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## ON THE COVER



**Mia (l.) and Claire Carroll**, 3½ years old, live in Avon, Colo., with their parents Geralyn and Rich. You can spot the family on the ski slopes at Vail and on the biking trails in the summer.  
**Location: Vail Golf Course; Vail, Colo.**  
**Cover Photography by Bernard Grant**



## FEATURES

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You asked for more Q&A columns... and we've delivered. Five "coaches," all experts in their fields, have their game plans and are ready to play. They're waiting on your questions; e-mail [twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com). Here's a rundown on who's fielding your questions.

Rebecca Moskewski, M.D., answers your health and medical questions in the Ask the Doctor column, which debuted last issue. We've given Dr. Moskewski's column a new name: The Twin Care Coach. Joshua Coleman, Ph.D., has been catching your marriage questions for several years now. He is now known as The Marriage Coach. And Family Talk is now The Family Coach, parent-to-parent advice.

In her new column, The Mommy Coach Rachel Franklin, M.D. will answer your questions about you, your health and your postpartum recovery. We may even include a few prenatal or perinatal questions.

Next issue we will introduce The Discipline Coach. And Happy Endings is now a compilation of anecdotes from you, our readers. Please send your Happy Endings contributions to [twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com). Tell us what you think of these changes. E-mail [twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com); please type "coach" in the subject line.

The new Minnesota law giving parents the final say about whether their twins are separated or together in a classroom is sure to have a ripple effect throughout the United States. AmyJo Lennartson reports on the the first such law in the nation and the parents who pushed through the legislation. Turn to page 18.

If you've seen the movie *Meet the Fockers*—well, even if you haven't—you will appreciate the article on signing by Julie Murray, page 37. It answered many of my questions. And for an interview with the mom of the twins who played Little Jack in the movie, go to page 41.

Summer is a great time to decorate. Open windows, warm days and fresh air make painting a breeze. And hauling out junk is easier when you don't have to contend with cold winds and snow. "Double Decorating" by Christina Baglivi Tinglof will inspire you to get started. The article begins on page 28.

See you in September.

*Sue Witnes*  
Managing Editor

**CORRECTIONS:** In the May/June issue we printed the incorrect weights for the Speelman twins; their birth weights were 2 pounds, 3½ ounces. Also, in May/June we incorrectly identified the photo of Karen Navarro on page 24 and the byline credit on page 3 as Kim Navarro. We regret the errors.



Mia and Claire Carroll had a great time at our photo shoot—we all did, including their 1-year-old baby sister Gianna—and the 3½-year-old twins proved that the temptation to "play through" (or, in twins' terms, "run") on a golf course is much greater than to practice form. In their first outing on the links, our models with personality were the leaders of the day.

## TWINS Magazine e-delivery feedback poll

1. When it comes to disciplining your children, how often do you and your spouse agree?
  - 4% All the time
  - 64% Most of the time
  - 20% About half and half
2. What discipline problem gives you the most trouble? (some multiple responses)
  - 36% Defiance
  - 28% Temper tantrums
  - 28% Power struggles
  - 16% Rivalry
  - 8% Biting
  - 8% Other (1 hitting and 1 disobedience)
  - 4% Smart mouth
3. Average age of twins in poll: 35 months

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## Autism

I read the letter, "A very special needs family" (May/June, Mailbox). Our situation is very similar. We too have three autistic sons. Our oldest is 6 years old and our twins are 4 years old. The youngest child, 20 months old, does not show any signs of autism— spared the environmental triggers! There are more of us out there than one would think. We struggle emotionally, physically, spiritually and financially. We need more help, but there is not enough. Thank you for shedding some light on our "special needs family." I look forward to your upcoming story on autism.

Jenell Bailey  
Via e-mail

## Our mistake

Your article "The Cost of Prematurity" (May/June) states that the Speelman twins were born 14 weeks early at 3 pounds, 3.5 ounces each. The average 26-week preemie singleton weighs 1 pound, 11 ounces, with twins averaging slightly smaller. Either the Speelman twins weren't 26-week preemies, you printed the

wrong weights or they should be in the record books! I only take exception because I've noted several times that your articles on preemies have misprinted the gestation or the weights at birth. As a recent mother of 25-week twins, I know how devastating it is to have 1-pound babies. Misinformation minimizes the tragedy of being a parent of micro-preemies.

Heidi M. Ramsay-Caruso  
Mother to TTTS survivors Brendan (1 pound, 1 ounce)  
and Brody (1 pound, 1 ounce)  
Salem, N.H.

*Editor's Note: We printed the wrong weights. Author Joann Amoroso wrote: "They each [Kiley and Kooper Speelman] weighed about 2 pounds, 3½ ounces, a good weight for their gestational age." When we wrote the photo captions, we inadvertently changed the "2" to "3." We try to be careful in proofing every story. And of course, we always want to hear any questions readers may have. We have the greatest respect for families who struggle with prematurity and would never diminish the tragedy. That is why we publish so many articles and so much information on prematurity. Accuracy must be our top priority. Our apologies.*

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### Irate video fan

I have been a subscriber to your wonderful magazine from the time my two little miracles were a couple of months old. I have always found the information to be thought provoking and helpful. As I read through the May/June issue, however, I came upon the article "Do Your Babies Love TV?" After reading it once, my reaction was complete irritation; after reading it several times, I had to tell you another version of this story, from a hands-on, mommy-of-twins point of view. By the way, I am in no way affiliated with Baby Einstein or Disney.

I realize many factors influence a child's intellectual development—genetics, upbringing, environment and more. I am completely unimpressed with Dr. Shifrin and his blanket opinion on TV watching. His comment, "You can bet Einstein didn't watch Baby Einstein videos" should have been enough information for me and other readers to simply toss the magazine in the trash. That one comment alone tells me he is archaic in his opinions and extremely biased in his judgments. Of course, Einstein didn't watch them, what an asinine comment. But can the good doctor provide us with any information on what exactly Einstein's parents did for him as an infant that encouraged his brain development? You can bet it wasn't the same old tried-and-true methods the doctor would have us believe. He should make very sure that he does his research. It is apparent to me, and most likely to anyone else who uses Baby Einstein videos, that he has never sat and observed infants and toddlers watching these videos.

My twins do not watch TV but we most certainly watch Baby Einstein and Hi-5 DVDs. My twins have loved them since they were 4 months old. They move, they sing, they dance, they laugh and they interact with each other about what they are viewing.

In my opinion, this panel you interviewed has not studied a significant number of children while they are engaged in a Baby

Einstein video. But I have and here are my findings. My 28-month-old girl/boy twins can name every planet in our solar system, by sight. They can say the entire alphabet and know most letters by sight. They can count to 20 and know most numbers by sight. They know some words by sight. They understand and express such concepts as sadness, anger, empathy, love, happiness, joy, tiredness, fear and loneliness. They know more shapes than I knew in fourth grade. They know all the basic colors plus fuchsia, khaki, burgundy, olive green, lime green, baby blue, navy blue and more. At 18 months of age, each of my children had a vocabulary of more than 400 words—words such as alligator, hippopotamus, orthodontist and ophthalmologist. Certainly I cannot credit Baby Einstein with all of their progress, but I have never sat with them and gone over and over letters and numbers, or planets or lunar phases, but the Baby Einstein videos sure have. I challenge the good doctor to watch my children watch a Baby Einstein video. I'm sure he is far too busy with his preconceived ideas and opinions to get out of his comfort zone for even 30 minutes to enlighten himself as to the reality of what those videos do for our children.

I realize you were simply reporting on what the [American] Academy [of Pediatrics] believes to be correct. As any mom of multiples will tell you, there's really no training and education like that of hands-on experience. Next time, ask moms and dads; you'll certainly get more useful, helpful, timely and practical information. Let the doctors bury their noses in medical information. And the next time Dr. Shifrin gives birth to more than one baby at a time, I'll be happy to listen to what he has to say.

Candace Lemarr

Grand Junction, Colo.

*Editor's Note: The article advised parents only to practice restraint in using videos and TV for babies under the age of 2. The experts we interviewed are parents and professionals. They have*



conducted, or are well versed in, research on hundreds and hundreds of children. Our experts were from the AAP and Zero to Three. Both organizations base their recommendations on extensive research. We stand by the experts we interviewed. You clearly have a strong commitment to your twins' education. We appreciate your viewpoint and taking the time to respond. Thank you.

**Sisters deliver twins two months apart**



Rebecca Miller (l.) holds her 6-month-old twins Jared Michael and Cory David. Her sister, Suzanne McLeod (r.) holds her 4-month-old twins Noah John and Grace Rose.

Suzanne McLeod and her sister Rebecca Miller, two years younger, always knew that having twins was a possibility since their father has identical twin sisters. But the Wappingers Falls, N.Y., sisters never dreamed of how twins would actually come into their lives.

Rebecca announced at Thanksgiving in 2002 that she was expecting twins. One month later, at Christmas, Suzanne announced that she too was pregnant with twins. They were due six weeks apart.

"All my father could say was that he would never be able to remember all the names," Suzanne wrote in a letter to TWINS Magazine. "Actually, he has done quite well. My mother never thought two of her daughters would be having twins at the same time."

Rebecca delivered fraternal twin boys June 3, 2003, at 35 weeks. Cory David weighed 4 pounds, 13 ounces, and Jared Michael, 5 pounds, 8 ounces. Suzanne, however, was induced on her due date, Aug. 11, 2003. Grace Rose weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces, and Noah, 7 pounds, 6 ounces—"a whole lot of babies!" Suzanne wrote.

"I love having twins and I especially love having twins with my sister. When they were infants, I would call my sister to find out what her twins were doing and then I would know what to expect from my twins two months later," Suzanne concluded.

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Lonnie Somers (r.) presents a check for \$20,000 raised at the 2004 Race for Hope to the Florida Institute for Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy. Accepting the donation are (l. to r.): Dr. Ramen Chmait, surgeon; Dr. Ruben Quintero, director and surgeon; and Mary Allen, R.N., fetal coordinator.



More than 14 families from a chat room meet to put a face with a name.

## TTTS Reunion

On April 9, more than 70 families gathered together in Tampa, Fla., for a reunion with the staff of the Florida Institute for Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy. In the group there were about 50 sets of twins and a couple sets of triplets that survived Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Syndrome, thanks to the wonderful staff at the Institute. Families took advantage of this opportunity to return to Tampa to thank their nurses and doctors and especially Ruben Quintero, M.D., for giving their children the chance to live.

During the event, the kids enjoyed hot dogs and water play at the Lowry Park Zoo while the parents listened to Dr. Quintero remark on the progress that has been made with research and advances in treatment of the syndrome. One mother sang a song that brought many in the crowd to tears. Lonnie Somers, founder and executive director of the TTTS Race for Hope, presented a fundraising check to Dr. Quintero and his staff. The TTTS Race for Hope, held in Denver, Colo., in November 2004 raised \$20,000 to fund ongoing awareness and research efforts. This year's Race for Hope is scheduled for Nov. 13 in Denver. Somers is looking to expand his fundraising efforts by adding Race For Hope in Orlando next March.

—Lonnie Somers

## Putting a face with a name

More than 14 families of twins gathered for a meet-and-greet in May to see the faces behind the names of people they had been chatting with online for months.

Organized by members of a chat board on Twinstuff.com, the event drew dozens of people from all areas of the East Coast to Pennsylvania to share laughs, smiles and twin tales.

Some drove through the night and others only had a short drive to Doylestown, Pa., where the families had a picnic in the park. On the second day, families enjoyed playtime with Big Bird, Elmo and other Sesame Street characters at Sesame Place in nearby Langhorne, Pa.

The annual event started when three members of Twinstuff, who did not live far from one another, decided to meet in 2003. The following year the trio invited other members and 10 families got together.

"Since we all had such a great time last year, we decided to make it an annual gathering," said Sharon Murdoch of New Jersey, a Twinstuff.com moderator and organizer of the event. She is the mom of 2 ½ year-old twin boys Marc and Jon.

"I had a wonderful time," said Dianne Cook, mother of 3-year-old fraternal twins Kyle and Kayla, who lives in Massachusetts. "It was great being able to actually meet so many people that I have been chatting with

online for months, in some cases years.

"I think we learned a lot ... and next year will be bigger and better than ever. I am already looking forward to it!"

—Patricia Resende, a freelance reporter in Rhode Island and mother of identical twins Jacob and Kyle

## TWINS™ Magazine moms say 'Yes!' to meet-and-greets

A member of the TWINS Magazine Message Board (TMMB) started a thread in our forum "Your Twins' First Year," asking if other moms would meet in person someone they had met online in a baby forum. More than 95% of the moms said "Yes!"

The gathering in Pennsylvania that Patricia writes about is a perfect example of moms making their virtual community a real community. Moms on the TMMB are doing the same throughout North America. Picnics are planned in Mississippi, Louisiana, Virginia, New Jersey, Maryland, Rhode Island, Canada, Florida and many more states. To find out what's happening in your neck of the woods, visit [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) and log on to our Twins Message Board.



## A spoonful of sugar



A reader writes:

How do you handle children who will not take liquid medicine? You can buy chewable Tylenol and Triaminic thin strips, but what about antibiotics and cough syrup? I have a horrible struggle to hold down my children and attempt to get them to swallow the medicine—and keep it down.



I am expecting twins and I struggled to get my 2-year-old to take antibiotics. We tried hiding it in applesauce, apple juice, yogurt and even chocolate milk. Nothing worked. Then I mixed it in fruit punch or soda—a huge treat since she only gets these drinks with her medicine. She sucked it down.

Deb  
via e-mail

I had the same problem with my 5-year-old singleton and 4-year-old twins. Before I give them medicine, I have a glass of juice and a couple of chocolate grahams with peanut butter ready. They hold their noses, swallow the medicine and quickly take a drink. If they look like they might vomit after the juice, I have them take deep breaths until the “look” passes. Then they get the graham sticks.

Karen Barry  
Concord, N.H.

We’ve tried a few things; Power Pellets is one. Power Pellets are M&Ms and each suck on the syringe is rewarded with a Power Pellet, which gives them the strength and power to get better. Our guys are almost 3 so we fill a syringe and let them do it themselves. At times, however, you have no choice but to force down the medicine.

Carry Fussa  
via e-mail

My 5-year-old son literally makes himself throw up when he sees medicine on the table. And he throws up most of what I put into him. I have held him and succeeded in forcing in what he needed when he was prescribed medicine that required only five doses, once a day. We have used suppositories which, surprisingly,

he prefers to oral medications. Recently, he was on a powdered medicine that fully dissolved in water and did not change the color, odor, taste or viscosity of the water. I made sure he didn’t see me add the powder to the water; he never knew he was taking it. My daughter gulps down medicine without any problem, but having him watch her example never helped. I get her medicine flavored at the pharmacy, although my son doesn’t like it. When it comes to cough and cold medicine, I don’t even try. I use a humidifier at night; a cold will eventually go away. We can’t deal with the struggle for a non-essential medicine.

Sandy Wolicki  
via e-mail

Avoiding a power struggle is the key to getting my 2-year-old twin girls to take their medicine. I use dosing syringes because they can hold the syringe and take the medicine at their own pace. When they were too young to dispense the medicine, I still let them hold the syringe while I gave them the medicine. This helps them feel like they had some control over the situation. When only one twin is being treated, I fill another syringe with milk or juice and give it her sister. I never bring the dosing syringes out at any other time. If one of them balks, I put the syringe where she can reach it and say, “That’s OK. I’m going to put it right here and when you’re ready, you can drink it.” Of course, I stay close by and watch to see that the medicine is taken (and taken by the child who needs it). In my experience, they are much more likely to keep the medicine down if they have some control.

