ceramic Plaque

A sentiment every parent of twins can relate to! This handcrafted ceramic plaque will tickle your funny bone and keep your sense of humor charged when you most need it. Leather hanger. 5 3/4"H x 7 1/4"W.

SF90092 \$17.99 each

A. 11" x 14"



"To a Mother of TWINS"

A. Creamy parchment mat, pale gold liner; 11"x14" overall.

SW00022 \$31.99 each
Two or more \$29.99 each

B. 11" x 14"

"Pardon Our Mess... Twins Live Here"

B. Creamy parchment mat, pale gold liner; 11"x14" overall.

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Personalized Twin Afghan

Clever original design created by an artist with twins and exclusive to us. Woven throw in a large size is personalized with your twins' names and their birth date in green embroidery. 100% cotton, washable. 46" x 67". Shipped directly from manufacturer.

Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery. No express delivery.

SF90112 \$49.99 each

Be sure to include personalization information on the order form or when you order by phone.

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Twins need time alone

As parents of twins we have an awesome responsibility. Not only do we need to help our multiples learn the art of getting along together, but we also need to help them develop the art of getting along apart. If we never allow our twins to spend time alone, they come to depend on their sibling too much.

Even as infants, twins should be separated at times. The benefits of being the center of grandma's attention every once in a while are numerous. At the same time, the other twin can spend quality time at home with mom. But how do we separate the twins when grandma lives several hours away? Here are five ways:

- 1 Find a church or community center that sponsors a "Mom's Morning Out" program. Allow one child to attend one week and the other the next.
- 2 Schedule one afternoon a week for quiet time. Provide desks for preschool and older twins. Fill the drawers with coloring books, crayons, storybooks or puzzles. By teaching our children that quietness is a valuable asset, they will long for quiet times as adults.
- 3 Encourage your twins to make separate friends.
- 4 Ask the day care center employees or your children's school teachers to place your twins in separate classrooms or groups during some time each day.



- 5 Encourage older twins to set individual goals regarding academic or extra-curricular activities.

One of the greatest benefits of being twins is having playmates who live in the same house. But learning to be alone is also beneficial, especially as twins grow older.

Nancy B. Gibbs is a freelance writer who lives in Cordele, Ga., and the mother of adult twin sons. She is the author of *Celebrate Life... Just for Today*. Visit her Web site at www.nancybgibbs.com.

Another benefit of breastfeeding



Children who are breastfed as infants have a better cholesterol profile as adolescents compared to babies who are fed formula, according to a study published in *The Lancet*, Britain's leading medical journal.

Medicine on the 'Net



MayoClinic.com has been named Best Overall Consumer Portal in the 2004 Medicine on the Net Web Excellence Awards. While there are some fine sources of information on the Web, including those posted by nonprofit disease foundations, many medical sites are unreliable. Ask your pediatrician which ones he or she prefers.

- A few of our favorites are:
- www.medem.com (conglomerate site for medical associations and academies

such as the American Academy of Pediatrics)

- www.cdc.gov (Centers for Disease Control)
- www.chop.edu (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)
- <http://web1.tch.harvard.edu> (Boston Children's Hospital)
- www.hopkinschildrens.org (Johns Hopkins)
- www.vh.org/pediatric (the University of Iowa Virtual Children's Hospital)

Annual patriotism



Families can display July 4th pride in their country with red, white and blue flowers and make it an annual effort. These garden ideas are just in time for the holiday, but will last all summer long.

2 – 3 years old

For the youngest ones in the family, it's as easy as 1-2-3. That is, just three plants: one red flower, annual verbena; one white flower, allysum; and one blue flower, lobelia. Plant them together in one container no smaller than 8 inches in diameter.

4 – 6 years old

For kids able to handle a slightly more complex project, paint a pot or basket (with a plastic liner) red, then plant it with white impatiens and blue lobelia. Make or buy American flags and stick them in the containers for that extra patriotic detail.

7 years and older

A little more ambitious show of spirit requires some space in the garden, preferably on a slight incline for a strong effect. Using annual salvia—available in red, white and blue—create the American flag. Make sure to plant the flowers in the ground 4 to 6 inches apart.

Children of all ages can maintain their annuals by watering regularly and removing dead blooms, which helps promotes flowering all season long.

Sandra J. Brill

SANITIZING CLOTH DIAPERS

White vinegar is a mother's best friend. Add a cup to the diaper pail to deodorize it. Add ¾-cup to the final rinse of every wash cycle in your washing machine. Wash no more than 24 diapers at a time in the hottest water at the highest level. Use an extra rinse cycle.

Hold the sunscreen?