Jessica Moon  
via e-mail

### For September/October

My 5-year-old twin girls seem to try to control their environment by being slow. For example, they dawdle when eating their breakfast or putting their clothes on. I ask them to put on their shoes and five minutes later they haven’t done it. It’s incredibly frustrating when we have to be somewhere at a certain time. If I do these tasks for them, then they ask me to do them again and again. How can I positively motivate them to speed things up so we can get to places on time without being in a big rush and frustrated?

E-mail your Family Coach questions to:  
twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com.  
Please type “Family Coach” in the subject line.

# New Test Predicts Risk for Preterm Labor

by Rachel Franklin, M.D.

In 1992, Gwen Shogren was expecting twin girls. When in September, at about 25 weeks, she began feeling abdominal tightness, she called her doctor, who recommended she “take it easy” at work and prescribed home pregnancy monitoring.

“I was hooked up to this belt twice a day and telephoned the results to my doctor,” Gwen recalled. “The monitor was showing irritability, so my doctor asked me to keep monitoring myself.” Unaware that she was in the beginning stages of preterm labor, Gwen continued to work. In fact, she pushed herself harder in order to finish her end-of-year tasks early in time to rest before an anticipated January due date. “I was under so much stress; I had so much to do. And I thought I was impossible to beat.”

While teaching a class as a skin-care consultant (a second job!) in early October, Gwen felt overheated. “I knew something was wrong the next morning when I sat down and felt very uncomfortable down below,” she said. She attached the monitor belt again and phoned in the results. This time she was told to go to the hospital. By the time she arrived she was eight centimeters



Jaden and Everett Sanzo, now healthy 10-month-olds, surprised their mom by arriving six weeks early and spent six weeks in the NICU.

dilated and had no options—Caitlin and Chelsea were delivered by Caesarean section later that day.

“All I remember is closing my eyes and praying ‘God, let them be OK.’ I was lucky,” Gwen said. “The girls were healthy—no head trauma, no infections.” Both babies started out on the ventilator and needed blood transfusions as a result of their prematurity, but after gaining enough weight and learning to eat on their own they came home. Gwen later learned she had an incompetent cervix, a condition in which the cervix opens on its own too early in pregnancy. Had it been detected, it could have been treated. Gwen has since had two healthy, full-term singletons.

Until recently, Gwen’s has been a story typical of most women who’ve had twins, triplets or more. Doctors did the best we could with limited information to predict who would and would not go into preterm labor. We provided advice regarding activity reduction or other steps to keep babies healthy and inside their moms’ wombs for as long as possible.

We no longer have to rely so heavily on guesswork and judgment. Now we have the Fetal Fibronectin test (fFN) that allows us to predict with greater accuracy who will deliver early. And all women experiencing a high-risk pregnancy—not just those expecting more than one baby—need to know about it.

Fetal Fibronectin (fFN) is a protein made during pregnancy that “glues” the developing baby’s amniotic sac to the lining of the mother’s uterus. It is found in vaginal secretions until 22 weeks of pregnancy. When fFN is found in the vagina of women who are between 22 and 34 weeks pregnant and who have symptoms of preterm labor, it suggests that the “glue” has broken down prematurely, indeed increasing the risk for preterm labor.

A positive test triggers the doctor to further evaluate the risk of premature delivery. It also provides an opportunity to start interventions in an attempt to stop labor, treat an underlying cause for preterm labor or to give medications or other treatments to reduce the risks to the babies from being born prematurely.

The greatest value of the fFN test, however, is in women experiencing a high-risk pregnancy who are having symptoms of preterm labor (such as abdominal pain, back pain or pelvic pressure) in whom the test is negative. When the test is negative in this situation, the woman has a less than 1 in 100 chance that she will deliver within the next 14 days. This can provide immeasurable reassurance to an expectant mother already “freaked out” enough about a multiple pregnancy.

The fFN test is neither painful nor difficult to perform; it feels somewhat like a pap smear. The doctor or nurse inserts a speculum into the vagina and touches the vagina with a cotton swab. The swab is sent to the laboratory and within six to 48 hours (depend-

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If the fFN test is negative, there's less than a 1% chance you will deliver within the next two weeks.

ing upon the facility's ability to do the test), it is reported "positive" or "negative." The test is not reliable in women who have had a vaginal exam within the previous 24 hours, so a woman with concerns about preterm labor should ask that the test be performed before checking the dilation of the cervix. The test costs about \$200 and is covered by most insurance plans.

The fFN test is not reliable enough to be used for screening

of all pregnant women or for women at high risk of preterm labor who are not having symptoms. The test itself is not able to stop preterm labor or delivery, but can be a useful tool in the doctor's arsenal for helping women have the healthiest babies possible.

All women expecting multiples should be aware of the symptoms of preterm labor and ask their doctors for the fFN test should they start having symptoms. A negative test should not be viewed as an excuse to "push it harder" like Gwen did, but as a reassuring sign that they'll last another two weeks. All women should follow their doctors' advice about reducing their risk for preterm labor regardless of the results of their fFN test.

## Symptoms of preterm labor

- Abdominal pain
- Back pain
- Cramps that are regular and every ten minutes for one hour
- Nausea and vomiting
- Pelvic pressure
- Vaginal bleeding

Gwen's preemies are now healthy 12-year-olds. When asked to guess what she would have done had she been able to have the fFN test that September, she doesn't hesitate. "If I had known, I would have slowed down, quit work." An active member of the Edmond Mothers of Multiples Club of Edmond, Okla., Gwen says she tells all expectant new members that if faced with a potential complication, they should reduce their activity and communicate with their doctors regarding how they can lower their risks for the type of premature surprise she experienced. ♥

Dr. Rachel Franklin is a board-certified Family Medicine physician in practice in Oklahoma City and the mother of 4-year-old twins. She is the author of *Expecting Twins, Triplets and More: A Doctor's Guide to a Healthy and Happy Multiple Pregnancy* (St. Martin's Griffin 2005), available from the Bookshelf at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com). Read her new column, "Mommy Coach," on page 12.

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## Twin skin



Dear Dr. Rachel:

I just delivered my boy/girl twins three weeks ago. They're doing well, but I have a question about me. I've got all this extra skin in my stomach now. I know my stomach stretched a lot, but this looks so bad. Is there anything I can do to shrink my belly?

Sandy



Dear Sandy:

I think all of us have had that moment sometime after the delivery of our multiples when we stand in the bathroom, reach our hands toward our midsection and find alien skin dangling from our breasts to our hips like a deflated balloon. It has the oddest sensation, like the dentist just numbed the entire abdomen, and it feels like dough left to rise too long, all warm and full of stretch marks. All of a sudden, questions you never thought you'd have race through your head: How did you go from bloated to deflated all in one day? Why did the doctor not just go ahead and do a tummy tuck while you were still numb from the epidural? How on earth do they expect you to fold this stuff up and tuck it into your pants, anyway?

The skin is an amazing organ. It can stretch farther than any other part of our bodies without tearing and has great elastic potential. How well it bounces back

depends on several factors: how much weight you gained, whether your abdomen was in good shape before pregnancy (skin has a memory), and whether you have something called diastasis recti (stomach muscles separating from each other as a result of the pregnancy). Also, after the age of 35, we start to lose some of the elastic (called collagen) in our skin, so if you had your babies after 35, your skin may be less able to bounce back to normal. For most of us, about six weeks after delivery the skin has regained much of its shape, and within one year our bellies will look the best they will look without surgery—unless we still have pregnancy weight to lose. At three weeks after delivery, you should be starting to notice your stomach flattening and tightening up about half from what it had been.

You can help your skin regain its shape by drinking at least 64 ounces of water per day (to boost your skin's elasticity) and working hard to lose the weight you gained during pregnancy. First, make sure your doctor has cleared you to exercise, especially if you had a Caesarean section, and ask her how much weight you can safely lose if you are breastfeeding. Once you are cleared, find 30 minutes every day to go for a brisk walk—hard enough to make you breathe heavily, but not hard enough to make you gasp for air. Twice a week, lie on your back with your knees bent and do abdominal crunches. Bring your shoulder blades just off the floor and slowly bring them back to the floor over two to three seconds—it's the “coming back down” part of sit ups that counts most to bring the abdominal muscles back in line. Do these until your abdominal muscles are so tired you can't do another one; then wait 30 to 60 seconds and do it again. If you have an

exercise ball to do it on, this can help your oblique muscles—the ones on the side that tighten the waistline—as well. (If your back hurts while doing these exercises, you may be doing them wrong.)

That said, we are always going to possess certain leftovers of our experience. The stretch marks, scar and veins will fade, but will never permanently leave us. The feet will forever be about a half size too big for our old shoes (yet another reason to go shopping!). We will, most of us, retain on average about three to five pounds of extra weight, but within two years after delivery, those of us who had twins will be about the same weight as other women our age, despite having gained more weight during our pregnancies.

And you can have a stomach again, somewhat different, forever changed, but still attractive. ♥

Dr. Rachel Franklin is a board-certified Family Medicine physician in practice in Oklahoma City and the mother of 4-year-old twins. She is the author of *Expecting Twins, Triplets and More: A Doctor's Guide to a Healthy and Happy Multiple Pregnancy* (St. Martin's Griffin 2005), available from the Bookshelf at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com). She posts advice on the TWINS Magazine Message Board forums: “Pregnant With Multiples?” and “Postpartum.” Visit her Web site at [www.AskDrRachel.com](http://www.AskDrRachel.com).



E-mail your Mommy Coach questions to: [twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com). Please type “Mommy Coach” in the subject line.



### Trend to private NICU rooms

Studies in neonatal medicine show that sights and sounds typical of most hospital units can trigger respiratory distress, loss of blood pressure, hyperthermia and even brain bleeds in critically ill babies. Newborns treated in an environment where temperature, light and sound are controlled show fewer signs of visible stress, hyperextensions, respirator pauses, gagging and arching. They sleep more, eat more efficiently and gain weight faster because they expend less energy. And, they have less frequent and shorter hospitalizations.

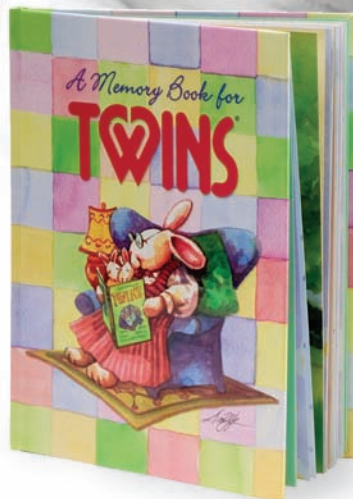
Following the national trend toward privacy, Phoenix Children's Hospital has become the first hospital in Arizona to offer private rooms in a Neonatal Unit. The NICU at Phoenix Children's Hospital—the largest in the western U.S. and third largest in the nation—admits about 3,000 babies to the NICU each year. The addition will be a proto-type for future construction at the hospital. "We'll be taking what we learn here and applying it to our future renovation plans," said Mark Shwer, M.D., director of nurseries. Visit [www.phoenixchildrens.com](http://www.phoenixchildrens.com) for more information.

### Top 50 twins' names in 2004

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Jacob, Joshua           | 26. James, John          |
| 2. Taylor, Tyler           | 27. Madison, Mason       |
| 3. Matthew, Michael        | 28. Ashley, Emily        |
| 4. Daniel, David           | 29. Benjamin, Samuel     |
| 5. Faith, Hope             | 30. Elizabeth, Katherine |
| 6. Madison, Morgan         | 31. Jennifer, Jessica    |
| 7. Ethan, Evan             | 32. John, William        |
| 8. Mackenzie, Madison      | 33. Joshua, Justin       |
| 9. Alexander, Andrew       | 34. Joshua, Matthew      |
| 10. Nathan, Nicholas       | 35. Abigail, Emma        |
| 11. Christian, Christopher | 36. Alexander, Benjamin  |
| 12. Joseph, Joshua         | 37. Gabriella, Isabella  |
| 13. Andrew, Matthew        | 38. Hayden, Hunter       |
| 14. Hailey, Hannah         | 39. Jacob, Matthew       |
| 15. Alexander, Nicholas    | 40. Jason, Justin        |
| 16. Isaac, Isaiah          | 41. Jordan, Justin       |
| 17. Jacob, Joseph          | 42. Andrew, Anthony      |
| 18. Jonathan, Joshua       | 43. Brandon, Brian       |
| 19. Emma, Ethan            | 44. Christopher, Matthew |
| 20. Natalie, Nathan        | 45. Hannah, Sarah        |
| 21. Elijah, Isaiah         | 46. Olivia, Sophia       |
| 22. Alexander, Zachary     | 47. Samuel, William      |
| 23. Anna, Emma             | 48. Haley, Hannah        |
| 24. Madison, Matthew       | 49. Joseph, Matthew      |
| 25. Ella, Emma             | 50. Mark, Matthew        |

—Social Security Administration

Brad and Jake, 3 days old



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## What's for Dinner?

Are you tired of the question, day in and day out? And are you tired of hearing what you should—or should not—feed your family? And that you should sit down to a full home-cooked dinner as a family every night? Nursing mom or soccer mom, it's tough to figure out how to do it, short of hiring a cook for the family. We have three suggestions to help you get a home-cooked meal on the table.

**1** Meal-assembly franchises, designed to save you time and money and help you serve your family home-cooked meals, are popping up around the country. The two national leaders are Dream Dinners and Super Suppers.

Here's the deal. The companies do all the planning, shopping, chopping, pre-cooking and clean-up. You show up for a two-hour session and assemble 12 entrees with the ingredients your family will eat. If your family will not eat one of the entrees, double up on another one. Store the entrees in your freezer until you are ready to cook them. Twelve entrees cost about \$200—or \$3 to \$4 a serving.

Professional chef Judie Byrd, founder and owner of the Culinary School of Fort Worth started Super Suppers in 2003. The fastest growing company in the business, Super Suppers plans to open more than 250 new franchises in 2005.

Dream Dinners was created by working mothers Stephanie Allen and Tina Kuna of Snohomish, Wash. in 2002. Based on the owners' commitment to restore the tradi-



Sallie Atsalis introduces her 10-year-old twins, Nick and Ellie, to her new kitchen—the Dream Dinners store, which she opened in May in the Detroit suburb of Livonia. Her family's dinner habits sparked her interest in Dream Dinners. When she purchased her last vehicle she was not too concerned about a DVD player or multiple cup holders. "It had to be small enough that I could pass French fries to my twins in the back seat. We ate out way too much," she confessed. Then Sally, who had worked in the automobile industry for years, discovered Dream Dinners and headed down a new road. "I've lived in Detroit all my life, and we love to assemble things; that's what we do naturally. At Dream Dinners you do just that."

tion of family meals, Dream Dinners got its start when Allen, a caterer, began preparing freezer meals for friends. Allen and Kuna see the two-hour time block as more than a quick way to assemble entrees. It is time to catch up with friends and make new ones. Dream Dinners plans to open more than 100 new franchises in 2005.

**2** Saving Dinner with the Dinner Diva—certified nutritional consultant Leanne Ely—offers a Web-based meal-planning aid to eliminate the hassle of bringing the family to the dinner table. For a small fee, Ely e-mails subscribers weekly menu plans. Downloadable shopping lists, online support groups, a wealth of tips and articles plus her book, *Saving Dinner: The Menus, Recipes, and Shopping Lists to Bring Your Family Back to the Dinner Table*, are in her toolbox.

**3** Freezer cooking has been around for years and is the basis of the new meal-assembly franchises. All you need to get started is a good cookbook. So many are out there that you're sure to find one that suits your family. Freezer cooking takes some getting used to and requires a chunk of time. Try planning, shopping and cooking on different days. Enlist a group of friends and alternate the planning duties, then get together and freezer-cook. If you can't get a chunk of time away from the kids, take turns with the "babysitting."

### Web sites

- > [www.dreamdinners.com](http://www.dreamdinners.com)
- > [www.supersuppers.com](http://www.supersuppers.com)
- > [www.savingdinner.com](http://www.savingdinner.com)



## Ask the doctor

Q

Is fruit juice bad for my 10 month-old twins?

A

Fruit juice is not “bad.” It is full of vitamin C and minerals that can be part of a healthy diet. What IS bad is when a child is drinking fruit juice INSTEAD of the milk he or she needs for proper growth and development. Milk in some form is still an essential part of the diet through the second year. Remember that fruit juices may have fillers and may only have 10% of the actual juice of the fruit in them. All of them have sugar, usually in the form of fructose. Read the labels! Parents should avoid giving large amounts of fruit juices between meals as this will fill up the children and contribute to pickiness and poor eating at mealtime. The juices may also contribute to dental caries (cavities) if sipped constantly throughout the day.

Q

Does it harm my 2 month-old babies to sleep in their [car seat] carriers all the time? They seem to sleep better in a sitting position.

A

Boy, does this bring back memories! I remember feeling guilty for keeping my colicky twins in their swings for long periods of time. (Even we doctors are not immune from motherly guilt). They, however, were perfectly content and became great sleepers after a few months! It certainly does not harm the babies in any way. In fact,

E-mail your Ask the Doctor questions to: [twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com). Please type “Ask the Doctor” in the subject line.

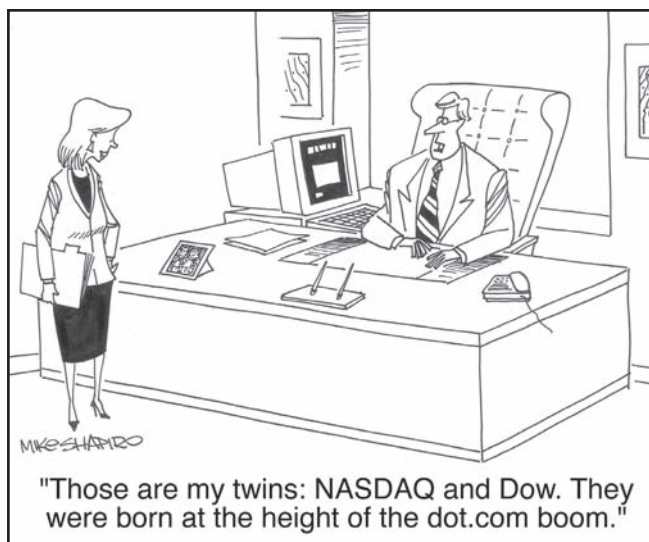
doctors recommend that babies sleep on their backs rather than prone as a prevention for crib death. So, be happy that they are sleeping! And a happy mom makes for happier babies!

Q

Is there any certain way to know if my twins are identical or fraternal, without testing?

A

The method used to tell identical twins from fraternal twins without any testing is called the “similarity method.” This is the one used by the common person. Identical twins will have the same sex, eye color and hair color. Experienced scientific observers can be quite accurate in labeling twins as identical or fraternal using things such as hair; eyes; skin color; shapes of the nose, lips, and eyes; fingerprint analysis; and tissue grafts between twins. They can claim up to 96 percent accuracy compared to blood tests using these methods. Of course, the most accurate way to tell is with DNA testing and it can be quite painless now by using scrapings of cells from the inner cheek (the way they do it on CSI) – although it is also the most expensive method.



# A five-step action plan for change



Dear Dr. Coleman,  
My husband seems to stay angry about nothing and everything. When I try to talk to about it he gets defensive and says my tone of voice is condescending. It seems like everything I do is wrong and he seems passive aggressive. I am at a loss for what to do. For example, I had invited my family for a graduation dinner party for my youngest sister. He did nothing to help with the twins or the party. All afternoon he just surfed through the sports channels on TV and asked me to make him lunch. I couldn't do it because I didn't have time and we ended up fighting, again. He claims I never do anything for him and he does everything for me. He thinks taking care of kids is nothing and I should do things for him. It's like having three children.



Dear Reader,  
I'm sure you're deeply frustrated with your husband's complaints and negativity. It's not hard to see why you'd feel very resentful. As with any marriage, one possibility is that he's beyond reforming and this is as good as it gets. Most of the time, however, marriages can be greatly improved by looking at how we're contributing to the problem, however outrageous our partner's behavior.

I am addressing my advice to you because you wrote to me. Bearing that in mind, consider the following ideas. Many men, if not most, are unable to talk about their feelings in a way that would get their partner's attention and sympathy. In addition, most men feel somewhat displaced by

their twins, especially when they're young. Men don't appear to be able to say, "Gee, I feel hurt and displaced. I really miss how close we used to be and how much time we had together. I feel like I'm low on your list of priorities now and that makes me feel sad, lonely and rejected." On average, when men can talk like that, they get their wives' attention and a positive result often occurs. What men do instead is complain about everything but their deeper emotions. Or they shut up and withdraw. Or they use anger and entitlement as the one area where they let loose with feelings.

So, my general advice with this kind of situation is to take as much responsibility as you can for your own behavior and follow this two-phase plan.

## Part one

1. **Empathize with his feelings.** I know that you're furious with him right now and he's not empathizing with you, despite the fact that you're probably working harder than he is. Find a time when you feel a little close to him and ask him, sincerely, what he'd like to see different in the marriage. Ask him about the ways that he feels criticized, left out or misunderstood. Listen non-defensively and without interrupting.
2. **Strive to communicate productively.** Even though he's not communicating well, don't get pulled into the muck. At this point, you're probably so resentful you're not communicating like an angel either. It's not fair, but at least one of you has to role-model good communication for the kids. I'm not saying to be a martyr or passive. I also want you to be assertive. But, at this point, you should lead with the positive.
3. **Appreciate what he does well daily.**

## Part two

4. **Do the above for around a month.** If that doesn't change anything you may have to shift tactics. This means, getting assertive. You can be assertive in steps 1 through 3, but now you may need to turn up the heat. Tell him clearly what he needs to change in the marriage. Make a list of what he can do to decrease your workload and make you feel appreciated. If he keeps dumping extra work on you, then you may have to go on strike and not cook or clean or provide other services until he brings more to the table.
5. **Seek counseling.** Most couples wait way too long to get counseling and sometimes it can be too late. My experience is that most couples can see a huge improvement within the first three sessions. Counseling is useful because it provides a caring, but neutral third party who can give you both confronting and supportive feedback about the ways that you both communicate and interact with each other. You may have to drag him there kicking and screaming. Do it. He'll get a lot out of it and so will you. ♥

Dr. Coleman is a psychologist in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. Author of *The Lazy Husband: How to Get Men to Do More Parenting and Housework*, and *The Marriage Makeover* (St. Martin's Press), he is the father of twin boys and a girl. E-mail him at [dr.joshua coleman@comcast.net](mailto:dr.joshua coleman@comcast.net) or visit [www.drjoshua coleman.com](http://www.drjoshua coleman.com).



E-mail your Marriage Coach questions to: [twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com). Please type "Marriage Coach" in the subject line.



# Doctor and mom of twins pens advice

**Expecting twins, triplets and more: A doctor's guide to a healthy and happy multiple pregnancy**, St. Martin's Griffin Press, 208 pages, \$14.95 available from TWINS Bookshelf online or at (888) 55-TWINS



Rachel McClintock Franklin, known as Dr. Rachel, is much more than a board-certified family physician and mom of young twins who has written a humorous, chatty and thoroughly readable book on how to handle a pregnancy with multiples.

Despite the fact that Dr. Rachel lays out the cold, hard facts regarding the risks of a multiple gestation, the book is neither threatening nor frightening. Instead, it is filled with hope, warmth, common sense and medical facts.

Thoroughly engaging, outspoken and articulate, Dr. Rachel will change your view of how you handle your doubts, fears and questions during pregnancy with twins. And she's got some equally provocative things to say about raising twins after they're born.

Dr. Rachel imparts enough wisdom to make you feel you are quite capable of handling a multiples pregnancy competently. Her message is overwhelmingly positive: Yes, you can understand and manage the risks! Yes, you can make it past your fears of what can go wrong!

Dr. Rachel is a breath of fresh air for women who want enough clinical information to be able to ask the right questions and who want it delivered in terms that assume they are intelligent listeners, although not medically trained.

Dr. Rachel offers dozens of quick, help-

ful lists to help you organize your thoughts and your life during pregnancy in order to prepare for the inevitable chaos that follows the birth of your multiples.

Examples of Dr. Rachel's advice:

- Restrict your activities and movements during your pregnancy much earlier than if you were expecting a single baby—as early as 22 weeks, in fact!
- Talk to a labor nurse from your hospital's labor and delivery department to get a referral to an OB-GYN and a perinatologist.
- Take pictures of your body at every phase, starting with the day you learn you're having twins... watch your growth and progress.
- Perform regular stretching exercises to maintain your flexibility and strength and help your back adapt to your body's changes. (Dr. Rachel includes simple stretches on pages 44 and 45.)

Dr. Rachel devotes more than 50 pages to post-delivery issues such as body changes after giving birth to multiples, marital intimacy and ways to help your body rebound. And she gives solid advice on two tough challenges: dealing with the NICU and postpartum depression.

Dr. Rachel's book—along with *When You're Expecting Twins, Triplets or Quads* by Dr. Barbara Luke—is now at the top of my list of recommended reading for moms who are getting ready for their multiples to arrive. ♥

—Susan J. Alt

Dr. Rachel participates in the online TWINS Message Board forum "Pregnant With Twins?" at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com). In her thread, Ask Dr. Rachel, she answers questions from expectant moms. Stop by and check out Ask Dr. Rachel. In her new column on page 12, she replies to questions from postpartum moms.

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# Minnesota Twins Win

by AmyJo Lennartson



Photo: State of Minnesota Media Service

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty signs into law the first bill in the country that will give parents the right to choose the classroom placement for their multiples. State senator Dennis Frederickson, chief sponsor of the bill, and families who helped get the landmark legislation passed look on.

Leave it to Minnesota. Home of the Minnesota Twins baseball team. Home of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul. And now, home to the first law in the nation that gives parents of twins the right to choose the same, or separate, classrooms.

Minnesota has become the first state in the country to pass a law that allows parents, not schools, to decide whether twins or higher order multiples should be placed in the same classroom or be split into different classrooms.

The law breezed through the Minnesota legislature this spring and will go into effect for the 2005-2006 school year, directly impacting parents of school-age multiples in Minnesota and breathing new life into the often-emotional and sometimes-controversial topic of school placement of multiples.

Dr. Nancy Segal, a psychology professor at California State University Fullerton and director of the school's Twin Studies Center, wrote letters in support of the Minnesota bill, and says that she hears from parents across the country. "I field numerous requests, complaints and even pleas from concerned mothers and fathers whose twins are routinely separated when they enter school for the first time," Segal said. "If parents received a fair hearing from local school officials, I would not receive the number of frantic messages that come in at the start of each school year."

Segal's research indicates that twins in the same classroom are fully able to develop relationships apart from their sibling(s), despite opinions to the contrary.

Segal, who authored the book *Entwined Lives*, which includes the topic of school placement of multiples, says that as the number of multiple births continues to increase, school administrators will have a greater need to understand and acknowledge the unique relationships of twins and higher order multiples.

The only other policy in the nation similar to Minnesota's is a 1994 resolution passed by the Oklahoma House of Representatives recommending that its school districts develop policies for the placement of multiples on a case-by-case basis and take into consideration the preferences of parents. Segal also has received reports from parents from Canada to Florida to Australia who have worked locally to implement similar policies.

Wendy Haavisto, who wrote the Minnesota bill after her boy/girl twins were separated against her wishes, said the national impact of the Minnesota law, passed unanimously, falls into the wait-and-see category.

Haavisto works as a legislative aide at the state capitol. Her background in politics has taught her that just because something works in one state, doesn't mean it will fly in another. Nonetheless, she believes the work Minnesota has done has paved the path for parents in others states to continue the discussion. She has received

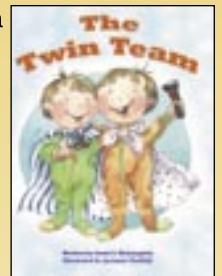


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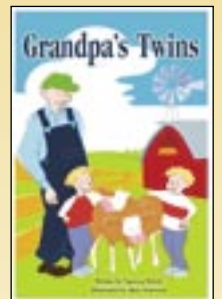
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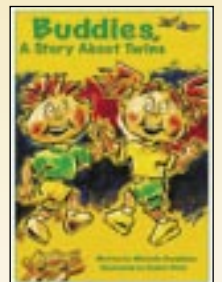
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calls from parents of multiples in Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Texas and Georgia—all with questions about how get a similar law on the books in their state—and she expects to hear from more as news of the unique law spreads.

Although the bill did pass both Minnesota's House and Senate unanimously, there was some early opposition and mixed media coverage of the bill. Haavisto recalls taking one negative phone call from a teacher who strongly believed that multiples are better off separated. The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) testified against the bill.

"The stories are really moving, but I don't believe this really belongs at the level of state government," Grace Schwab, director of governmental relations for MSBA, said early in the political process. "This is micro-managing school districts."

The state's second-largest newspaper, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, agreed and ran an editorial titled "Micro-managing Multiples." They wrote: "Statewide legislation, though well-intended, is overkill in this case. It is not state government's role to step in and cure every miscommunication or squabble at the local level." In response, dozens of letters poured into the newspaper, including one from Segal titled "Micro Thinking is Bad for Multiples."

Discussion prompted by the media attention resulted in amended language that gives principals, in cooperation with the children's teachers, opportunities to review the placement of the multiples, and if the placement is deemed "disruptive," the principal may ask the school board to determine the placement.

"The process really worked," Schwab said after the bill was amended and on its way to being signed into law. "We got a law and language that is good for everyone. And we got a law that's good for kids, and that is the most important thing." ♥

AmyJo Lennartson is a freelance writer and mom to 2-year old twin boys Gustav and Lukas. She lives in Eagle Lake, Minn., with her family.

Read about the families who were the power behind the Minnesota bill; turn to page 20. >>>



Photo: State of Minnesota Media Service

Wendy Haavisto, author of the bill, and her daughter Victoria, listen to testimony.

## RESOURCES

TWINS Magazine has long advocated that parents be given the right to choose whether their multiples be placed together in a classroom, or separated. TWINS first took a stand in 1990 by decrying the unfounded and misdirected policies that required the separation of twins in school. TWINS has continued support the right of parents to determine what is best for their children.

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State of Minnesota Web site  
2005 Session, Senate file #180, House  
file #130. [www.leg.state.mn.us](http://www.leg.state.mn.us)

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Mothers of Twins Club  
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# Minnesota Twin Powers—

Photo: State of Minnesota Media Service



Kristoffer Ostenso and his wife Wendy Haavisto, with twins Nicholas and Victoria, testify before the Minnesota Senate Education Committee. Pictured in the center is Sen. Dennis Frederickson.

by AmyJo Lennartson

Sandy and Blane Huppert knew they wanted to keep their identical twin boys Zachary and Xavier together in kindergarten and started the process in late spring 2004, prior to the school year. Knowing that separate classrooms could be especially detrimental to one of their boys, they carefully followed all the necessary procedures: phone calls, letters to the school and formal meetings, all with little or no response.

Just before school started in the fall, the Hupperts got the meeting they had been waiting for. The principal opened the meeting by saying that the class rosters had already been done and Zachary and Xavier would be separated. The principal made it clear that he favored separating all multiples, but said the issue could be revisited in meetings as the year went on.

Zachary and Xavier, now 6, were placed in separate classrooms, and the principal and the Hupperts had numerous meetings, always starting with the Hupperts asking for their boys to be in the same classroom, and always ending with the principal standing firm on separate classrooms.

By last Thanksgiving, the stress over the issue was so high that Sandy and Blane were short with each other, and the kids could sense something was going on. Finally, they called the assistant superintendent of the district and asked about formal policies on placement of multiples and were told that the school generally

does what the parents want. "We don't know what happened, but by Christmas the principal had changed his mind and let us do what we felt was best," Sandy said. Both boys were visibly relieved and the stress at home decreased.