Dr. Michael F. Holick, a professor of medicine, physiology and biophysics at the Boston University School of Medicine—the Dr. Linus Pauling (legendary advocate of megadoses of vitamin C) of vitamin D—thinks we need much larger doses of vitamin D than we can get from our diets or supplements. And, with vitamin D deficiency and rickets on the rise, people are listening to him.

Along with calcium, vitamin D builds healthy bones and may help reduce colon polyps, reduce the risk of developing multiple sclerosis and other diseases and improve skin conditions.

Current recommended daily intake of vitamin D is 200 to 400 IUs. “Consumers should routinely be taking 1000 IUs a day of vitamin D,” Dr. Holick said. “It is not practical to get 1000 IUs from popping a pill. More importantly, supplements do not pro-

vide the same benefits as sunshine, and if taken in too large a dose can cause vitamin D toxicity.

“I am not advocating a return to the baby oil and sun-reflector tanning days of the past. This is about a spending a few minutes in natural or artificial sunlight, several times a week—without sunscreen—to satisfy your body's vitamin D requirement; it is not about damaging the skin,” he explained.

So, get those kids out the door and protect them from sunburn, not sunlight.



Flying hot dog butterflies

Use hot dogs and condiments to design a “flying butterfly” to suit the tastes and whims of your twins. Make the activity a teachable moment by discussing symmetry when decorating the wings: What you do to one side you can copy to the other side. We guarantee no two butterflies will look alike!



You'll need:

2 slices of bread (bun)

1 hot dog

Olive slices

Mustard

Onion pieces

Cheese cut into various shapes

Plate

Ketchup

Relish

Pickle slices

Plastic knife

- Under adult supervision, make a 1-inch cut lengthwise into one end of the hot dog. When you microwave or boil the hot dog, the cut end will split at the top to form the antennae.
- Cut the bread in half diagonally to form two butterfly wings.
- Make butterfly “spots” by squirting dots of mustard and ketchup onto the bread slices and make circle swirls with the relish. Add olive slices for eyes. Onion or pickle slices and cheese shapes create the wing designs.

Julie Huffman

DoubleTakes

Boy/girl twins are (almost) always dizygotic (DZ, "fraternal").
Can you guess whether the same-sex multiples are monozygotic (MZ, "identical") or dizygotic?

1



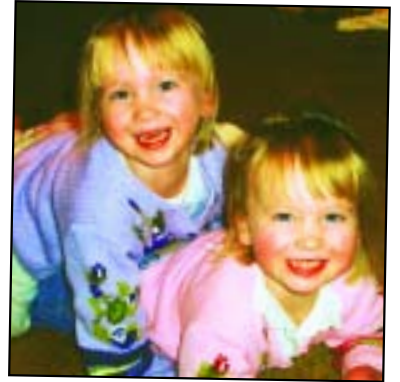
Olivia and Joseph
Age in photo: 8½ months
Rocklin, California

2



Addy and Anika
Age in photo: 2½ years
Cocoa Beach, Florida

3



Mackenzie and Cecelia
Age in photo: 2 years
Rochester, New York

4



Elke and Taylor
Age in photo: 3½ years
Sharpville, Philadelphia

5



Aiden and Logan
Age in photo: 5½ months
Hopkinton, Rhode Island

6



Carson and Avery
Age in photo: 8 months
Alpharetta, Georgia

7



Adam and Breanna
Age in photo: 3 years
Denver, Colorado

8



Carolos and Miguel
Age in photo: 4½ years
Naples, Florida

9



Angelica and Alyx
Age in photo: 21 months
Odessa, Texas

10



Gabriella and Faith
Age in photo: 8 months
West Hartford, Connecticut

11



Davelyn and Danielle
Age in photo: 15 months
Yuma, Arizona

12



Audrey and Edie
Age in photo: 9 months
Pearland, Texas

13



Ashley and Alexa
Age in photo: 5 years
Toledo, Ohio

14



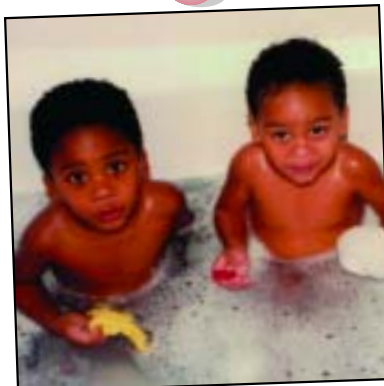
Jared and Jace
Age in photo: 4 years
Sylvester, Georgia

15



Connor and Raellee
Age in photo: 2 years
Kingston, Tennessee

16



Blake and Harrison
Age in photo: 2 years
Atlanta, Georgia

Photo Tips

What we are looking for:

- Sharp focus
- Crisp, clean, vivid color (no blue or yellow cast)
- Good, attractive lighting (no high shadow contrasts, no "red eye")
- Uncluttered backgrounds
- Happy children interacting with each other

We select photos for an upcoming issue three months prior to its distribution. Because of the volume of photos received, we are unable to respond individually. If your photo is selected and you have not included a release form with it you will be contacted to sign a photo release. See Release Form on page 36 of this issue.