Sandy looked forward to a break from the stress, but Blane had a different idea: "What break? We need to write a law."

At the same time, in a nearby suburb, in another school district, a similar story was playing out with the Haavisto-Ostenso family. Like the Hupperts, Wendy Haavisto and her husband Kristoffer Ostenso were battling their school principal to keep their 6-year-old boy/girl twins Nicholas and Victoria in the same classroom.

Despite assurances that their wishes to keep their twins together would be honored, they were stunned to learn on the first day of school in the fall, that Nicholas and Victoria had been separated. "I relied on my husband, a fraternal twin, for guidance in how to handle the situation," Haavisto said.

In the end, they caved in and regretted it. "Nick's teacher told us he was being disruptive and crying in school because he missed his sister," Haavisto said.

Haavisto works as a legislative assistant to Minnesota state senator Dennis Frederickson, who has grown boy/girl twins himself. He was sympathetic to her story and told her she should write a law.

Encouraged by Frederickson and fueled

by the stress and frustration over her kids' school placement and the clarity with which she saw herself working to make sure other parents would not experience what her family did, she began to write the bill.

While Haavisto was busy writing the first draft, Blane was busy too. Using his experience as a former congressional intern in Wisconsin, he was getting the ball rolling on a bill of his own by placing a small blurb in the daily newspaper about the pending legislation. The Hupperts saw the article and, as a result, a powerful team was activated.

Haavisto leveraged her insider knowledge at the Capitol, while the Hupperts mobilized hundreds of parents of multiples across Minnesota, many through chapters of Mothers of Multiples Clubs. Letters, phone calls and e-mails supporting the country's first state law mandating that parents of multiples have the final say on classroom placement poured in. The bill passed unanimously.

Both Haavisto and the Hupperts have been featured in dozens of media interviews and their school districts are very aware of their political activity. Despite any tensions that may be present between the school and the parents, both sets of parents are fully committed to their schools and hope that the new school year brings a fresh start.

"We don't want any animosity between the school, the parents and the children and hope that our political involvement is a non-issue," said Sandy. The Hupperts, who requested that their principal and school district not be mentioned, are quick to add that although they could afford a private school for their kids, or tap into Minnesota's open enrollment law, they are strong advocates of neighborhood schools.

Like the Hupperts, Haavisto and Ostenso also plan to keep their kids in the same school. Haavisto's husband usually deals with the kids' school now, because of her involvement with the legislation. "Our kids have learned a lot and we are very happy with the school, but we are even happier that Nicholas and Victoria will be together next year. It will be the law," Haavisto said. ♥

# The attachment

As parents, we all want our children to be compassionate, to appreciate the little things in life and be grateful for what they have. My husband and I, having grown up poor, shared the concern that our twin daughters might not appreciate the luxuries or even the basics that we provided for them. So, from an early age, say about a month or so, we stressed to them the importance of caring about objects large and small.

We may, however, have overdone it just a bit. While Alexa listened and then went on as if we hadn't said a word, Emmalyn became consumed by the significance of every item she touched. Everything was precious to her—the scrap of paper she scribbled on, the socks she wore, even the brochure about reasonably priced health insurance that she clasped to her little chest like a long-lost friend.

So it was with a sense of dread that we explained to the girls they had outgrown their toddler beds, and it was time to get “big girl beds.”

Alexa was so excited that she supervised the transportation of the pieces into her room for assembly, interrupting our progress roughly every two minutes with gleeful hugs. “Big bed,” she chanted. “Big bed, big bed, big bed!”

Emmalyn, by comparison, huddled on the floor, arms wrapped around her legs, face hidden behind her knees. “Little bed,” she choked out. “Want my little bed.” We kept smiles plastered on our faces as we tended to our pangs of guilt. Was she really ready for the big bed? Wouldn't she tell us when she felt ready? On the other hand, what if she didn't feel ready until she was a sophomore in high school?

That first night was a sleepless one, more for Ken and me than for the girls. Alexa fell out of bed several times, despite

the side rails we had installed. She crawled back into bed the first couple of times, but eventually she must have decided not to bother. I found her sound asleep on the floor, clutching her “little blanket” and emitting those peaceful little sighs that only babies and toddlers seem to make.

There were no thuds from Emmalyn's room, although I checked on her every time Alexa fell. I couldn't help myself. Perhaps Emmalyn had fallen silently but with such intensity that she sustained an immediate life-threatening closed head injury that prevented her from crying out. Moms of twins have wild imaginations at 2 a.m.

In the morning I bounded into Emmalyn's room with a cheerful “Good morning!”

But the eyes that returned my gaze were not happy. Emmalyn was sitting on her big bed in the same position as last night. “Want my little bed.”

Just then, Alexa ran into the room. “Love big bed! Emmalyn love big bed?”

“No!” Emmalyn snapped. “Want my little bed.”

“But sweetheart,” I said, “you're a big girl now, and big girls sleep in big beds.”

“Don't want to be a big girl.”

“No? Why not?”

Mournful eyes snapped up to mine. “Cause they sleep in big beds.”

It wasn't until some days later, when Alexa showed her the magic trampoline characteristics of big beds, that Emmalyn decided that perhaps, just perhaps, there was some redeeming value to this torture after all. Things settled down to the usual level of twin chaos for a while, and Ken and I congratulated ourselves on handling the situation quite well. And wasn't it great



ILLUSTRATION BY MARY PETERSON

that Alexa had helped her through it, too?

My first clue that Emmalyn might not have fully accepted a carefree attitude toward possessions should have come the day we stood at the recycling center while the girls played their usual game of pitching plastic bottles into the appropriate containers. Alexa lobbed one after another in the general direction, hitting me on the head only about every other throw. But Emmalyn stood a few feet back, eyes downcast, an empty bottle in her hands.

“Em, what's wrong?”

Tears clouded her eyes.

“Em, are you OK? What hurts?”

She held up her bottle for me to see. “Hawaiian Punch!”

“Hawaiian Punch hurts?”

“I love Hawaiian Punch!”

“I know, honey. We'll get more. Don't you want to throw the bottle in the bin?”

“Nooooo,” she whimpered, “Love bottle. Can't throw away! Keep it forever.”

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Kandace York is a freelance writer who lives in Luckey, Ohio, where she, her husband and twins try to recycle regularly.



# Single Moms, Double Duty

by Donna Kahwaty

People may still stop and marvel at your twins, but the fact is, there are more twins than ever. Spend a day at the park, the mall or the playground, and you're sure to see double strollers and matching clothes, followed by harried mothers trying to keep up. What you won't see is how many of those moms are just as harried at home because they're raising their twins—and possibly other children as well—alone.

It's estimated that about 14 million single parents—roughly one-third of all parents—are raising 25 million children. If the incidence of twin births is about 3%, that means 375,000 sets of twins are being raised by single moms or dads.

Though it stands to reason that some single-parent frustrations—lack of free time, guilt, frustration, tight budgets and pure exhaustion—are universal, single parenting of multiples can make for some special circumstances, in good ways and bad.

## Tough days of infancy

“It was definitely the hardest when the girls were infants,” said B.J. Knuth, a Phoenix-area mother of twins Allison and Paige, 10. “It was hard enough at home, but even when we went places, I just never considered things like having to make so many trips to the car to carry them and all their stuff, and then do it all again when I

left. Once, Paige had to go to the hospital in the middle of the night, and I couldn't take just her without dragging Allison out of bed, too.”

Physically and logistically, caring for two infants is double duty, and not being able to dote on both babies takes an emotional toll as well. “Paige was colicky and needed a lot of attention, and Allie was such a happy baby,” Knuth recalled. “Sometimes I left Allie in the baby swing for hours while I took care of Paige and I felt so guilty about that! It felt like Allie was being punished for being such a calm and contented baby.”

“I'm sure every parent finds it difficult,”

said Sandy Bernstein, a South Florida mom of 10-year-olds Gregory and Emily, “but I remember feeling very sad. When I thought about having babies, I thought about feeding, burping and playing with them, but I couldn't. It was feed, burp, change; feed, burp, change and there wasn't time to play with one baby, let alone two. All I could think about was ‘How am I depriving these infants?’”

Or is it Bernstein who was deprived? Dana Kelly, a New Jersey mom who was left to parent her twin boys by herself, virtually from the time they were 1 year old, finds that she can barely remember their early years because she was so busy caring for them and their older twin sisters. “They seem fine,” she said of the boys, now 4, “but I feel badly for not being more aware of those years, or being so exhausted and busy that I couldn't always spend time with them or the girls.”

## Life gets easier

What these moms might see as neglect, of course, isn't; it's just the guilt of a mom who is frustrated over not being able to do it all. Fortunately, as children get older and caring for them becomes less physical and more emotional, the task of parenting multiples—even alone—has some distinct advantages.

Almost like magic, as twins get older, the very thing that made caring for them more difficult when they were younger—their shared developmental stage—makes

## Tips for Going it Alone

- Budget for a regular babysitter, even if it's only for two or three hours a week. If a sitter is not an option financially, claim one night a week as your own. Put the kids to bed early and invite a friend over, enjoy a favorite TV show, read a book or work on a craft project—anything but housework!
- Don't be afraid to ask for or accept help when it's offered.
- Join a support group that matches your needs. Mothers of Twins Clubs, Mothers of Preschoolers, Mothers and More and Single Mothers by Choice are just a few that can help single moms feel less isolated; some even have single mom sub-groups.
- Don't feel guilty about asking older children to pitch in. Try not to look at your situation as being outnumbered; see it instead as having extra hands around the house.
- Partner with other parents for babysitting, carpooling or social visits.



caring for them easier. With different aged children, schedules can be complicated by multiple school pick-up and drop-off times, varied meal requirements, naps that interfere with sports schedules and more. The result? A hectic schedule that includes little to no down time for the single parent.

On the flip side, a mother of same-age children often finds her day is more streamlined and consequently, less stressful. Even if there are other children in the home, having some of them either napping or not, being taken to preschool or perhaps sports practice or activities together, eating the same meals or perhaps even sharing a play date is beneficial.

Even when there are no play dates, twins have the advantage of a built-in playmate, something Kelly has found invaluable. “I’ve worked at home since my girls were born, and I know that I never would have been able to do it if they had not had each other,” she shared. “I would have felt so guilty leaving a singleton to play alone for a couple hours each day, but I never had to worry with either set of twins.”

Having children the same age also opens up more opportunities for activities outside the home. “When you have a 1-year-old and a 3-year-old, you can’t do something like story group at the library because the 1-year-old can’t sit through it,” Bernstein observed. “It’s so much easier to plan things.” When one child becomes old enough for the movies, swimming lessons, scouting and other activities, both children are old enough and new doors open.

As the children get even older, having same-age children continues to have benefits, the biggest relating to homework, according to Kelly. “Being in the same grade means they’re learning the same things and taking the same tests at roughly the same time,” she pointed out. “The girls are able to explain homework things to each other that I can’t, and when it’s test time, it makes much more sense for them to quiz each other than to have me quiz them because it’s helping them both. I can also chaperone for two kids at once when they do a grade field trip.”

Parents of all children eventually reach



Kayleigh and Karleigh, 14 months

what they call “the chauffeur years,” and twins can actually make those years easier as well. “They’re often invited to the same birthday parties, they’re both in band, and both stay after school for their honors English class,” Kelly said. “When there are special events at school, they both go, so it’s only one trip for the concert or the Fourth Grade Ice Cream Social. I actually do less driving with two the same-age kids than I would with two singletons.”

Of course, there are exceptions, particularly with opposite sex twins who won’t be on the same sports teams or going to the same parties, at least not for a while. “I gave up the idea of having them in sports in the same season,” Bernstein said, with a sigh. “We spent one soccer season where Emily and Greg were both playing on different fields, and I was dropping one at one field and taking the other one, watching half of the first game and arranging for someone to bring the child to the second field. Now, they choose sports in different seasons, and Emily dances, which is also easier.” Single moms should remember, though, that parents with partners often juggle just as much, particularly if one parent has a job that makes it difficult to get to after-school activities.

## Who’s caring for mom?

Still, having multiples does mean more children for mom to take care of without anyone to take care of mom. Without a spouse to assume that role, single moms often end up feeling unappreciated by everyone—including themselves.

Knuth fell into that trap, and it took counseling to help her see that she had been neglecting her own needs. “Everybody gets dealt a hand, but it’s vital for single parents to deal themselves in, so that they can play, too,” she explained. “It’s so easy to slip into making sure the kids’ needs are met, but ignore your own. And when a parent continuously ignores her own needs, children will interpret this to mean the parent has no self-worth.”

Demonstrating that self-worth is especially important with twins, says Dr. Eileen Pearlman, Ph.D., director of [twinsight.com](http://twinsight.com) and author of *Raising Twins: What Parents Want to Know (And What Twins Want to Tell Them)*, because twins not only model what they see, but they also model each other. If what they’re seeing and modeling is consistent and positive, single parents get the advantage of that extra reinforcement—even without a second parent in the house.

In the end, sometimes just being alone can take its toll, and because single mothers are so busy, it’s easy for them to become isolated and start to feel that they don’t fit in with married moms. Not true! Children are a bond that cuts across any social situation, and in groups like Mothers of Twins Clubs or Mothers and More, the bonds form between the moms, regardless of the home situation.

“I started going to a parents of multiples club in my fifth month and continued until they were 4,” Bernstein said. “Everyone was so supportive; I never felt like I wasn’t wanted. Any single parent should never be afraid to ask for help or develop a support system; that was my saving grace.”

Knuth agrees. “Single parents of twins need a strong support system and lots of back-up plans, but most importantly they need to be able to ask for help,” she said. “Many people are oblivious to the challenges single parents face but when made aware they can be quite helpful.” ♡

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Donna Kahwaty is a freelance writer and a single mother of six: two sets of twins who live with her in Wharton, N.J., and a third set who lived only three days.

## Birth surprise in Jerusalem

Months before I was due with our second set of twins, they settled themselves into a breech position and stayed that way. Much to my distress, I reached week 38 with their heads still up under my ribcage. The thought of an impending Caesarean section with the risk of infection and the challenging recuperation while coping with the needs of two newborns along with our other children, had consumed me with weeks of worry.

Our first set of twins had been transverse, a position even worse than breech, but the contractions had, incredibly, turned them head down. Thankfully, they were born 20 minutes after we made it to the hospital. All our singletons had been born at home. I had so hoped these babies could have the peace and serenity of a home birth, but this possibility seemed remote. Still, my daily prayers became tear-drenched pleas to G-d to spare me the burden of surgery.

I ate enormous amounts of protein, calcium and calories, resting and waiting for the big event. Neighborhood girls took turns helping out with our kids and my husband did 100% overtime as mom and dad while I lay like a beached whale on the couch, too heavy to move.

As I waited for a miracle, I made arrangements for a hospital delivery. The obstetrician who had been with me for the birth of the first twins was willing to let me have a “trial of labor” to see if they would turn, before doing an operation, to which no one else would agree.

Many people were praying for us to have a safe delivery and we had the blessing of an especially beloved Tzaddik whom we always spoke with before each of our children’s births. Nonetheless, I was still exceedingly over-anxious that all would work out well. Daniel and I decided to visit Mayan Sataf, a much-acclaimed spring located on the outskirts of Jerusalem for a segula, a spiritual remedy.

At the ancient site, Daniel and I drank from the waters, then sat beside a tree, read Psalms and prayed fervently, feeling both the sanctity of the place and the intensity of our request: “Please let them be born without complications, healthy and whole! Please G-d, let the babies turn!”

It was a strenuous climb back up the winding staircase to the parking lot, not an easy feat for someone with an oversized watermelon for a belly who had barely walked to the corner store for the last two months.

That Friday night after our Sabbath dinner, I walked outside



Nine-month-old Isaac, foreground, and Anna practice crawling. They were born July 10, 1994, seven minutes apart and weighed five pounds each.

with our guest, Miriam. My friend Sara had invited her to come for the Sabbath—“Just in case Rachel needs you,” she told Miriam. I protested that I wasn’t ready to give birth.

In bed, my large size and the summer heat made it impossible to sleep. I restlessly read all night, finally dozing off around 5 a.m.

At about 6:30 a.m., one very intense contraction, the kind that typically came near the end of 10 hours of labor, suddenly awakened me. I rolled myself out of bed and stood, wavering, wondering what was happening. Were the babies turning? In utter disbelief, I realized that the babies were about to be born! I panicked—two breech babies! I whispered to my husband, who woke instantly, that I felt like the babies were coming out. He remained calm, which was good because I certainly did not.



Younger twins Sarah (l.) and Benji, pictured at 3 months old, were born July 17, 1999, three minutes apart. Benji weighed 7 pounds; Sarah, 5½ pounds.

I tried to lay back down and rest, but my water broke. Daniel ran to call an ambulance. Then we called the obstetrician who was supposed to do the Caesarean. “I won’t make it to Ein Kerem,” I yelled into the phone. He calmly assured me



Isaac and Anna, 4 days old

he would have another physician meet us at our local hospital.

Daniel asked me if I could get off the bed and stand, which he remembered reading was the most favorable position for a breech birth.

“No!” I cried, but after only a moment of hesitation, almost by instinct, I rolled myself off the bed as quickly as possible, grabbed the top of the radiator for support and our first baby was born. A frank breech!

“It’s a boy!” announced Daniel as he gently moved our red and wailing newborn son out of the way.

Then our daughter emerged, miraculously turned head first and crying, within three minutes of her big brother.

Everything happened so fast. Just minutes after we had called the ambulance, the driver arrived, burst into the room and was greeted by our awed announcement, “Everything’s OK now.” Daniel was already busy cutting the cords.

Just then our 9-year-old ran into our room. “Imma, I hear a baby crying!” Within moments, all our children were wide awake and running in to greet the new arrivals.

The ambulance driver insisted on whisking us away to the hospital. Thank G-d Miriam was there to watch the children.

Daniel and another paramedic held the twins, while I was carried out to the ambulance. Smiling broadly, I glanced up at our building and noticed our neighbor’s children staring open-mouthed from their window, shocked to see me with two babies in tow!

Observant Jews do not use the telephone on the Sabbath except for life-saving emergencies. That Sabbath, the news about our babies’ arrival traveled by word of mouth faster than e-mail. That an unassisted birth with such a high potential for life-threatening complications had gone so smoothly was considered nothing short of a miracle.

G-d arranged things so that the only one in all of Israel who would allow me to birth breech twins naturally was the one who was with me. Everyone who heard was shocked that my bearded, ultra-orthodox Rabbinic husband was the only one there to help me: “So tell us how you learned your midwifery technique?” But Daniel and I knew that the real midwife was G-d alone. ♥

Batya Solomon is a mother of eight, a freelance writer and a certified doula and labor coach. Originally from New York state, she, Daniel and their children have lived in Jerusalem since 1985.

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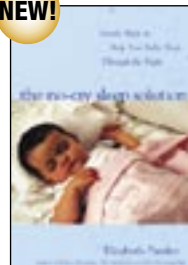
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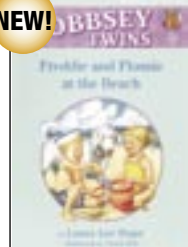
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# Helping families adjust to multiples

Psychologist David Hay is rare among twin researchers. Rather than use the “twin method” to examine the heritability of specific diseases like hypertension and alcoholism or to determine the relative influences of nature and nurture, Dr. Hay studies actual twin development. Lately, Dr. Hay has analyzed the ways families adjust to the birth of multiples and what families need for a positive experience.

## Why look at family adjustment to multiples?

In the late 1980s I worked with the parents of twins group in Melbourne on a grant proposal for a government inquiry into birthing practices. I began to realize how little we knew about what parents of multiples wanted both before and after the births. I felt we needed to know more about why things could go so differently for different families. Why would one mother of infant twins say, “They make all the work worthwhile when they smile and cuddle you. You feel like your heart could burst. I never knew I could love anyone so much as these two little people who are my life,” while another mom says, “I feel as if everything is getting on top of me and it is worse because I have no help at all. I feel very isolated, as if the world is passing me by. I don’t get out very often which I think is causing me to be very depressed. I’m starting to feel like a hermit. Would love to get away for a couple of days but that’s impossible which makes it worse, because I have nothing to look forward to.”

## How did you start the study?

First we needed lots of money! In order to have sufficient scientific rigor to influence those who make decisions about health funding, a study must be large and representative of the population. Fortunately, we secured a generous grant from Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, which was impressed by the large increase (1% to 1.7% between 1983 and 2003) in Australia’s multiple births.

We set out to follow 200 families from the time twins were diagnosed until the children were 6 months old. We interviewed the moms in their homes every month. We worked very hard to get a good spread of families: rich or poor, city or country.



**Researcher:** David Hay, Ph.D.

**Positions:** Professor of Psychology, Curtin University, Perth; National Patron, Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA)

**Web site:** [www.twinsandmultiples.org](http://www.twinsandmultiples.org)

Our most significant decision was that our interviewers had to be mothers of multiples. They were not volunteers but were properly trained and paid as university research assistants. Two midwives, one a mother of twins, monitored the interview process so if a family had issues which were beyond the expertise of the interviewers, special help could be arranged.

From the start, the interviewers agreed to stick with their assigned families whatever happened. One of the very first moms interviewed gave birth at 27 weeks and one of the twins died. In this and other sad situations, the family, not the interviewer, decided whether they wished to continue in the study. In fact, all but two did.

## How did you evaluate the families’ needs?

We adapted the ABCX model of family functioning, which is used to measure the impact of well known stresses, such as moving house or divorce. We evaluated the impact of the stress of multiple pregnancy in relation to three things: the family’s perceptions of the pregnancy, the family’s resources and their coping strategies. The ABCX model is simple and practical—any professional can think about these few things in determining the level of support a family needs.

## Any surprises?

Our biggest surprise was that the study itself became a major help. Some moms called their interviewer their “guardian angel.” One wrote: “Someone came every month to visit. You could talk about anything you wanted, knowing it would be totally confidential. You could ask any questions you wanted.”

Often dads took off from work to participate in the interviews. “What about asking us what it’s like being an expectant father of twins?” they insisted.

In between the interviews, the mothers kept semi-structured diaries. We learned of their fears and joys, and their concerns about everything from their sexual relationships to financial pressures. They were humbling to read.

At each interview the parents completed standard questionnaires that monitored their psychological health. We found that early involvement in the study had beneficial effects. We were surprised to also find high rates of psychological problems in both moms and dads from early in pregnancy.

## What are the implications?

The prenatal depression issue worries us. If parents are signifi-

cantly depressed just a few months into the multiple pregnancy, they are unlikely to attend prenatal education meetings run by their local multiple birth group, or act upon the suggestions in TWINS Magazine. Basically they will not be prepared for the workload that twins bring. They are at risk of falling into a debilitating cycle of ever-increasing inability to function and increased psychological distress.

**How can readers help families expecting twins?**

When you are talking with new or expectant families, be non-judgmental and think about these three things.

**What worked for you may not work for the next family.** If the couple has been trying to get pregnant for years and/or has experienced several miscarriages, their fears and joys about the multiple pregnancy will be quite different from those of other couples. Reliving your experiences may not be helpful. Listen and validate their concerns.

**Recognize their resources.** Let them know what help is available. A few years ago I did a workshop for fathers of multiples in an isolated town, home to a major Australian military base. The dads said their families felt alone. They were thousands of miles from relatives who could support them. The other young families with single children simply had no idea of the workload that multiples brought. I suggested that it's easy to begin to subtly educate the rest of the community. Have a friend over for coffee in the evening when you are trying to feed, bathe and get your multiples ready for bed. That will convince them of the extra workload without your having to say too much!

Older people in the community who are far from their own grandchildren may be delighted to take the multiples to the park for an hour or so while you have a break. If relatives ask what you want for a birthday, say you would like money so you can get a reliable babysitter and the two of you can get out for a while. And don't feel guilty. Having contented parents is one of the biggest gifts you can give your twins.

**Be sensitive to the issue of pre- or postnatal depression.** This does not mean you have to become an amateur psychologist, but know that the expectant couple who initially comes to your meetings and feasts on every source of twin information, but then seems to lose interest, may not be coping well and may be suffering from depression and need medical help. In Australia our beyondblue national postnatal depression program, [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au), has a booklet specifically for multiple birth families.

A fuller account of David's work on adaptation in the multiple-birth family can be found in Chapter 66 of *Multiple Pregnancy: Epidemiology, Gestation and Perinatal Outcome*, Blickstein, I., Keith, L.G. (2005, London/New York, Parthenon Press).



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

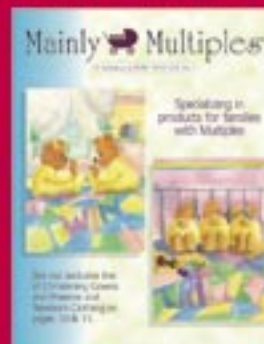
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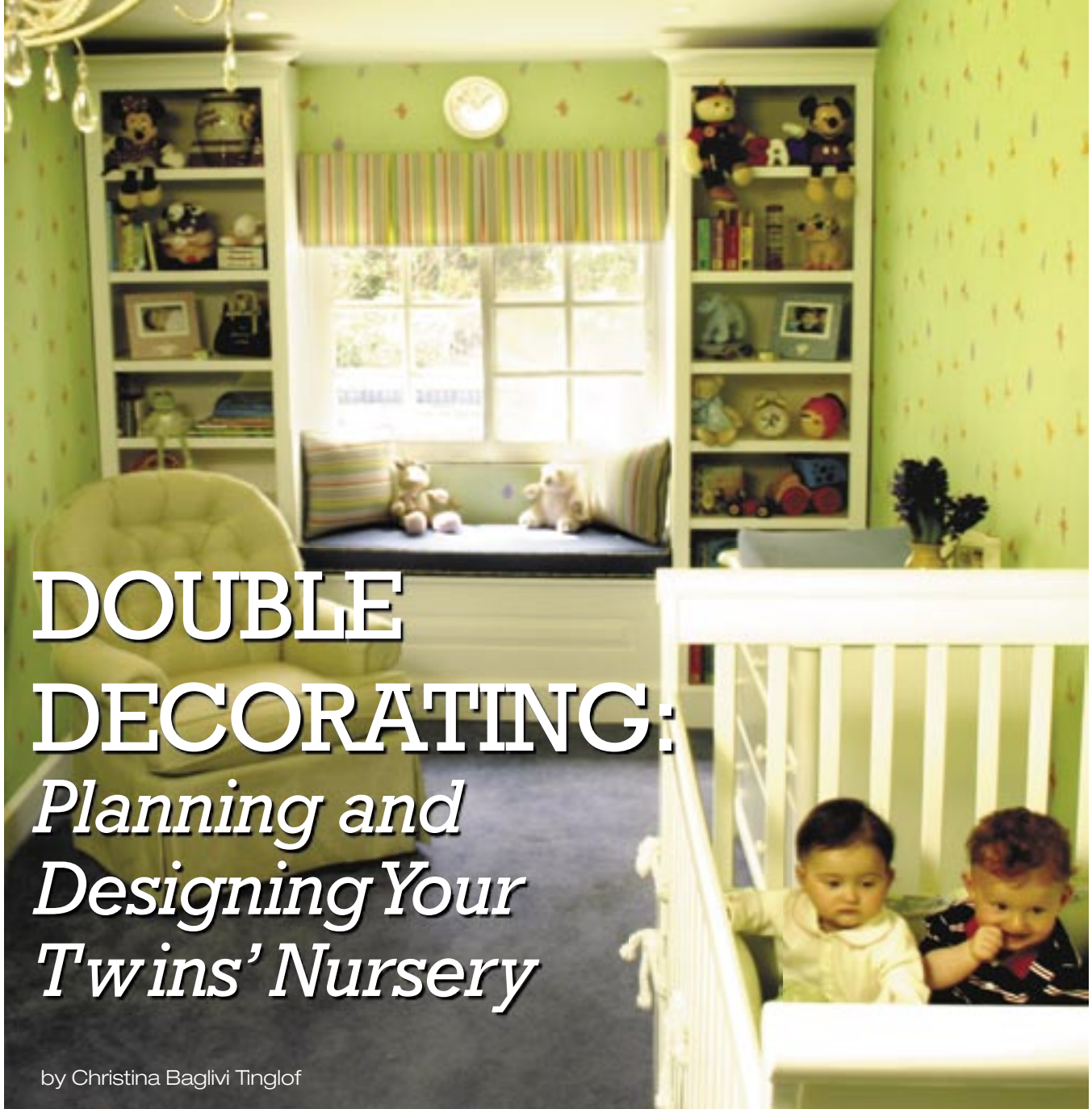


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# DOUBLE DECORATING: *Planning and Designing Your Twins' Nursery*

by Christina Baglivi Tinglof

PHOTOS BY ANDY KITCHEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Nicole Gilardi created a soothing yet sophisticated space for her boy/girl twins Hannah and Sammy by making a focal point of the alcove and using crisp colors and a vintage crystal chandelier.

When Nicole Gilardi was put on bed rest during her pregnancy, instead of napping or reading she spent her time poring over fabric and wallpaper samples, designing a nursery for her soon-to-be boy/girl twins, Hannah and Sammy, now 10 months old. "It was hard to pick a color scheme," said the Sherman Oaks, Calif., mom. "I definitely didn't want pink or blue."

She began with her crib layette—an embroidered lily pond scene in crisp, lime-sherbet seersucker. Wallpaper with whimsical chirping birds and a vintage crystal chandelier came next. The focal point in this enchanting nursery, however, is a large alcove with a window seat framed by floor-to-ceiling built-in bookcases where she spends many a happy hour reading to her twins. "The nursery is sophisticated yet very soothing," Gilardi said. "It's so tranquil."

## It's all in the planning

If you're in the process of planning a nursery for your multiples, you're probably feeling excited yet a bit overwhelmed. You may be wondering how you'll ever fit two cribs (or more) in one room, where you're going to store all those diapers, or how you can make the space special for each of your new babies.

"Start with a color palate that you love," advised Suzanne Morrissey, editor of *Kids' Rooms* magazine, a Better Homes and Gardens Special Interest Publication. "Don't think you're tied to pink for girls and blue for boys." In general, she says, whispery soft pastels are out and mid-range colors are in—periwinkle blues and peachy oranges, for instance.



## Use color for individuality

If choosing the perfect shade of paint intimidates you, Morrissey suggests heading to your local home store and selecting from one of the many pre-designed paint palates available. “There are usually three to five colors within one palate,” she explained. “Just assign each child a separate color from the palate. I call this the baby’s signature color.”

Use both signature colors as the main decorating component for bedding and wall paint. For example, try painting two walls one signature color and the other two walls the second. This technique not only gives visual movement to the room, but it also offers instant ownership to each child. Finish up by mixing and matching accessories in the room using the other hues on the palate. “The colors are always going to work well together since the paint values have been matched by design professionals,” Morrissey added.

D’Anne Gray, a Simi Valley, Calif., mother of triplet boys, successfully used color to individualize their room. Like many parents with multiples, Gray color-coded her boys’ personal belongings—from pacifiers to toothbrushes—to cut down on everyday chaos. When it came time to move the triplets from cribs to toddler beds and redecorate, keeping the room color-coded made sense. “The boys were really into Buzz Lightyear,” Gray said. “I liked the idea of using it as a nursery theme because it had their three colors—Mitchell’s red, Garrett’s green and Spencer’s blue.”