Please be sure to:

- Place your address label on the back of the photo (or write softly with permanent ink pen) along with a phone number.
- Include the names of the children, their age in the photo and their twin type (dizygotic, monozygotic or unknown).

Send your twins' photograph to:

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Attn: Art Director
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NOTE: We are unable to use any professional photographs. Photos will not be returned.

All photos become the property of TWINS.

13 - MZ
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8 - MZ
4 - MZ
15 - DZ
11 - DZ
7 - DZ
3 - DZ
14 - MZ
10 - UNK
6 - DZ
2 - MZ

Based on parental reports.

TWINS Magazine (ISSN 0890-3077) is published bimonthly for \$25.95 per year by TWINS Magazine, 11211 East Arapahoe Road, Suite 101, Centennial, Colorado 80112-3851. Periodicals postage paid at Englewood, Colorado and additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Agreement # 40579507. Canada Returns to: Station A, P.O. Box 54, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6J5. Email: twins.customer.service@businessword.com POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: TWINS, 11211 East Arapahoe Road, Suite 101, Centennial CO 80112-3851.

Cross-country to Colorado

With twin toddlers, my husband and I walked from Ohio to Colorado. There might have been a train speeding along underneath us and providing the transportation, but we still walked the whole way.

I'd heard horror stories of families flying with small children who wailed the entire time, which I found unconscionable. A better option for our upcoming vacation, I decided, would be passenger train. It would take longer but provide so much more room along the way. Ken hesitated but could not overcome my optimism. I envisioned train travel as a practical, downright patriotic thing for us to do. Soon we were standing in the train station at the dawn's early light, tickets in hand as we waited for the battle—trip, I mean—to begin.

As we sped to Chicago it was easy to enjoy the freedom of strolling the aisles with the girls. Soon we transferred to the Denver train. Emmalyn and Alexa were even more fascinated by this train and explored it with an increasing enthusiasm that countered our decreasing energy. But I reassured myself that soon we would retire to our family quarters and breeze along the rest of the way to Denver in first-class luxury. Multi-tasking at its best. In our cozy quarters I kicked off my shoes, leaned back on the couch, closed my eyes and congratulated myself on the wisdom of train travel.

"Mom. Mo-o-o-o-o-m." Emmalyn was tugging at my jeans with one small hand

as she reached toward the hallway door with the other. "Walk."

"Not now, Em. Mom is tired. Later."

She climbed over to the window-view table. At that moment she let out a horrified howl that built into a shriek as she stared at the scenery whirling by. Ken and I tried distracting her with the toys and books we'd brought, but without success.

I made a split-second decision. "Em, walk?" Through her wails I motioned, in the sign language that all parents of twins develop, what we were doing. Off we went.

As long as Emmalyn was walking, she was fine. We walked all the way to the end of the train, upstairs and down, through the dining car, the passenger cars and the glass-paneled sightseeing car. At least she was wearing herself out so she'd sleep well that night. When I felt I could take no more, I handed her to Ken, who continued the relay.

The sun set and the sky darkened. Emmalyn remained just as steadfast in her calmness when we walked as she did in her sobbing terror when we stopped. We trudged along and passengers greeted us first with pleasant nods. By the 10th lap, there were smiles. By the time I lost count, the insomniacs who were still awake just stared.

Some time after dark, on the brink of collapse, I staggered into our sleeping quarters to find Ken and Alexa deep in slumber. Emmalyn's sobbing returned within a few seconds. So I did the algebra that all parents



Illustration by Deborah Zemke

of twins know—one sleepless parent and child are infinitely better than two sleepless parents with twins. We left.

Together Emmalyn and I walked through the cities as they gave way to the prairies, through the prairies as they rolled into hills, through the hills as they crept up to mountains. I dragged one foot ahead of the other as Emmalyn toddled undaunted in front of me. We rolled on toward Denver without missing a step.

Ken passed me in the hall just after dawn, took one look at my haggard face and said, "I'll take Emmalyn. You go back to the room with Alexa."

Ah, at last, I thought, I'm with the twin who is content to stay put.

"Mom," a voice said faintly, growing clearer. It was Alexa. "Want to see Daddy and Emmy." As I stared at her in horror, she summed it up in two words: "Let's walk."

For the next family vacation, we are renting a jet. ♡

Kandace York is a freelance writer who lives in Luckey, Ohio, with her husband and twins.

Twin Vision

by Brian and Brad Jones



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