Hannah and Sammy Giladi share their rocking chair.

To make the room look like a spaceship, she lined the lower portion of the bedroom walls with pegboards painted silver. She then installed one continuous shelf around the entire room about 2 feet below the ceiling and painted the walls above the shelf in each child’s signature color. (The fourth wall is yellow, which defines a community space.) The boys, now 4½ years old, use their portion of the shelf to display personal treasures. “If I had painted the walls blue, Spencer would have said, ‘It’s my room,’ causing big problems,” she explained. “This way each child has equal ownership.”

## Making the most of a small space

When planning your twins’ nursery, having ample storage tops the list, too. “We have a small home and an even smaller nursery,” said Stephanie Somers, mother of 10-week old boy/girl twins, Jordan and Sydney. “I knew making room for one baby would be challenging, let alone two.” To combat her lack of space (the room is only 11 feet by 10 feet) yet still create a nursery big on classic style, the Sherman Oaks, Calif., mom spent a lot of time planning and searching for the just the right furniture and accessories.

Somers chose furnishings that were versatile—a dresser also serves as a changing table—and that could grow as her children do. “The furniture is a dark cherry wood. I didn’t want to go with white since I thought they’d outgrow that color quickly, especially my son Jordan,” she said. Somers feels the classic designs will endure until her kids leave for college.

Somers kept her color palate simple, too, and matched the window treatment to the wall paint, something that Morrissey says makes any room appear larger. “Avoid contrast between the color of your window treatment and wall color,” Morrissey cautioned. “Otherwise you’ll create a big box that just stops the eye in the middle of that wall.” Another tip? Go for sheer curtains so that they almost fade into the wall.

To make the most of every square inch of space, think vertically rather than horizontally and opt for tall rather than long storage pieces like a chest of drawers instead of a dresser. One strong note of caution, though: Anchor each piece of furniture properly to a wall stud to help prevent accidental toppling.

To compensate for their lack of an extra bedroom, Peter and Nancy Bond of Palos Verdes, Calif., turned to pencil and paper and designed a loft for their 5-year-old daughter Rebekah and 21-month-old twin girls Rachel and Cameron. The loft is actually a tall custom bunk bed, minus the bottom bed—Rebekah sleeps on the top bed, leaving plenty of room for two cribs to fit underneath. When the twins get bigger, the Bonds will disassemble the cribs and turn them into two twin beds.

## Deep in the Heart of the Jungle

Jungle- and safari-themed nurseries are hot. It's no wonder since wild animals and big, vivid designs cross gender lines and are equally appropriate for baby girls as well as boys.

"I wanted something educational, colorful and stimulating," said Allison Costa of her bold safari-themed nursery. No whimsical Jungle Book cartoon characters for her fraternal twin boys, Hudson and Presley, now 12 months old. Instead, custom zebra-patterned bedding and a carpet with a vibrant leafy design are set against an elaborate wall-to-wall mural depicting true-to-life wild animals and tall palm trees hand painted by her cousin, a local artist.

"I wanted the room to be realistic and not baby-like," added the Studio City, Calif., mom. "I wanted to show the boys what animals really look like."

The focal point of this imaginary rain forest is the twin closets fashioned to look like jungle huts, complete with "Hudson" and "Presley" painted on the doors.

Although pleased with her handiwork, Costa's favorite part of the nursery is its location. "All you see are trees out of every window," she said. "You really feel as though you're in the jungle."



### Accent with accessories

When it's time to accessorize the nursery, forget fancy artwork and make your own. "Give a young relative or family friend the colors you're using and have them paint something for you on an inexpensive canvas," suggested Morrissey. Not only will you save some money, but also the art will have special meaning. "And hang the pictures lower, at the twins' eye level," she added. "It makes it seem more their space." As they get bigger, just raise the art higher on the wall.

Think about how your twins will use the space, too. If they'll also use the area as a playroom, place storage containers such as buckets, baskets and bins on the floor where they can easily reach them.

When searching for all this twin bounty, don't concentrate on just one store, advises Stephanie Somers. You'll never know what you'll find where. "I looked everywhere, from Target to high-end retailers. For instance, all my lighting came from flea markets," she said.

Being practical and creative will pay high dividends, as your young twins will have a space that is truly their own. ♡

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Christina Baglivi Tinglof is the author of *Double Duty: The Parent's Guide to Raising Twins*. She lives in the Los Angeles area with her husband and three sons including fraternal twin boys. Her Web site is [www.talk-about-twins.com](http://www.talk-about-twins.com).

## Our first road trip

When Adrienne and Julian were 1, we took them on their first journey—a three-week road trip from Maryland to Maine and back. My parents retired to West Poland, Maine, and my three brothers and their families planned their visits to overlap with ours. Our kids weren't sleeping through the night yet, so I warned my family that this wasn't going to be a particularly peaceful Maine escape.

During our first stop, by the time we finished changing the kids' diapers, eating lunch, giving them bottles and going to the restrooms, we realized we'd been at the rest stop for three hours. We hadn't left Maryland. We'd already been warned that for every hour it takes people without young children to travel a certain distance, we should allow double that time. This first segment, from Bethesda, Md., to Waterbury, Conn., true to the formula, took 12 hours instead of six.

After another overnight in Massachusetts, we drove the final three-hour leg, and my family greeted us enthusiastically. As much as I love my family and their company, I'm not sure that spending long vacations with them is the best way to preserve that love. Don't get me wrong. I adore my three brothers and their spouses and children, but 19 relatives sharing such a small space requires some finesse and teamwork, and most people don't feel like working that hard when they're on vacation.

Adrienne and Julian are about 20 years younger than their oldest cousins, so their priorities, needs and interests are quite different: They wake up very early, and they make noise. Most college kids enjoy sleeping until noon and staying up to watch movies until

past midnight. The only way we could ensure that our children had a semi-quiet environment was to put their cribs in the unventilated laundry room, and still, their well-intentioned cousins slammed doors and played loud music when the kids were trying to sleep. Two days into our visit, both kids got colds and were up four times a night with stuffy noses. We tried to pace ourselves.

My parents enjoy having the whole gang up there for about the first 24 hours. After that, they look like they wish everyone would take off on a long canoe trip.

The kids were just starting to experiment with walking, which meant lots of falls on hardwood floors. My parents' home was full of hazards, begging to cause an emergency-room visit: a hot wood stove, coffee tables with sharp corners, steep steps, stone floors and lots of uncovered sockets. Maine seems to trigger my husband's most awful allergy attacks, so he spent the entire vacation on antihistamines. By the beginning of the third week, we were looking forward to our departure. My mother said this was the first time she was ever relieved to see me drive away from her home.

The trip home wasn't quite as seamless as the trip north. I got cocky about the return directions and didn't bother to review our route. Alex is as directionally challenged as I am, so he didn't notice anything was wrong. I forgot we were supposed

to get off Route 95 somewhere in New England. By the time we got to a Comfort Inn in Mystic, Conn., I realized our major goof.

The next day the traffic around New York was horrible, and the kids were getting antsy. We discovered they loved oyster crackers; this bought us some time.

Alex, a former New Yorker, assessed the situation and decided we'd be better off heading toward Staten Island than sitting in stand-still traffic. We were running out of oyster crackers. I wasn't confident. Staten Island looked like a detour, but I deferred.

We ended up at an overpriced Chinese restaurant at about 8 p.m. Alex thought we should strap the kids in the car seats and try to make it all the way back to Bethesda, about five more hours depending on traffic. After much back and forth, I deferred again, figuring that we'd pull over as soon as things got unbearable.

As Alex boldly predicted, the kids fell asleep as soon as we hit the highway and didn't wake up again until morning. We put ourselves to bed at 2:30 a.m. and slept until 7 a.m., when Adrienne and Julian let us know it was time for breakfast. As a friend later explained to us, "You don't call them vacations anymore, Lauren. You call them trips." ♥

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Lauren Kafka reflects on the first year with her now 7-year-old boy/girl twins from her home in Bethesda, Md., where she runs a home-based editorial business.



ILLUSTRATION BY MARY PETERSON





# Nursing Twins, 6 Months and Beyond

by Kim Davis

*A mom tells how she breastfed her twin girls for 18 months and added solid food into her nursing routine.*

Kim nurses 10-month-old Kristen (foreground) and Hannah.

One afternoon, while attending a friend's baby shower, the topic of nursing came up. "How long do you think you'll nurse?" someone asked the mom-to-be.

"Probably only a year," she replied.

Kristin, my friend and the shower hostess said, "If you need any advice on nursing beyond that time, you should talk to Kim. She nursed her twins until they were 18 months old." Everyone gasped.

"Wow, you're my hero! I would love to be able to nurse that long." Well, I don't think I'm a hero—just patient and persistent.

For me, nursing my identical twin girls Hannah and Kristen beyond 6 months was important for two reasons: I could continue to provide protective antibodies to my girls and it was the only quiet time I had with them. I enjoyed holding them close while they nursed and studying their faces and bodies. It was also a great time for me to relax and refuel.

Typical 6-month-olds, however, are fascinated by the world around them and can be easily distracted: Find a place that is quiet. The best places for us were either in an overstuffed chair in my bedroom or on the living room floor.

Also around 6 months, my girls' bottoms were falling off the back of my original nursing pillow. Hannah and Kristen also tended to roll to one side and I was afraid that they might fall off. The pillow that worked best for me at this stage was the EZ-2 Nurse Twins foam pillow because it was longer in the back, the sides were tilted slightly so the girls would roll into my side, and it was wider so they were more comfortable.

Of the two different methods of nursing—demand and scheduled—scheduled worked best for me. I had three children under the age of 3, was running my own business from home and was a wife. You will have to decide which method works best for your situation and lifestyle.

## Transitioning to table food

Sometime around the sixth month your babies can begin eating cereal. I actually started mine on plain cereal when they were 5 months. You should nurse first until they are well established on table food and eating three meals a day. The nutrients in the breast milk are what they need the most. I found that if I nursed one hour before feeding cereal, they still had an appetite for their cereal.

I fed them cereal when we were at the table eating as a family. There are several reasons for doing this. First, you establish that you eat at the table, not in other parts of the house. This also stops them from becoming snackers. Second, they realize that you eat together as a family. And finally, they watch you eat and learn from you. This especially helps when introducing a new food.

When you first start feeding your babies with a spoon or fork, remember that it's more about learning than nutrition. So be patient. Most of what goes in the mouth gets pushed back out.

Although there really isn't an order in which fruits and vegetables are introduced, some mothers recommend fruits first because babies prefer sweet flavors, especially if they are nursed. Your milk is very sweet. Nutritionists, however, recommend that vegetables may be more readily accepted if they are introduced before fruit.

Between 7 and 9 months, I introduced fruit by mixing it into the babies' cereal. A meal pattern that worked well for me was nursing every three hours. At 9 months, I added vegetables and we went to nursing every 3½ to four hours. They ate fruit and

Mom's  
#1 mantra:  
I will have  
enough milk

cereal in the morning and vegetables for dinner.

At 10 months, they were still nursing every 3 ½ to four hours and I introduced baby breads and dry cereal. Cheerios are always a big hit! Remember, your babies might not eat much at first but they are developing their chewing and self-feeding skills.

By 11 months, Hannah and Kristen were nursing every four to five hours and eating table foods. Once table foods are offered, you will need to add another meal so that your babies are eating three or four times a day. Make certain that you serve foods high in protein like fish, poultry, meat, tofu, beans and yogurt because your babies' intake of milk drops substantially.

By 12 months we were nursing three times a day: 7:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. (before naps) and at 9 p.m. (bedtime). At this point, they were well established on table food, eating three meals a day and a snack. So, the final transition was just adding whole milk to the meal.

### Introducing sippy cups

My babies never drank from a bottle except when I needed a couple more hours of sleep during their second month (and that was only once a week for a couple weeks). So, they were going from breast to sippy cup. I read books that recommended starting them on sippy cups at 8 months. But personally I found that didn't work for us. Rather, I found that their eye-hand coordination was much better at 10 months.

I recommend a two-handle, spill-proof sippy cup. I found Gerber's Fun Grips Soft Start spill-proof cup worked best for us. Give the babies their sippy cups after they've finished their cereal, fruit and vegetables. You don't want them to fill up on water first. Remember, this too is a learning process so don't be really concerned with how much they drink.

Fill the cup ¼ to ½ full and do not use the sippy cup valve. It will be messy because they'll probably sling the cup around to see what happens to the water. So be prepared for a little mess (but that's why they're in high chairs!). You'll need to help them hold the cup up to their mouths at first to show them how it works. Put their hands on the handles and help them drink. It will take a few trials but eventually they'll catch on. A couple weeks after they've mastered the cup, you can start using the valve.

By now you're probably saying, "Haven't we just weaned the

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babies?" And you basically have, because part of weaning is the process of expanding your babies' diet to include food. Your pediatrician may tell you to stop nursing, as mine did. But, I say it's OK to continue nursing. Your toddler is only going to nurse two or three times a day, and the antibodies in your breast milk are still present and provide protection. Nursing can also be important for your toddler's intermittent comfort and emotional refueling. I found that this was one of the moments where we could connect during our busy day. I was also losing weight rapidly nursing two babies because you can burn so many calories!

If you do decide to continue nursing beyond six months, remember to drink a lot of water, eat properly, get plenty of rest and check all medicines before taking them. I would also recommend the book, *The Nursing Mother's Companion* by Katherine Huggins, R.N., M.S. It was my bible to nursing. Or, contact the La Leche League in your town. ♡

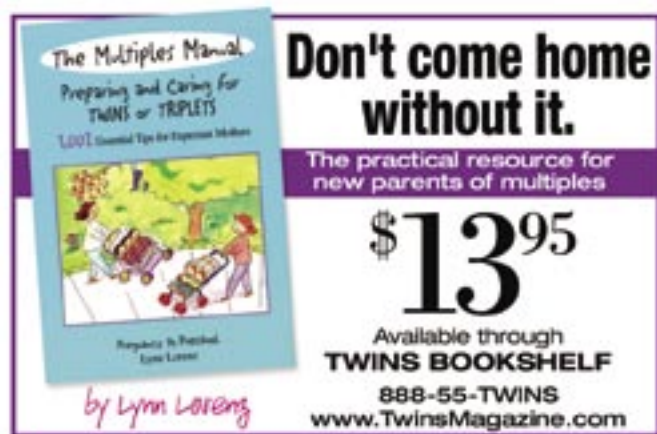
Kim Davis, a stay-at-home mom to identical twins Hannah and Kristen, 2½, and Emma, 4½, in Jacksonville, Fla., has a home-based graphic design business.



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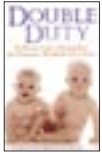
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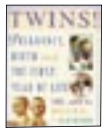
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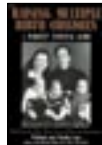
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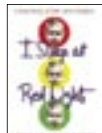
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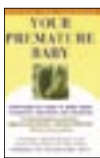




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Mason Berg, above, signs "hear."  
Timothy Williamson, below, signs "tiger."

# Signing babies

by Julie Murray

As a mother of twins, I understand the motivation to give your children every opportunity and advantage to learn and grow. As a speech-language pathologist, I've seen the benefits of using sign language to supplement the communication skills of children with developmental delays. But is sign language the magic pill to produce smarter and brighter children? Is it really worth the effort to teach signs to children who are also learning speech at a typical rate? Will it cause them to rely on signs instead of speech?

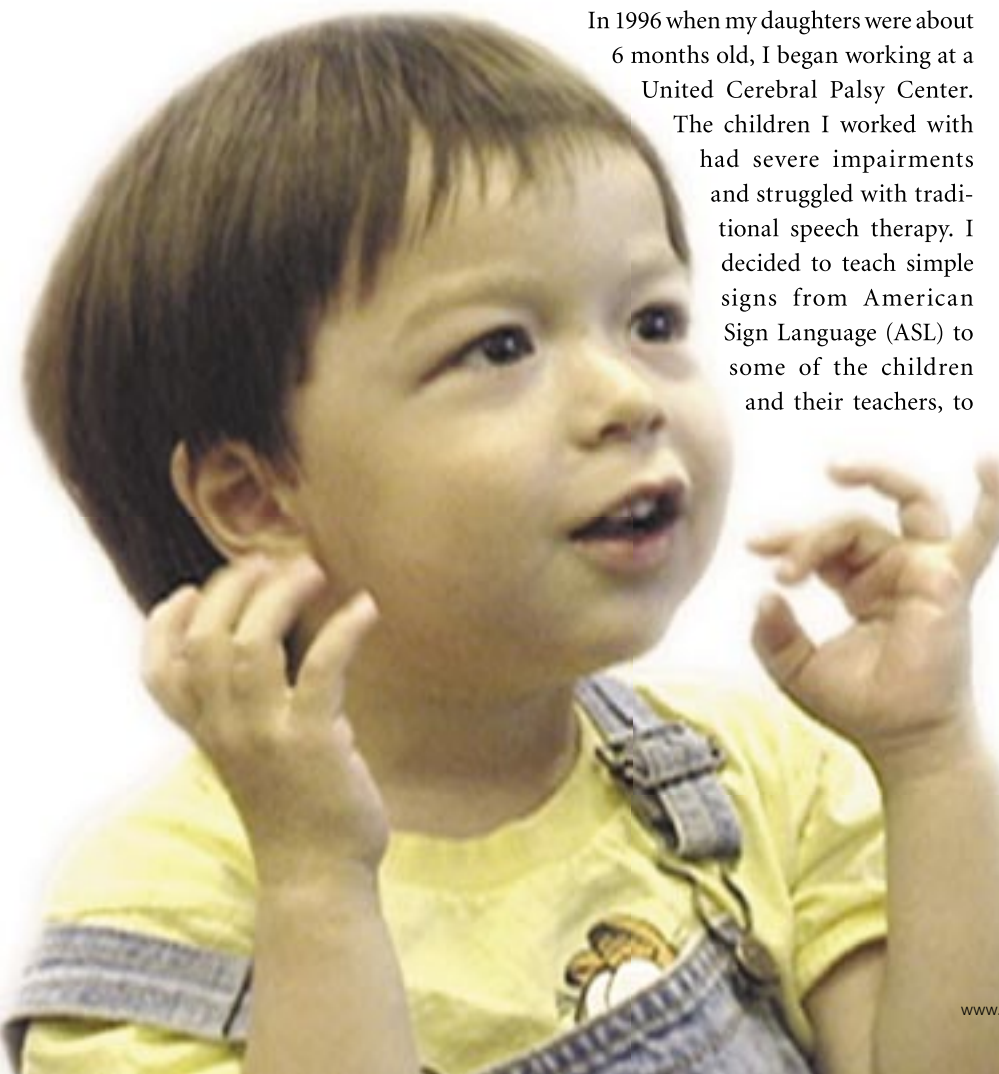
In 1996 when my daughters were about 6 months old, I began working at a United Cerebral Palsy Center.

The children I worked with had severe impairments and struggled with traditional speech therapy. I decided to teach simple signs from American Sign Language (ASL) to some of the children and their teachers, to

empower them to have more successful communication interactions. Because my sign language skills were rusty, I borrowed a series of videotapes to help me re-learn simple, functional signs such as "more" and "diaper." I took the tapes home and began practicing my repertoire of signs with my daughters. Before long, I noticed my twins were watching the signs I made along with the words I was saying. Like other babies at this age, they made attempts to imitate my movements, but didn't seem to connect the meaning with the movement until they were about 12 months old. My girls used some simple signs, along with speech, to let me know more about their world and about their wants and needs. As their speech skills increased and my job changed to adult-only therapy, we gradually stopped signing at home. According to the research and experts in the field of signing with babies, I jumped off the boat too quickly.

## Benefits of signing

According to Dr. Joseph Garcia, educator, researcher and author of *Sign With Your Baby*, the benefits of signing with your children are enormous. While working as a sign language interpreter, he observed that hearing babies of deaf parents expressed their needs at a much earlier age than babies who were not exposed to sign language. His subsequent research confirmed this observation, noting that babies with regular exposure to signs at 6 or 7 months could begin expressing simple ideas through signing as early as their eighth or ninth month. Dr. Garcia states: "...parents are not



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Jim McBride signs "apple" to his son, A. J.

giving speech or signs to a child, but are giving language to a child.”

Sign language use will not delay speech development. In fact, additional research in this area shows children who sign actually begin to speak earlier and have larger vocabularies than children who do not learn sign language. Although Dr. Garcia promotes the benefits of exposure to signs with children of any age, he recommends starting to use signs with your children around the age of 8 months.

Because babies understand language before they are able to effectively express their ideas, sign language provides a wonderful opportunity for young children to communicate with their parents and caregivers. Speech is a complex process that typically takes several years for children to master the basics, while simple signs that don't require extensive fine motor skills can be learned and used by children as young as 6 months of age. Babies naturally use gestures to communicate, such as raising their arms when they want to be picked up or pointing to a bottle when they are hungry. Use of a signing system, such as American Sign Language

(ASL) or “home signs” (signs created by parents based on gestures), along with spoken words, makes language accessible to children at a younger age. When kids can effectively communicate, they are less frustrated and have more successful interactions with others.

Children who learn to sign are empowered to interact and change their environment. This can be as basic as making a clear choice between juice and milk, or communicating that a diaper is wet, by signing instead of crying. Parents of children who sign are able to put themselves in their children's minds and understand their world while their children are at a vulnerable age. The process of learning and using signs stimulates cognitive processes such as eye acuity and deductive reasoning, and also provides parents with an amazing opportunity to engage their children and themselves in a learning process that benefits them both.

### Signing in a multiples family

Parents and caregivers of multiples may especially benefit from signing. As any mother of young multiples can tell you, it

is very time-consuming to figure out why your children are crying and frustrated so they can be calmed and their needs met. Parents hear the cries, observe the frustration and play a guessing game to solve the problem, running through a list of possibilities: wet, hungry, thirsty, teething, sleepy. Parents of multiples who sign have discovered that signing bridges the gap and takes some of the guesswork out of caring for their babies.

Obviously, signing will not eliminate all crying episodes, but babies cry for a reason. Crying is a non-verbal and non-specific way for babies to let their parents and caregivers know they need attention. Often with multiples, when one baby cries, the sibling joins in and parents are confronted with a chorus of crying babies. If children learn to communicate needs by signing to a receptive caregiver, some crying jags and temper tantrums may be eliminated. It is important to note that one twin may not necessarily sign to his or her twin until after 2 years of age, so parents of multiples shouldn't expect signing between babies until their children are older.

### Choosing a system

For parents who are interested in signing with their multiples, different approaches and systems are available. Some use American Sign Language (ASL) and some recommend “home signs.” There are advantages and disadvantages to both systems.

Because ASL is already established (and is the third most widely used language in the United States), children who learn signs from ASL are at an advantage when signs are used in settings away from home, such as day care or preschool. Some standard signs from ASL, however, may be too complex until children's fingers are more nimble.

“Home signs” are created by parents and are custom-made to meet the individual needs of your family. For example, the sign for the family dog is likely to be different from the ASL sign for dog, which requires finger snapping. These “home signs” may not be recognizable



Savannah Cormier signs “eat” to her parents when she’s hungry.

to people who strictly use ASL, but may meet the practical communication needs of families with young children .

## How signing grows

The most important aspect of signing with your children is to focus on the process as an amazing adventure. First, parents learn signs, usually starting with the most func-

tional signs such as “eat” and “more.” Next, parents use these signs, along with speech, in normal, everyday interactions. Parents don’t sign every word they say. In fact, only key words—the words that carry the most meaning—are signed. Rather than forcing children to move their hands a certain way, parents teach their children signs by using the signs themselves. Children observe, imitate and eventually connect that a specific sign, along with the spoken word, has meaning and power. Some children may make this connection almost immediately, others may observe for months before actually using a sign themselves. Over time, parents and children add to their signing vocabulary. After initial signs are learned, and as children’s fine motor skills and communication needs increase, sign language may also increase in complexity.

## More than the latest trend

Sign language for babies appears to be more than the latest trend in child development. It is a research-based approach to communication that may benefit both parents and children by helping busy parents become more engaged and in tune with their children and their needs. Whether you accomplish this with your multiples by using sign language or by other means, the benefits of communicating well with your children is always worth the effort. ♡

---

Julie C. Murray is the mother of 9-year old twins, a freelance writer and a speech-language pathologist who lives in Pisgah Forest, N.C.

## Signing dos and don'ts

**DO** always pair a sign with the spoken word. This helps children connect that they have the power to use language to impact their world.

**DO** have fun. Signing should be a positive activity between parents and children.

**DON'T** expect your multiples to sign to each other. Babies aren't likely to use signs to communicate with other babies until after age 2.

**DON'T** show off your child by asking him to make signs out of context. “Show Aunt Martha how we sign cat” when there is no cat in sight takes the meaning away from the message.

**DO** remember children learn signs, like anything else, in their own time.

**DON'T** make caregiving dependant on signing. Dr. Garcia cautions that making signing demands, such as requiring the child to sign “bottle” before the bottle is given, is counter-productive.

**DO** use signs with your children as an opportunity to further engage their senses and as another means for strengthening the parent-child bond.

For more information about programs to help parents get started, I recommend the following Web sites:

[www.sign2me.com](http://www.sign2me.com)

[www.signingbaby.com](http://www.signingbaby.com)

[www.signwithme.com](http://www.signwithme.com)

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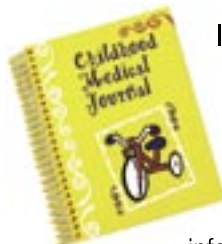
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# Meet the Fockers... er, Pickrens

by Sharon Withers

Wendy Pickren had received other casting calls in e-mails from her local twins club, Mothers of Multiples. But this one caught her eye. The bottom of the e-mail stated: "We will teach them to sign."

"When I read that part, I thought, 'My boys fit all of the descriptions and they already know how to sign!' I looked at it humorously, thinking that it would make a funny story to tell them when they got older: 'I once submitted your photos for a major motion picture!'" said Wendy, mom of 2 1/2-year-old Bradley and Spencer. "I sent in a few snapshots of my 'fellas,' just for fun."

Wendy got "the call." "We went to the casting office in Los Angeles, a long drive from our Northern California home. The boys demonstrated some of their signs and we returned home, thinking we had had our adventure. Little did I know that the adventure had just begun. We were in Los Angeles for five months filming *Meet the Fockers*. What a wild ride!"

Spencer and Bradley, born in October 2002, were 18 months old when they began filming the blockbuster sequel to *Meet the Parents*. The comedy stars Robert DeNiro, Ben Stiller, Dustin Hoffman, Barbra Streisand and the identical twins in the role of Little Jack.

The concept of signing, which the Pickrens used at home, and Ferberizing, which they did not, were already in the script when the boys were cast. "Some of the signs changed as we went," Wendy said. "The director and writers were very flexible and agreed that if we could work in some signs and skills the boys already knew it would be easier for everyone."

Signing came naturally to the Pickrens family. As a pediatric occupational therapist in her before-twins life, Wendy sometimes used sign language to communicate with children. "A friend lent me



a really great DVD, *Signing Time*," Wendy said. "Although I am not big on TV for the babies, the DVD was educational and we loved it— and very really helpful."

"When the fellas were really little (weeks old), I would sign and say, 'Wait one minute' as I laid them down and dashed about the house. As they grew, I incorporated signs into the songs I sang and words I spoke to them."

By 11 months old, Spencer and Bradley were using signs. "Of course, first signs included 'more' and 'eat,' but those can be lifesavers when you are trying to efficiently meet the needs of twins!" They increased their signing vocabulary, even as they began to speak. By 15 months, they were able to use about 50 signs.

Wendy never dreamed signing would lead to Hollywood. In fact, she never had considered the entertainment business. She was just happy to be home with her boys, going to the park and play dates.

She did, however, become friendly with another mom of movie twins, the little girls in *Lemony Snicket*. "I felt that it was important to connect with another mother who had had a similar experience, so that we could support each other, share in the excitement and give or get advice," Wendy said. "Other than that, I am just so lucky to have great friends back home—most of whom have twins—for companionship and camaraderie in this crazy twin adventure." ♥



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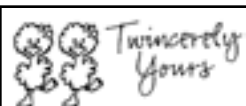
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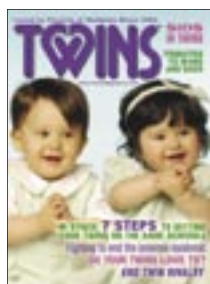


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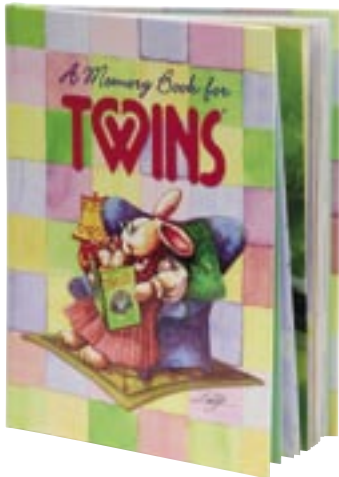
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Special Gifts for Families with Multiples

# TWINS Shoppe



## 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 water-color 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.

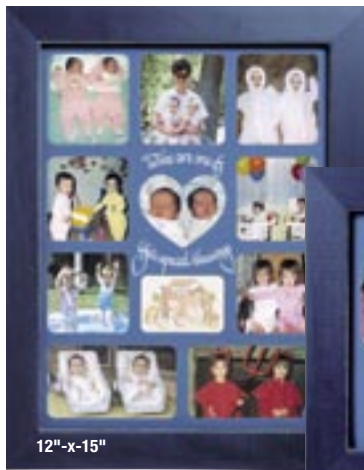
**SS03003 \$34.95 for a set of 2 books**

Dozens more products available at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://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

**SS03001 \$25.95 each**



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" 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

TWINS 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.

**SF90115 \$9.95 each**



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"H x 15"W.

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



A. 12"-x-15"



B. 12"-x-15"



A. 11"-x-14"

## "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 $\frac{3}{4}$ "H x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ "W.

SF90092 \$17.99 each



## "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.

SW00021 \$31.99 each  
Two or more \$29.99 each

## Twice as Nice Photo Frames

These two ceramic frames from Russ Baby will look fabulous on your dresser, bookcase, shelf or fireplace mantle. The frames have glass inserts and flocked backing, each frame provides a unique opportunity to show off your twins. The Stars and Hearts frame includes spaces for two photographs to show your twins separately. The Bears and Balloons frame has room for one big photograph to show your twins together. These are beautiful, wonderful gifts

to celebrate the birth of your twins for a close family member or even for yourself. Frames are individually boxed. Twice as Nice Stars and Hearts Frame is 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 6" and holds two 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " photographs. Twice as Nice Bears and Balloons Frame is 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " and holds one 4" x 6" photograph.

- A. SF04002 Stars and Hearts \$12.99 each
- B. SF04003 Bears and Balloons \$14.99 each

**NEW!**



A.



B.



## 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.*

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

## Kids at the table

You can start teaching manners as soon as your children begin to eat table food, but don't expect immediate results; it is a process that lasts for 10 or more years. When teaching manners, keep in mind age-appropriate behavior, use gentle reminders over and over again, look for what your children do right and compliment them on those behaviors. (Don't turn dinnertime into lecture time.)

As soon as children can talk, they can learn to say "please," "thank you" and, at grandma's house, something such as "Dinner was very good."

Here are some realistic expectations of mastering certain manners.

### 3 years

Children can use a spoon or fork instead of their fingers and can sit at the table for 10 minutes.

### 4 years

Children can learn to set and clear the table.

### 5 years

Children can use knives and begin to practice manners at the table: chewing slowly and quietly with a closed mouth, not talking with food in their mouth, participating in simple dinner conversation and other considerate behaviors.



Swimmer's ear, or *otitis externa*, is a summertime ailment that results from water containing bacteria or fungi becoming trapped in the ear canal.

Symptoms:

- Stuffy and/or itchy ear(s)
- Swollen ear canal (sometimes completely shut)
- Runny, milky liquid draining from the ear
- Ear is painful and tender to the touch, especially the cartilage
- Swollen neck glands

If your children experience any of these symptoms, visit your doctor.



Patrick and Nicholas, 2½ years

### 6 years

Children should be able to place a napkin on their lap and use it to wipe their mouth. They also can fold and place their napkin on the table when they are finished, and position their knife and fork across the plate.

Prevention:

- Keep the ear dry.
- After swimming, use over-the-counter eardrops designed for drying out the ear
- Before swimming, use oil-based eardrops (recommended for recurring problems)
- At the beginning of the season, ask your doctor to remove wax build-up, which traps moisture, from your twins' ears.

**A word of caution:** Never use cotton swabs to clean the ears or remove water.

For more information on disorders of the ear, nose or throat visit [www.entnet.org](http://www.entnet.org).

—American Academy of Otolaryngology,  
Head and Neck Surgery

## Scrapbooking for Multiples: 6 RULES

A scrapbook is a memento your children will carry with them for many years and cherish. Here are some tips to help you scrapbook your multiples' childhood:

1. Create a book for each child, just as you would for singletons.
2. Include their individual photos in their scrapbook. It is important not to always take group photos of your multiples. Don't forget to mark the back of each photo in order to avoid mix-ups later.
3. Include their personal information such as birth time, weight, height (length), first word, first steps and other similar milestones, along with photos of each occasion. Most of these details vary from child to child, and twin to twin.
4. Decorate each scrapbook according to each child's interests: cars, animals, planes, dolls, colors.
5. Being a multiple is a special thing. In addition to their individual books you may want to create scrapbooks that include all of your multiples. Pictures of them together in matching outfits, on their birthday and other special occasions would be appropriate for a "unity" book. Each multiple will want his or her own "unity" scrapbook.
6. The most important rule: Let your imagination fly and have fun!

—Lisa Tiffen

## Saving for a rainy day or new toy



You can teach young children to budget and save, as soon as they begin to get an allowance. Here's a game they'll like.

You will need two sets of three jars or margarine tubs, three colorful labels, and your children's allowance in small denominations, such as four quarters instead of a dollar bill. Create and decorate one tub for spending, one for savings and one for donations. With each child, determine how much money goes into each tub.

**Spending:** Attach pictures of friends, games or snacks to the label.

**Savings:** Cut out photos of big items your children are saving to buy.

**Donations:** Find images that represent the causes to which your children would like to donate, perhaps



church, an animal shelter or the environment.

The terms "budget," "income" and "savings" are abstract concepts that most children under 11 do not grasp. By dividing their allowance into tubs, kids have a concrete way of seeing where money goes to meet short- and long-term financial goals.

—From the book, *Yes, You Can! Raise Financially Aware Kids* by Jack Jonathan with Dr. Sheelagh Manheim, (Stowers Innovations), [www.stowers-innovations.com](http://www.stowers-innovations.com).

Car  
seat  
safety  
online

*The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has a child passenger safety Web site that features short videos and comprehensive information to help parents protect children of all ages when they ride in vehicles—from installing child safety seats to reinforcing safe driving habits for teens. Visit [www.chop.edu/carseat](http://www.chop.edu/carseat).*



## CRAFTY KIDS

Kids Craft of the Month Club (3 - 12 years) and Toddler Craft of the Month Club (18 - 36 months) deliver educational craft projects to families' doorsteps. Created by inventor mom Becky Dawson, formerly of IBM, after the birth of her son Jack, the program takes the planning and shopping hassle out of home projects. A 12-month subscription (\$7.95 per month) includes 60 crafts and a 72-piece starter kit of all the tools necessary for the crafts. Visit [www.mommiesmart.com](http://www.mommiesmart.com)



com for more information and to preview the crafts. Sign up online, or call 303-651-9234.

*“Play for young children is not recreation activity. It is not leisure-time activity nor escape activity... Play is thinking time for young children. It is language time. Problem-solving time. It is memory time, planning time, investigating time. It is organization-of-ideas time, when the young child uses his mind and body and his social skills and all his powers in response to the stimuli he has met.”*

—James L. Hymes, Jr.,  
child development specialist,  
author

## Smart babies

“Proper nutrition is extremely important to mental development, as is stimulation and activity,” said Loraine Stern, M.D., a practicing pediatrician and clinical professor of pediatrics at UCLA.

DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and ARA (arachidonic acid) occur naturally in breast milk and are included in some formulas such as Enfamil LIPIL. They are important nutrients for mental and visual development in infants.

Giving your babies the stimulation and activity necessary for healthy development is as easy as providing good nutrition. Simple activities like talking, reading, playing and singing to your infants comfort and stimulate them.

Dr. Stern offers the following tips to stimulate your babies' growth and mental development:

- Talk to your babies. Your voice is soothing, and your babies learn from the sounds. Imitate sounds your

babies make, and as they get older, they will probably imitate you right back.

- Hold a rattle about 12 inches from your baby's face and move it slowly from side to side. Your baby's eyes will follow the path of the rattle for a short time. Over time your children will be able to track for longer and longer periods.
- Play classical music to help soothe your babies.
- Read to your babies every day and play peek-a-boo.
- Sing to your babies and talk while feeding and changing diapers.
- Put some plastic cups in the tub while you are giving them a bath so they can fill and pour.
- Place an unbreakable mirror in a spot where your babies can see themselves.

## Why won't they sleep?

Researchers interviewed the parents of 1,741 children ages 5, 17 and 29 months old about their children's sleep habits. Here's what they found.

At 5 months of age, 23.5% of children did not sleep six consecutive hours at night. Of the children who did not sleep six consecutive hours at 5 months or 17 months of age, 32.9% were still not sleeping six consecutive hours at night at 29 months of age.

The reasons, however, were different. The factor most strongly associated with not sleeping at least six consecutive hours per night at 5 months was feeding the baby when he or she awakened during the night. At 17 months and 29 months of age, the reason was the presence of a parent in the room.



Jacob and Ashton, 1½ months

18% to 22% of twins are left-handed; fewer than 10% of non-twins are lefties.



Isabelle and Rodney, 8 months

## BABY SMILES

- B**abies go through many stages of friendliness in their first year. As their world widens, they move from being mom-centered to other-centered with its ups and downs, its shy days and exuberant days. All babies move at their own pace and quirkiness so these are only general guidelines.
- When they are 2 months old, babies respond to voices and to people who hold them and play with them, and they may even smile.
  - By 5 months, they respond to others' emotions.
  - When they reach 6 months of age they may have separation anxiety, even if you leave the room for only a few minutes. This can last a few weeks or a couple of months.
  - Also at about 6 months, they may begin to acknowledge each other consciously.
  - By the age of 9 months they may become little entertainers for any audience they can summon, including each other.
  - By 1 year of age they show affection on their own initiative.

Find the real twins >>>



# Double Takes

Boy/girl twins are (almost) always dizygotic (DZ, "fraternal"). (See the article on our Web site.) Can you guess whether the same-sex multiples pictured on these pages are monozygotic (MZ, "identical") or dizygotic?

**1::** Shaindel and Rassia  
2 weeks  
University Hills, Ohio



**2::** Ashley and Calah  
9 Months  
Round Lake, Minnesota



**3::** Benjamin and Nicholas  
3 Years  
New Providence, New Jersey



**4::** Allie and Ralpie  
4 Months  
Sussex, New Jersey



**5::** Jackson and Grace  
2½ Years  
Portage, Michigan



**6::** Kairi and Kai  
3½ Years  
Washington, D.C.



**7::** Jessica and Julianna  
5 Months  
Farmingville, New York



**8::** Andrew and Tyler  
5 Months  
Milford, Massachusetts



**9::** Ryan and Erin  
28 Months  
Elgin, Illinois



**10::** Amanda and Alexis  
3½ Months  
Maricopa, Arizona





**11::** Erik and Evan  
8 Months  
Johnson City, Tennessee



**12::** Autumn and Madelyn  
2 Years  
Felton, Delaware



**13::** Triston and Zachrey  
5 Years  
Fair Oaks Ranch, Texas



**14::** Sierra and Alana  
1 Year  
Sparta, New Jersey



**15::** Mario and Antonio  
22 Months  
Miramar, Florida



**16::** Tatum and Taylor  
11 Months  
Scottsdale, Arizona



**17::** Braydn and Skyelar  
9 Months  
Webster, New York



**18::** Keiley and Joely  
5 Months  
Gravois Mills, Missouri



**19::** Madison and Alexandria  
16 Months  
West Union, West Virginia



**20::** Alison and Christian  
6½ Months  
Torrance, California

## 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 45 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:**

TWINS Double Takes  
Attn. Art Director  
1121 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite 101  
Centennial, CO 80112-3851

NOTE: We are unable to use any professional photographs. Photos will not be returned. All photos become the property of TWINS.

#### *Based on parental reports:*

**1 - The "real" twins: second and fifth from the right**

1 - DZ	2 - MZ	3 - MZ	4 - DZ
5 - DZ	6 - UNK	7 - UNK	8 - DZ
9 - DZ	10 - DZ	11 - DZ	12 - MZ
13 - DZ	14 - DZ	15 - DZ	16 - DZ
17 - MZ	18 - DZ	19 - DZ	20 - DZ

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## My twins say the cutest things

### Hands full

I go food shopping with all my children. Riley, 5, Ella, 3, and Thomas and Audrey, 22 months. One day Ella asked, “Mommy how come so many people say to you, ‘Boy you sure have your hands full and there is nothing in your hands?’”

Colskids  
*TWINS Message Board*

when she asked the ever-so-common question, “Which one are you? Are you Cael or are you Malaki?” Not two minutes later, Cael come over to his grandma and held her face in his small hands and said, “Are you grandma, or are you grandma?”

Lena Porter  
*via e-mail*

while Cullen was looking on. Cullen kept staring at, and eventually tried to reach out and touch, Egan’s penis. I said to Cullen, “Those are your brother’s privates.” When I pulled Egan’s diaper up to cover him, Cullen waved and said, “Bye-bye privates.”

Joelle  
*TWINS Message Board*

### Who are you?

There is no joy like being a mother. Nothing brings more smiles, laughter and tears. This particular moment brought a lot of laughter and smiles. I am the mother of 2-year-old twin boys who look very much alike. So far, in the whole two years of their lives, they have been asked the same question over and over again: “Which one are you? Cael or Malaki?” The twins already love to tease and trick people; and will always tell you the other’s name—except when they get in trouble and they will be sure to tell you who is who.

Their grandma came to visit on Easter and began playing on the floor with them

### Cookie smart

I am a mom to three girls: 8-year-old identical twins and a 3-year-old singleton. I was talking about letters, numbers, phone number, where do you live and the like with my 3-year-old. I said, “Oh, you’re so smart.”

She said, “I’m cookie smart.”

It took me a minute to realize she was calling herself a smart cookie.

DBG, New Jersey  
*TWINS Message Board*

### Winking

I am a mom to four: Brandon, 16; Hannah, 6; and Caitlin and Kyle, 17 months. My darling son Kyle has started winking. It is so cute: He’ll look at you and blink both eyes and wait for your reaction. If you ask him where his eyes are, he’ll also wink at you.

Tracy  
*TWINS Message Board*

### Wave bye-bye!

When my twin boys were just over 2, I happened to be changing Egan’s diaper

Do you have a short, funny anecdote about your twins? E-mail your funny anecdote to [twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:twinsmagazineeditor@yahoo.com). Please type “cutest things” in the subject line. We will publish selected submissions in upcoming issues.

## Twin Vision

by Brian and Brad Jones





# PERSONALIZED STORY BOOKS

Each twin “owns” personal attributes that make up his or her unique personality and story. These **personalized story books for twins** help each twin understand what it means to be an “I” and not just “one of the twins.”

These personal stories for each of your twins will **help your child to learn to talk to you about important subjects**. Create the foundation for open communication with each twin that will last a lifetime.

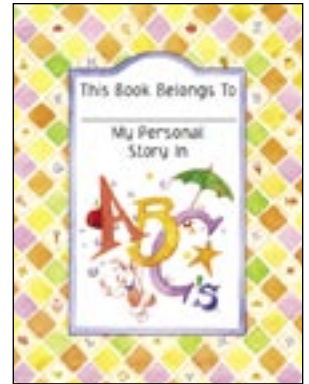
To find out what is important to your children **discuss the fill-in sections of these books** with each twin. This is your chance to allow your children to ask questions and gain quality time with each twin, away from the TV and computer games. **You'll be amazed at what you will learn about how your twins think** as you reinforce your special bond with them.

Start when your twins are babies. Help them develop their own personal stories. Many of the 32 pages in each colorful book have **fill-in-the-blank spaces for a child's personal preferences and individual information**.

From the time your twins are infants, they will love having their personal stories read to them. **Before long, they'll be reading** the stories back to you, and to each other!

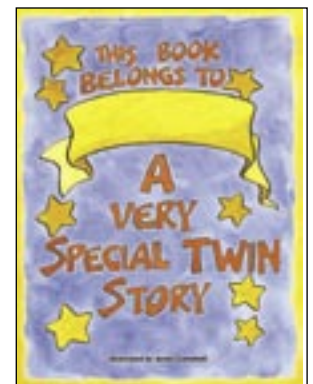
## My Personal Story in ABCs

**1** Teach the alphabet in pictures and words, with more than 20 places for **filling in personalized information** about your twin—birthday, your **family's details**, home address, Mommy's and Daddy's names. Lavishly illustrated by Jerianne Van Dijk, the outstanding artist who illustrated the popular TWINS Lifetime Memory Books. 32 pages. 8.5 x 11 inches. Softbound. **\$15.95**



## A Very Special Twin Story

**2** Your child is the “Star” and producer of this story. Dozens of **places to fill in details about the time your twin** was born, the city where the family lives, **favorite colors**, games and activities. Wonderfully illustrated by artist Jenny Campbell. 32 pages. 8.5 x 11 inches. Softbound. **\$15.95**



Buy 2 of the same book, or **Mix 'n Match**....have a different personalized story for each child.

Special Price for a set of 2 books: **\$25<sup>95</sup>**

Order direct through Twins Bookshelf – online at [www.TwinsMagazine.com](http://www.TwinsMagazine.com) or call toll-free **888-55-TWINS** exclusively through Twins Magazine *Not available anywhere else!*



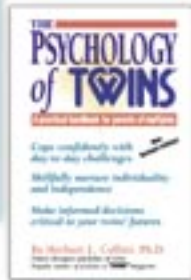
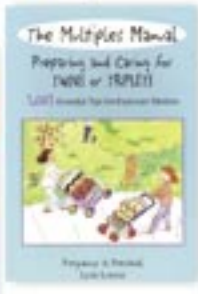
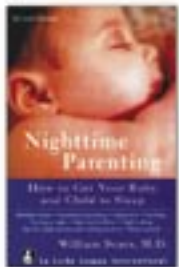
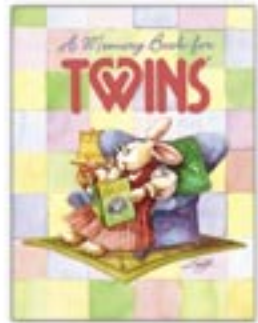
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*Created Specifically for Mothers of Multiples*

### Our Most Popular Gift Packet Includes:

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